

Of Crusades and Culture Wars: “Messianic” Militarism and Political Conflict in the United States

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In this paper, we explore the manner and extent to which differences in militaristic orientations occupy an important front in the much ballyhooed American “culture war.” In particular, we posit that belief in biblical inerrancy engenders a “messianic” militarism. We further suggest that this relationship occurs not only directly but also indirectly, through a heightened sense of nationalism. We compare the predictive capacity of such traditionalistic Christian “believing” to other elements associated with it: (1) cognitive dogmatism, (2) hierarchical visions of authority, (3) devotionism, and (3) immersion within the traditionalistic Christian culture. Finally, we demonstrate the relevance of these dynamics to understanding “red/blue” cleavage structures in the United States, by showing that as belief in the authority of the Bible increases, so does the perceived electoral salience of foreign policy issues, relative to domestic issues.

Understanding the sources of militaristic beliefs among mass publics is important because democratic leaders cannot sustain aggressive military engagements without the support of the polity. Less obvious, though, is the degree to which understanding militarism may be critical to appreciating the broader dynamics of political conflict in the United States. The last few electoral cycles have seen foreign policy orientations outperform all other variables in their capacity to explain vote choice and partisan attachment (e.g., Aldrich et al. 2006; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2005). Indeed, even before the events of September 11, 2001, it was no secret that Republicans had come to “own” issues of national security in the minds of the American electorate (e.g., Petrocik 1996; Wattenberg 1996). Furthermore, many astute observers have suggested that the hawk/dove distinction has been an important cross-cutting agent of electoral change over the past 35 years.¹ Still, despite growing recognition of foreign policy attitudes’ broad political importance, little scholarship has been

devoted to exploring systematically the etiology of those attitudes. This paper seeks to travel some distance in that direction.

However, exploring those dynamics is not our only (or perhaps even our primary) goal. In contrast to the paucity of research dedicated to understanding militarism, a great deal of fanfare, scholarly and otherwise, has accompanied the rise of the so-called “culture war” (e.g., Hunter 1991; Layman 2001). The primary mechanism underlying this gradual reconfiguration of the electoral map into “red” and “blue” states² appears to be religion—especially the distinctiveness of white, traditionalistic Christians (for good reviews of this literature, see Fowler et al. 1994; Layman 2001). Most observers, both in the media and the social scientific community, have suggested that the battlegrounds upon which the culture war is waged do not extend very far beyond sex/gender identity issues and church/state controversies (e.g., Layman and Green 2006; however, see Legee et al. 2002, for a fuller account). In fact, religious orientations

¹This issue-evolutionary process would have surfaced during the Vietnam War (e.g., Aldrich and McKelvey 1977), grown legs during the Reagan defense build-up (e.g., Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989), but temporarily regressed following the end of the Cold War (e.g., Anand and Krosnick 2003).

²The culture war thesis has its detractors. Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2005) demonstrate that the nation is not as polarized as has been sometimes asserted. However, they express less skepticism toward the idea that electoral conflict has been gradually reconfigured, pitting Christian traditionalists on one side and seculars/religious progressives on the other.

are often juxtaposed *in competition with* foreign policy attitudes as potentially explanatory agents of electoral change (e.g., Abramowitz 2004; Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, 2005; Hillygus and Shields 2005). But what if these two sources of electoral influence complement, rather than compete, with each another? In other words, what if the prioritization of “moral values,” as the 2004 NEP exit poll notoriously dubbed the culture wars dimension, captures attitudes toward military wars as well (e.g., Danner 2005)?³

In this paper, we posit that Christian traditionalism and its corollaries encourage aggressive foreign policy postures and that such *messianic* militarism shapes vote choices in a significant way.⁴ We identify and empirically evaluate four distinct, but not necessarily competing, mechanisms that may influence foreign policy beliefs both directly and indirectly. The first element, biblical inerrancy, is most central to our story. We argue that such beliefs may encourage militarism by promoting righteous warfare as an ideal. The second element, opinion leadership within the traditionalistic Christian culture, may activate and reinforce latent militarism—particularly in conflicts pertaining to Israel. The third element, cognitive dogmatism (whether religious or not), may encourage militarism as a simple extension of a mental framework that cannot accept compromise as a solution to conflict. The fourth element, hierarchical visions of authority (which is often associated with Christian traditionalism), may lead to punitive orientations toward others with minority points of view—in this case, other nations who pose a perceived threat. Finally, we suggest that any of these four mechanisms may also engender militarism indirectly, by first inspiring a sense of American nationalism, which in turn heightens militaristic beliefs. It is important to note, at the outset, that while we consider particular application to the War in Iraq and the broader War on Terrorism to be interesting from an applied politics perspective, our theoretical interest, and our

focus, lies in understanding the relationship between traditionalistic Christianity and a *general* disposition toward militarism.

Thus, we have three goals in this paper: (1) to advance our understanding of militarism as a general political posture in its own right, (2) to both broaden and deepen our understanding of religion as a political determinant, and (3) to extend and perhaps simplify our understanding of political conflict in the United States. If the data support our expectations, they will suggest that foreign policy attitudes constitute an important battlefield in the culture war, thus simplifying our understanding of contemporary political cleavages. The following sections (a) review the extant literature pertaining to foreign policy attitudes, (b) present a theoretical framework for understanding “messianic” militarism, (c) describe our research design, data, methodology, and results, and (d) discuss the implications of those findings.

Understanding Militarism

Perhaps because foreign policy attitudes cannot be arrayed on a unidimensional spectrum the way, theoretically, domestic attitudes might be structured on a liberal-conservative continuum, an early generation of scholars searched in vain for evidence of structure. More recently, however, there appears to be an empirically derived consensus that “a single isolationist-to-internationalist dimension inadequately describes the main dimensions of public opinion on international affairs” (Holsti 1992, 448). To be sure, post-Vietnam scholarship is most notable for its attempts to unpack this internationalist dimension and for its realization that internationalist preferences come in different forms.

For example, Mandelbaum and Schneider (1979), using Chicago Council on Foreign Relations data, derived a three-factor solution in their analysis of responses to foreign policy survey items: liberal internationalism (those who support U.S. involvement abroad for nonmilitary purposes), conservative internationalism (those whose support is limited to military intervention), and noninternationalism (or classical isolationism). And in one of the most influential analyses, Wittkopf (1990) demonstrated the utility of understanding public opinion as the intersection of two independent dimensions: support versus opposition of cooperative internationalism (CI) and support versus opposition of militant internationalism (MI). The resultant four categories consist of

³Several popular accounts have suggested that religion is an important determinant of the hawk/dove cleavage and that perceived lack of patriotism and tolerance for “godless Communism” on the part of the New Left may have galvanized the “religious right” nearly as much as the sexual revolution (e.g., Bacevich 2005; Berlet and Aziz 2003; Phillips 2006). Some political science scholarship has pointed to these relationships as well (e.g., Green et al. 1996; Kohut et al. 2000; Mayer 2004).

⁴We define messianic militarism as *the conviction that the international interests of the United States (including imperial ones), particularly as they conflict with nondemocratic nations, are benevolent, divinely inspired, and necessary to a cosmic battle between good and evil—thereby demanding their uncompromising and hawkish pursuit*. We have borrowed this term (but not its definition) from Rothschild (2003).

Internationalists (support both forms of internationalism), *Isolationists* (oppose both forms), *Hardliners* (support MI but oppose CI), and *Accommodationists* (support CI but oppose MI).⁵

Whether labeled conservative internationalism, militant internationalism, or something else, the post-Vietnam work has underscored vividly the need to examine public support for a particular variant of internationalism—namely, the kind that calls for a willingness to use the U.S. military to defend and protect American interests abroad. Hurwitz and Peffley refer to this posture⁶ as *militarism*, which “is anchored, on the one end, by a desire that the government assume an assertive, combative foreign-policy posture through military strength and on the other by a desire for a more flexible and accommodating stance through negotiations” (1987, 1107).

But what is the genesis of a militaristic posture? Hurwitz and Peffley (1987), in a LISREL model of foreign policy attitudes, demonstrate that militarism is constrained by a set of core values—specifically, belief of the *Morality of Warfare* and *Ethnocentrism*,⁷ such that individuals who believe war to be a moral solution to certain international problems and who believe in the inherent superiority of the United States are substantially more likely to hold militaristic beliefs—at both a general and a specific (i.e., policy) level.

Of course, if militaristic postures stem from core values pertaining to the morality of warfare and perceived American superiority, it begs the question: what is the genesis of these core values? As noted, evidence suggests that one important source may be traditionalistic Christian religion.

Theory: Messianic Militarism

“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” (Matthew 26: 52 [RSV])

The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s

wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and the blood flowed out . . . rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia. (Revelation 14: 19-20 [RSV])

If traditionalistic Christian religion provides one source of militaristic foreign policy postures, what are the causal mechanisms by which this influence occurs? Our theoretical perspective draws upon that of Green et al.’s “believing, belonging, and behaving” framework (e.g., 1996), which carefully disentangles the political influence resulting from doctrinal belief (“believing”), experience in a particular Christian denomination or tradition (“belonging”), and religious devotionism (“behaving”). However, we seek to attach an addendum to this typology. Specifically, we consider it imperative for scholarship to distinguish the effects attributable to traditionalistic Christian believing, belonging, and behaving, per se, from more wide-ranging orientations that are frequent corollaries of such religiosity—namely, cognitive dogmatism and hierarchical visions of authority.⁸ Thus, so as to not misattribute the etiology of our proposed “messianic” militarism to the wrong source (s), in the following subsections we attempt to carefully explicate and disentangle—with theory—the direct and indirect causal mechanisms underlying each of these hypothesized relationships.

The Role of “Believing”: Traditionalistic Christian Orthodoxy

We define traditionalistic Christian orthodoxy as a *conviction that adherence to orthodox interpretations of the Bible is the essence of Christian faith*. That is, traditionalists believe scripture to be authoritative and inerrant—often even in matters pertaining to history, science, and predicting the future—and consider particular beliefs to be nonnegotiable tenets of the Faith (see Marsden 1991 and Guth et al. 1996 for two good overviews of Christian traditionalism).

As Smidt (1988) and others have pointed out, traditionalistic worldviews are not limited to fundamentalist or evangelical (i.e., “born-again”) Protestants,⁹ but can also be found in the pews (but rarely

⁵Hinckley (1988) also makes extensive use of the hardliner versus accommodationist types.

⁶Hurwitz and Peffley define postures as abstract beliefs that “convey the general stance or orientation the individual would like to see the government adopt in conducting foreign policy, without indicating what specific policies should be employed to attain the desired goal” (1987, 1104).

⁷For this paper, we prefer to label this value “nationalism,” in order to emphasize its geographic and cultural aspects rather than its ethnic ones.

⁸It is not at all clear how these characteristics arise, or whether they are exogenous to traditionalistic Christian belief. However, while disentangling this causal relationship is certainly of theoretical interest, it is beyond the scope of this study.

⁹Evangelical Protestant denominations include (but are not limited to) the Southern Baptist Convention and many other Baptist churches, Pentecostal/Charismatic churches such as the Assemblies of God, and the rapidly growing “nondenominational” megachurches that have become a staple across the United States.

among the clergy) of mainline Protestant churches (albeit in considerably smaller numbers), and in many Catholic parishes. As the 2004 American National Election Study attests, roughly 37% of the American public considers the Bible to be literally true—a number that actually underestimates traditionalistic belief in the mass public, because many traditionalists who believe the Bible to be without error do not necessarily believe that every word is to be taken literally.¹⁰

How could such traditionalistic orthodoxy engender hawkish postures? First, doctrine may encourage the faithful to embrace the inherent morality of killing in times of war. In this regard, “end-times” theology has an important role to play. Drawing upon visions found primarily in the biblical book of Revelation, many traditionalistic Christians fervently believe that future history is to culminate in an apocalyptic battle between the armies of Christ and those of Satan. A popularized retelling of such eschatology—the *Left Behind* Series (LaHaye and Jenkins 1995)—has sold in excess of 60 million copies (Unger 2005). Though variations exist in end-times visions, they collectively enjoy the confidence of 50–60% of the U.S. population (e.g., Pew Research Center 2005). By definition, these interpretations consider the waging of war for the purpose of defeating evil as not only morally justified but necessary and even demanded by God.

Second, doctrine may influence militarism indirectly, by first prompting a heightened sense of nationalism. Such fundamentalist affect for the “New World” can be traced to “covenant theology.” Based on biblical accounts of God’s relationship to Israel, covenant theology asserts that God identifies with some nations, either blessing or punishing those “chosen” nations according to their faithfulness. Such thinking, in conjunction with end-times visions, infused the Crusades as well as many other military escapades throughout the past two millennia (see Phillips 2006). In the North American Colonies, the Puritans believed very strongly that their new home represented the “New Jerusalem,” where God’s kingdom would be ushered in (see Kessler 1992). The first Great Awakening also drew heavily upon this imagery of colonial America as a “shining city upon a hill” (see Winthrop, in Hollander and Capper 2004), and ultimately provided the War for Independence with much of its zeal (see Corbett and Corbett 1999;

Phillips 2006). Once infused with this nationalistic fervor, individuals are then more inclined to defend the interests of that nation by any means necessary, including militaristic ones (For a fuller account of this dynamic, see Hurwitz and Peffley 1987).

Both of the doctrines described above—covenant theology and end-times theology—also provide reasons to suspect that messianic militarism may spike further when the conflict(s) in question pertain to Israel. First, a literal interpretation of the Old Testament covenant between God and the biblical Israel—a land that encompasses much of the Middle East, including roughly half of modern Iraq—demands deference to that relationship.¹¹ As such, many Christian traditionalists believe that God’s covenant with the United States depends upon its reverence toward God’s original covenant with Israel (e.g., Mayer 2004). Second, and by extension, many end-times visions explicitly assume that the apocalypse will occur in Israel (literally at Armageddon).

The Role of “Belonging”: Evangelical Identity and Cultural Immersion

It is possible, perhaps even likely, that the average traditionalistic Christian does not spend significant amounts of time thinking about the dynamics described above, focusing instead on nonpolitical matters of faith and personal morality. Thus, while doctrine may potentially inspire militarism, it may be significantly enhanced if believers are exposed to opinion leadership—whether by nationally recognized figures (e.g., James Dobson, the leader of the popular radio show and newsletter *Focus on the Family*), popular books (e.g., the aforementioned *Left Behind* series), periodicals, videos, local pastors, teachers in sectarian schools, or influential members of social networks. To be sure, the political consequences of such opinion leadership within social networks has been well documented, both generally (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987) and specifically within church communities (e.g., Gilbert and Djupe 2003; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Wald 1988). Thus, we expect that immersion in evangelical Christian culture—whether by attending an evangelical denomination or by being exposed to “Christian” radio, television, and/or publications—may heighten the influence of doctrinal orthodoxy, through the mechanism of opinion leadership.

¹⁰Moreover, we do not consider traditionalism to be a dichotomous concept. That is, Christians, and indeed people in general, can be “more” or “less” traditionalistic in their outlook.

¹¹For example, following Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s cerebral hemorrhage in January, 2006, Pat Robertson proclaimed that it reflected God’s “enmity toward those who ‘divide my land’” (Barisic 2006).

This, again, may be particularly true when the militarized conflict in question pertains to the Middle East. There are two reasons for this. The first reason pertains to the emphasis given within many evangelical communities to the end-times visions described above. The second reason may have to do with conditions specific to the presidency of George W. Bush. Unlike Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, who embraced the Christian Right but were not themselves traditionalistic Christians, and unlike Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, both of whom are evangelical Protestants (Southern Baptists, specifically) but do not embrace the social agenda of the Christian Right, George W. Bush is the first president whom the Christian Right can legitimately claim as its own. Accordingly, the relationship between the evangelical community and the Bush presidency has been strikingly close and unprecedented. Therefore, due perhaps in part to personal affect, evangelicals may be more inclined to support the “Bush Doctrine” in the Middle East to an extent that they would not if someone else were occupying the Oval Office (for more elaboration on this point, see Guth 2006).

It is important to note, at this point, that we do not expect to observe an independent effect for religious “behaving.” That is, we do not expect religious devotionism, independent of biblical inerrancy or immersion in the evangelical culture, to be significantly associated with either nationalism or militarism. In fact, we suspect that such *non*traditionalistic Christian religiosity may be associated with *less* militarism, given (a) the history of pacifism within many expressions of Faith (both Christian and otherwise), and (b) Jesus’s own admonitions against violence as recorded in the gospels.

Cognitive Dogmatism and Hierarchical Visions of Authority

As we mentioned earlier, certain cognitive and psychological predispositions that are frequent corollaries of Christian traditionalism (while remaining conceptually distinct) have the potential to drive this process. First, Rokeach (1960) described a cognitive style or “mode of thought” (Brown 2004, 66) that is characterized by an intolerance of ambiguity and a cognitive process that is dichotomous, or essentially incapable of considering shades of gray. Such *cognitive dogmatism*, which may be critical to sustaining traditionalistic worldviews of any kind, may also encourage one to believe that: (a) one’s own nation must be inherently superior to others, simply because of the personal affect one attaches to it; and that

(b) nations with different perspectives—particularly if those nations are perceived as threatening one’s own—are not just incorrect, but evil, and cannot be tolerated.

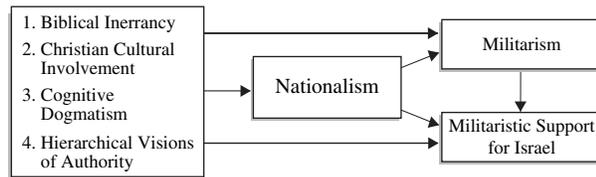
Second, scholars have repeatedly noted an association between fundamentalist religiosity and “authoritarianism”—an amalgamation of orientations that includes conventionalism, submission to authority, and a tendency to use authority punitively (Adorno et al. 1950).¹² Altemeyer (1996), for example, has consistently found that authoritarianism is correlated with orthodox Christian beliefs, adherence to childhood religion, and an active practice of faith (also see Leak and Randall 1995). There is, in fact, little in the way of scholarship that disputes this linkage.

Some scholars have considered hierarchical visions of parental authority as an indicator of authoritarianism that is exogenous to political attitudes (see, in particular, Stenner 2005). Whether one necessarily wants to label such visions “authoritarian” or not, they are widespread; some 49% of the U.S. public reports valuing obedience over self-reliance as admirable qualities in children (The National Election Study 2004). Furthermore, such visions have been shown to predict both (1) nationalism and (2) intolerance toward those perceived as foreign or inferior—particularly under conditions of perceived threat (Stenner 2005). It stands to reason, then, that a tendency to be aggressive toward those who are seen as different, inferior, and/or threatening could easily translate into the same tendency when thinking about foreign policy matters. That is, when such individuals perceive foreign nations (which would necessarily be inferior, in this worldview) to be threatening their beloved homeland, a militaristic response would naturally follow. Indeed, although they did not label it authoritarianism, Barker and Tinnick (2006) demonstrated that hierarchical visions of authority are strongly associated with positive affect toward the military and support for increased defense spending. Accordingly, it is imperative that influence attributable to such broad orientations be distinguished from that attributable to specific traditionalistic beliefs.

In sum, as Figure 1 depicts, we hypothesize that militaristic foreign policy postures can be predicted by: (1) end-times and covenant theologies, as manifested through a *belief* in biblical inerrancy, (2) opinion leadership via *belonging to* the traditionalistic Christian subculture, (3) cognitive dogmatism, and (4) hierarchical visions of authority. We further

¹²See, for example, Wulff (1991, Chap. 5) for a review of these studies.

FIGURE 1 ‘Messianic Militarism’: Paths of Influence



suggest that any of these relationships can also be observed indirectly, via a heightened sense of nationalism. Beyond that, we expect the influence of biblical inerrancy and cultural immersion to exert additional influence, beyond that attributable to militarism more generally, when applied specifically to the protection of Israel, because the particular doctrine in question (and contemporary discussion of it) is applied directly to this nation, and because of the personal affect evangelicals feel toward George W. Bush, whose presidency has been defined in terms of the “War on Terror (ism).”

Research Design and Methodology

In an effort to enhance design validity (see Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002), we tested our hypotheses by conducting two separate studies, using two sets of independently collected survey data—each with its own strengths. The primary strength of Study 1 lies with its measurement of key concepts (especially biblical inerrancy), while the key strength of Study 2 is the representativeness of the survey sample (given that it relies upon data from the 2004 American National Election Study). If the same patterns of findings emerge across the two studies, we will have traveled some distance toward demonstrating their robustness, thereby increasing our confidence in them. Due to space constraints, we focus here on Study 1. However, the full details of Study 2 can be found in the the online Appendix C at <http://journal-of-politics.org/articles.html>.

Study 1. In order to obtain more precise measures of some of these concepts than were available from

publicly accessible sources, we conducted a national, computer-assisted self interviewing (CASI) survey, administered via the internet by the Center for Social and Urban Research at the University of Pittsburgh.¹³ We purchased the sample ($n = 5,564$) from Survey Sampling International (SSI), whose Survey Spot Panel is generated to maximize response rate and generalizability,¹⁴ and is updated frequently in order to minimize testing effects associated with repeated survey responsiveness.¹⁵ The sample was stratified by 11 carefully chosen geographic regions and by population density, to ensure roughly equal numbers of urban and rural responses, from various parts of the country.¹⁶ The surveys were administered in October, 2004, to deliberately capture the context of the presidential campaign.

In analyzing the responses to this survey, we estimated a series of equations predicting four dependent variables: general militarism, militaristic support of Israel, nationalism, and the perceived relative salience of foreign policy issues and domestic policy issues to vote choice.¹⁷

Missing data of the typical variety were deleted using the listwise procedure, reducing our sample size to 4,063 (diagnostic tests reveal nothing systematic about these missing cases). However, because our survey instrument was administered via the internet, we had to consider the potential consequences of missing data resulting from selection effects. That is, in internet surveys, respondents can more easily terminate the survey without finishing it than is the case when interviews are conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. After taking into account such sample

¹⁴Still, we applied a weighting procedure to our data in order to match national ratios of men to women, drawn from U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

¹⁵Specifically, Survey Sampling, Inc. (SSI) draws the samples (given the regional and urban/rural parameters discussed above) from their national survey panel, contacts the potential respondents with an invitation to participate, and enters participants in a lottery run by SSI (this is similar to the methodology used by Harris Interactive, discussed in Alvarez, Sherman, and VanBesa-laere 2003).

¹⁶This stratification proceeded in two stages: first, roughly equal samples were drawn from each of the following cities: Seattle, Los Angeles, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Charlotte, and Philadelphia. Second, to ensure comparable numbers of rural and urban respondents, roughly equal samples were drawn from outside the MSA’s of each of those cities, but within the same states.

¹⁷To ward off any heteroskedasticity invited by our sampling strategy, we have calculated all standard errors using the Huber/White (robust) estimator of variance, with clustering according to the date of the survey interview (to control for campaign effects).

¹³The use of such samples is becoming much more common. For comparisons of the relative advantages and disadvantages of telephone and internet survey methods, see Krosnick and Chang (2001); Alvarez, Sherman, and VanBesa-laere (2003); Berrens et al. (2003).

mortality, we were left with a working sample size of 3,000–3,008, depending on the equation. To account for any potential biases that such voluntary termination could produce in terms of a correlation between characteristics that predict selection into the sample and the error terms of our regression equations, we chose to analyze these data using the selection modeling approach developed and refined by Heckman (1976). The online Appendix A provides the details of our selection procedure.

The Religious Determinants of General Militarism

Our first equation estimates a general posture toward militant internationalism. The exact wording of all measures are detailed in the online Appendix B. We measure this dependent variable by standardizing and summing two indicators: (1) respondents' readiness to support military action under different circumstances, and (2) preference for military strength versus diplomacy as the best way to handle international disputes (See Appendix B.A.1).

Independent variables: Religious. To capture adherence to doctrines pertaining to covenant theology and end-times visions (i.e., "believing"), we include a four-item measure of the degree to which respondents take the Bible to be inerrant and authoritative, even with regard to matters of history, science, and the future of the world (Appendix B.B.1). Many leading survey instruments of political attitudes (such as the American National Election Study) measure biblical literalism, as opposed to inerrancy, which fails to count many traditionalists who are not literalists (see Legee and Kellstedt 1993). We believe that our measure has the capacity to correct this systematic bias, and it is the opportunity to use this measure, more than any other, that prompted us to collect these new data.

Second, we measure Christian cultural involvement (i.e., "belonging," or exposure to opinion leadership) by including an *interaction* term that multiplies the biblical inerrancy variable described above and a dummy variable measuring whether respondents can correctly identify James Dobson as the leader of *Focus on the Family* (Appendix B.B.2). We assume that those who consider the Bible to be inerrant *and* who can correctly identify Dobson are most likely to be immersed in the culture and therefore exposed to opinion leadership from various sources. On the other hand, Dobson is such a prominent figure within the evangelical culture (but much less well-known outside the

culture, unlike Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell) that, if one cannot correctly identify Dobson, one is probably not an active part of the culture, and is thus less likely to be exposed to opinion leadership within that culture. Given the disparity in Dobson's celebrity within and beyond traditionalistic Christian networks, it is possible that this variable, by itself, could predict militarism.¹⁸ For this reason, as well as to achieve proper model specification, we also include the main effect Dobson variable in all of our models.¹⁹

We also consider it necessary to distinguish Christian *cultural* involvement from general religious commitment or devotionism—i.e., "behaving." Quite clearly, large numbers of individuals of all faiths frequently attend their houses of worship to express beliefs that are wholly separate from those of Christian traditionalism. We therefore quantify *religious devotionism* by summing two variables that measure church attendance and frequency of prayer (See Appendix B.B.3).

We do not, in the particular equations reported in this paper, include various interaction terms in order to reveal the multiplicative effects of believing, belonging, and behaving, conditional to one another, as is sometimes done in the literature. Our primary rationale for this decision is that our "belonging" variable is itself captured by an interaction term already. Given this, we cannot capture additional variance explained by the conditional effect of such belonging in conjunction with believing. However,

¹⁸Of course, some particularly attentive respondents will be able to identify Dobson, regardless of their involvement within the traditionalistic Christian culture. However, it is useful to note that the Pearson's correlation coefficients between knowledge of Dobson and typical measures of political knowledge are not strong: the average correlation between Dobson and the standard Delli Carpini and Keeter items is .05. More strikingly, knowledge of Dobson is significantly *negatively* associated with knowledge that the deficit had increased between 2000 and 2004 and correct identification of political tolerance, egalitarianism, and humanitarianism as liberal values.

¹⁹The use of a religious cultural knowledge question (Dobson identification), in conjunction with the belief variable, for the purpose of creating an interaction term that identifies immersion within traditionalistic culture, is admittedly unusual. Most studies have attempted to measure this concept directly, by asking respondents about their denominational affiliation. Unfortunately, our survey did not include such measures. However, as Corwin Smidt and others have shown, belonging to an evangelical denomination is not akin to "belonging" to the traditionalistic culture anyway, since the traditionalistic culture transcends church denomination. Accordingly, as Zaller (1996) has used knowledge items to improve measurement of media exposure, we use a religious cultural knowledge question to improve our measure of cultural immersion (by combining it with belief). At any rate, Study 2 uses the standard measure of evangelical identity and results across the two studies are quite comparable.

we should note that, as a robustness check, we have estimated the equations with all relevant interactions between the religious variables, and neither the substance nor statistical significance of our results is affected by these alternate modeling strategies.

Independent Variables: Cognitive/Psychological. In order to distinguish a belief in biblical inerrancy from its broader cognitive and/or personality-based corollaries, we include two additional measures. First, we measure *cognitive dogmatism* by summing responses to two survey questions: (a) whether morality is absolute or can change with the times, and (b) whether morality is simple and already known or complex and sometimes difficult to discern (Appendix B.B.4).

Second, following Barker and Tinnick (2006) and Stenner (2005), we measure *Hierarchical Visions of Authority* with a factor score index of three items, each of which is designed to assess the degree to which respondents believe that obedience, respect, and discipline are among the most important virtues that children should be taught (Appendix B.B.5).

Intervening Variable: Nationalism. Recall that we seek to distinguish the direct effects of these religious and cognitive variables from the indirect effects that may be filtered through nationalism—which we measure by asking individuals whether “other nations should try to make themselves as much like the U.S. as possible” (Appendix B.A.3).

Controls. First, because our primary theoretical interest is in understanding variance in a generalizable tendency toward militant internationalism, rather than just specific feelings pertaining to the Iraq conflict or even the embrace of Israel, we include two variables designed to control for those specific attitudes. First, we include a measure of the degree to which respondents report feeling shame in response to learning that the U.S. military tortured Iraqi prisoners. We suspect that those who harbor animosity toward Arabs or Iraqis in particular, for any reason, are less likely to feel shame over their mistreatment by U.S. soldiers (Appendix B.B.6), which, without this control, would likely be captured as greater militarism.

Second, we include a measure of general isolationism-interventionism regarding Israel, measured by asking respondents about the degree to which they think the United States should spend time “worrying about Israel.” Again, without this control, those whose foreign policy interest is limited to a concern over Israel could be captured as militaristic by our general measure, which would represent a systematic bias (Appendix B.B.7).

Third, we control for the party ID heuristic (Appendix B.B.8). Indeed, especially within the con-

text of a presidential campaign, respondents may take militaristic positions not because of traditionalistic beliefs but, instead, because such perspectives have become dominant within the Republican Party, and traditionalists may have built-up affect for that party or, in particular, its leaders (such as President Bush). Of course, given that for many voters, Christian traditionalism likely drives party attachment at least to some extent, including this control provides a particularly stringent test of our hypotheses, and probably means that the relationships we observe will be somewhat biased toward the null hypothesis.²⁰

In the same vein, because Christian traditionalists have been shown to be, on average, disproportionately older, southern, rural, and less educated than other Americans, we also include measures of these variables in our models, to account for any spurious influence that they might introduce (Appendix B.B.9–12). Furthermore, because African Americans are disproportionately evangelical, but tend to emphasize a somewhat different set of doctrinal beliefs than do white traditionalists (namely, that of “liberation theology”), we also include a measure of African-American identity (Appendix B.B.13). Additionally, because females have been shown to be disproportionately religious (but not necessarily traditionalistic, see Corbett and Corbett 1999), while less militaristic (e.g., Holsti 2004), we include a control for gender identity (Appendix B.B.14). Finally, to account for the fact that, in 2004, opposition to the war in Iraq was shown to be significantly associated with political sophistication (Kull, Ramsey, and Lewis 2004), we include a measure of this variable to further account for any influence particular to the 2004 context (Appendix B.B.15).

Results

Table 1 displays the results of our equation predicting general militarism. First, the Wald test of independent equations reveals that the Heckman procedure was warranted. Although the Heckman procedure estimates relationships using Maximum Likelihood Estimation, it assumes normally distributed

²⁰Similarly, citizens may use ideological identification as a heuristic. Our survey did not include measures of ideological identification, but when we include controls for attitudes towards cultural issues such as abortion, our results do not differ appreciably. We decided to report results without these controls, because there is no theoretical reason (that we know of) to suspect that such attitudes, without the intervening variables of party identification or ideological identity, should predict any of our dependent variables. Furthermore, when we add ideological identification to the models in Study 2, the results do not change.

TABLE 1 Predicting Nationalism, Militarism, and Militaristic Support for Israel from Christian Traditionalism, Corollaries, and Controls

Independent Variables:	Militarism		Milit. – Israel		Nationalism	
	Coeff.	S.E.^	Coeff.	S.E.^	Coeff. (S.E.^)	Odds Ratio
Militarism	-	-	0.367	0.042*	-	-
Nationalism	0.112	0.016*	0.178	0.036*	-	-
Biblical Inerrancy	0.041	0.021*	0.206	0.039*	0.072(0.026)*	1.284
Correct I.D. of Dobson	0.084	0.037*	0.120	0.074	0.029(0.085)	1.061
Inerrancy*Dobson	-0.029	0.031	0.199	0.076*	-0.045(0.035)	0.899
Devotionalism	-0.009	0.007	0.034	0.014*	-0.006(0.007)	0.969
Cognitive Dogmatism	0.107	0.028*	0.150	0.036*	0.093(0.023)*	1.187
Hierarchical Authority	0.073	0.024*	0.063	0.040	0.087(0.028)*	1.302
Concern for Israel	0.156	0.026*	-	-	-	-
Anti-Iraqi Sentiment	0.214	0.018*	0.019	0.028	-	-
Party ID (GOP)	0.188	0.007*	0.038	0.018*	0.042(0.013)*	1.136
Year of Birth	-0.002	0.001*	0.003	0.001*	0.002(0.001)*	1.005
South	-0.005	0.043	-0.023	0.060	0.028(0.026)	1.055
Urban/Rural	0.053	0.019*	0.035	0.037	0.033(0.013)	0.996
Education	0.022	0.014	-0.063	0.026*	-0.021(0.011)*	0.942
African American	-0.008	0.096	-0.296	0.124*	-0.016(0.099)	0.937
Female	-0.133	0.033*	-0.130	0.053*	-0.164(0.033)*	0.614
Political Knowledge	-0.006	0.009	-0.036	0.018*	-0.060(0.011)*	0.848
Jewish Identity	-	-	1.849	0.158*	-	-
Anti-Semitism	-	-	-0.347	0.041*	-	-
Constant	5.361	2.057*	-1.275	3.808	-2.618(1.850)	
Working N	3003		3000		3005	
Censored N	1058		1058		1058	
Log Pseudo-likelihood	-230275.3		-295767.6		-220768.3	
Selection Equation:						
Biblical Inerrancy	-0.035	0.012*	-0.027	0.011*		
Christian Cultural Involvement	0.003	0.059	0.014	0.058		
Cognitive Dogmatism	-0.070	0.019*	-0.047	0.017*		
Hierarchical Authority	0.022	0.024	0.010	0.024		
Year of Birth	-0.001	0.001	-0.000	0.001		
South	0.160	0.039*	0.159	0.037*		
Urban/Rural	-0.073	0.072	-0.076	0.074		
Education	0.011	0.008	0.019	0.009*		
African American	-0.167	0.086*	-0.170	0.082*		
Female	-0.111	0.041*	-0.130	0.032*		
Political Knowledge	0.001	0.012	0.012	0.011		
Likelihood of Voting	0.157	0.020*	0.153	0.018*		
Unemployed	0.007	0.023	0.009	0.021		
Homemaker	0.012	0.491	-0.024	0.054		
Student	-0.199	0.069*	-0.137	0.072*		
Household Income	0.021	0.008*	0.005	0.008		
Constant	1.818	2.164	0.858	1.688		
Wald Test of Indep. Eq.	23.04*		13.55*			

Source: 2004 U.S. Political Culture Survey
 *p ≤ .05, ^ Huber/White (“robust”) standard errors.

error-terms and therefore uses an identity-link function, meaning that the coefficients can be interpreted as marginal effects. As the coefficients and standard

errors associated with biblical inerrancy, cognitive dogmatism, and hierarchical visions of authority indicate, all three of these variables are positively

and significantly associated with militarism, providing support for our hypotheses relating to each of these variables.

To facilitate comparison of the predictive strength of our independent variables of interest, we have standardized the biblical inerrancy, dogmatism, hierarchical authority, and nationalism variables (we have not standardized the Dobson variable, since it does not make sense with a dichotomous measure). Since none of these variables is terribly skewed, and since the dependent variable is also a standardized index, interpreting the substantive strength of the coefficients is relatively straightforward, accomplished by first multiplying the coefficients as they are reported in the table by the range of the scale and then comparing them directly. In this regard, a four standard deviation increase in biblical inerrancy (moving from the 5th percentile to the 95th percentile), corresponds to a .16 standard deviation increase in estimated militarism (among those who cannot correctly identify James Dobson). By comparison, the same increases in hierarchical authority and dogmatism correspond to a .29 and .44 standard deviation increase in militarism, respectively. Thus, in terms of substantive significance, we can see that these cognitive or psychological orientations, which have nothing to do with the specifics of Christian doctrine, are stronger independent predictors of militarism than is the doctrine itself, *ceteris paribus*.

Interestingly, correct identification of Dobson as the leader of *Focus on the Family* is also significantly related to militaristic attitudes (though the substantive strength of the relationship is not as great as that of the other variables). Given the presence of the interaction term in the models, this measure captures the influence of knowing who Dobson is among those who do not consider the Bible to be of exceptional spiritual standing (those whose scores on the biblical inerrancy variable fall at the mean)—making the finding somewhat surprising. We can only speculate as to the theoretical significance of this relationship, but perhaps it is the case that some people, because of family or other personal relationships, are exposed to the conservative Christian culture—and therefore subject to its influence regarding political matters—without buying into biblical inerrancy.

On the other hand, correct identification of Dobson as the leader of *Focus on the Family* does not affect the relationship between biblical inerrancy and militarism (as indicated by the insignificant interaction term), suggesting that whatever independent effects these variables have on generalized militarism, they are not multiplicative; traditionalists do not need

opinion leaders to prime hawkish postures, but religious opinion leaders may inspire such postures among others who would not otherwise hold them.

When it comes to the impact of religious devotionism, independent of that corresponding to exposure to Christian culture, devotional activities such as church attendance and prayer appear as though they might actually correspond to a tendency toward pacifism and diplomacy (though this relationship is only significant at the .10 level, in a one-tailed test). Much like Martin Luther King and Gandhi credited their study of the life of Jesus as inspiring their civil disobedience movements, perhaps devoted mainline Protestants and others of different faith traditions identify more with the Jesus who “turns the other cheek” than the one who crushes the “grapes of wrath.” It is also worth noting that our devotionism index clearly measures something different from that captured by correct identification of Dobson. Indeed, in alternate specifications estimated as a check for robustness, in which the Dobson variable was omitted, the religious devotionism variable *always* bears a negative independent relationship to foreign policy militarism.

As expected, concern for Israel, indifference toward Iraqi prisoners, Republican Party identification, age, male gender, and living in small towns or rural areas are all strongly predictive of greater militarism, and education is slightly predictive. However, race, political knowledge, and southern region do not bear any statistical relationship to the dependent variable.

The findings discussed heretofore depict the *direct* relationships between the elements of Christian fundamentalism and a general posture toward foreign policy militarism, controlling for various potential confounds. However, one more relationship bears special emphasis. Recall our hypothesis that Christian traditionalism and its psychological corollaries also engender militarism indirectly, by first provoking greater nationalism. This equation also reveals a necessary link in that causal chain, demonstrating that nationalism bears a very strong relation to militarism (corroborating Hurwitz and Peffley’s earlier [1987] finding). Specifically, a four standard deviation increase in nationalism corresponds to a .44 standard deviation increase in estimated militarism, making the nationalism variable comparable to moral dogmatism in terms of predictive strength.

The Religious Determinants of Militaristic Support for Israel

Although our primary interest is in understanding the relationships between Christian Traditionalism

(and its corollaries) and a general posture toward international conflict, we also have an applied interest in the relationships as they pertain specifically to the Middle East, and especially Israel, given its centrality to covenant theology, to end-times theology, and to contemporary foreign policy. Hence, the equation displayed in Table 2 narrows the application of militarism to the particular case of

Israel. Specifically, we ask respondents to indicate the degree to which the United States has a responsibility toward Israel in its conflicts with Arabs and others in the Middle East (Appendix B.A.2). Recall that we expect Christian traditionalists—especially those immersed in the culture—to be even more militaristic than normal when considering the specific case of Israel. However, we do not necessarily expect dogmatism or hierarchical visions of authority to bear significant relation to support for Israel, once the more generalized tendency toward militarism is controlled.

The independent variables in this equation are identical to those in the previous equation, with three exceptions: first, we incorporate general militarism as an additional predictor, for the reasons described above; second, because we are predicting attitudes toward Israel, we include measures of Jewish identity and Anti-Semitism (Appendix B.B.16, 17); and third, because our dependent variable now concerns Israel and because we obviously do not want to control for specific orientations toward that state, we have omitted the *Concern for Israel* variable from the previous equation. We do, however, leave in the variable measuring Anti-Iraqi Sentiment, so as to isolate genuine concern for Israel from some more general antipathy toward Arabs.

Table 2 displays the results of this analysis. First, as was the case in the previous equation, the Wald test of independent equations reveals that the selection process did have a systematic component, justifying our concerns in that regard. Substantively, as expected, militarism, nationalism, and biblical inerrancy all bear significant positive relationships with militaristic support for Israel. The performance of biblical inerrancy is particularly impressive, given the strong relationship already revealed between it and general militarism. Furthermore, as we hypothesized, the size of this relationship relative to the other predictors is much greater than it was in the general equation; a four standard deviation change in biblical inerrancy corresponds to a .53 standard deviation change (a .84 unit change) in militaristic support for Israel. By contrast, a four standard deviation increase in dogmatism corresponds to a .39 standard deviation change in support for Israel, and a four standard deviation increase in hierarchical visions of authority corresponds to a .16 standard deviation increase in support of Israel, a relationship that is, at best, marginally significant, statistically speaking. As expected, therefore, a belief in inerrancy translates into a heightened level of militaristic support in the particular case of Israel.

TABLE 2 Estimating Foreign Policy Salience to Vote Choice from Elements of Christian Fundamentalism and Controls

Independent Variables:	Coeff.	S.E.[^]
Biblical Inerrancy	0.135	0.073*
Correct I.D. of Dobson	-0.080	0.205
Inerrancy*Dobson	-0.000	0.106
Devotionalism	0.009	0.016
Cognitive Dogmatism	0.030	0.042
Hierarchical Authority	0.030	0.077
Party Identification (GOP)	0.162	0.018*
Year of Birth	-0.013	0.001*
South	0.015	0.081
Urban/Rural	-0.019	0.036
Education	0.073	0.028*
African American	-0.867	0.164*
Female	-0.013	0.081
Political Knowledge	0.041	0.016*
Constant	29.423	3.595*
Working N	3002	
Censored N	1058	
Log Pseudo-likelihood	-331216.2	
Selection Equation:		
Biblical Inerrancy	-0.027	0.011*
Christian Cultural Involvement	0.010	0.062
Cognitive Dogmatism	-0.054	0.017*
Hierarchical Authority	0.022	0.025
Year of Birth	-0.000	0.001
South	0.161	0.037*
Urban/Rural	-0.077	0.073
Education	0.021	0.011*
African American	-0.175	0.086*
Female	-0.113	0.034*
Political Knowledge	0.008	0.011
Likelihood of Voting	0.156	0.016*
Unemployed	0.007	0.021
Homemaker	-0.016	0.037
Student	-0.181	0.059*
Household Income	0.010	0.009
Constant	0.942	1.773
Wald Test of Indep. Equations	3.09*	

Source: 2004 U.S. Political Culture Survey
 *p≤.05, ^ Huber/White (“robust”) standard errors.

The finding that cognitive dogmatism significantly predicts unflinching support of Israel, independent of general militarism, was not anticipated. Given that this sample is comprised entirely of U.S. citizens, and the U.S. perspective toward Israel, historically, has been supportive of that nation, perhaps dogmatists of all stripes are more inclined to advocate “unflinching” support.

So far, we have observed that, as expected, the capacity of biblical inerrancy to predict militaristic attitudes is much greater, relative to dogmatism or hierarchical visions of authority, when the conflict in question pertains to Israel. However, the most striking finding revealed by this equation is that the predictive capacity of biblical inerrancy *doubles among those who can correctly identify James Dobson*, suggesting that exposure to Christian culture matters when it comes to specific issues that are addressed at length within that culture. This finding is consistent with the work of Krosnick and Telhami (1995), who found that citizens attitudes regarding Israel are quite different when they are part of an Israel issue public than when they are not, regardless of their degree of political attentiveness overall.

We also see that, consistent with the previous equation predicting general militarism, knowledge of Dobson acts as a marginally significant predictor, even by itself. However, in contrast to the previous equation, religious devotionism is also independently associated with militant support for Israel. We consider it possible that this relationship could also be a function of culture, in that many active Christians who do not personally view the Bible as inerrant, and who may not be involved *enough* to recognize Dobson, may still pick up cues about the importance of Israel from casual conversations and observance of Christian radio, publishing, and the like. However, this explanation is merely speculative.

As for the other variables in the model, with regard to the variables unique to this equation, it is not surprising that Jewish Identity is strongly associated with militaristic support of Israel, while anti-Semitism is negatively associated. As for the variables found in both equations, the relationships follow the same general pattern as those observed in the previous equation, with a few exceptions. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these exceptions pertains to the effect of sophistication. Both measures of this concept—education and political knowledge—are negatively associated with “unflinching” support for Israel, suggesting that greater sophistication enables a more nuanced understanding of the conflict, which may breed a more evenhanded attitude.

Indirect Effects: The Religious Determinants of Nationalism

In terms of the indirect effects of Christian traditionalism, via nationalism, we have already observed that nationalism bears a strong relationship with militarism, both generally and specifically in the defense of Israel. However, it remains to be seen whether nationalism can be predicted by biblical inerrancy, cultural immersion, dogmatism, or hierarchical visions of authority.

Accordingly, this equation mirrors that predicting general militarism, absent the variables designed to control for attitudes toward Iraqis or Israel. Column 3 of Table 1 displays the results of this analysis. As the coefficient for the Wald test at the bottom of the first column shows, the selection equation was not significant in this case, indicating that the variables predicting selection into the sample would not have biased the coefficients in the main equation. This finding is fortuitous for us methodologically, because it enables us to estimate the equation directly, using a more appropriate link function for dependent variables with only four ordered categories, such as this one.

Accordingly, the table presents the coefficients using ordered logistic regression, displayed in terms of the change in the odds of a respondent occupying any higher category of the dependent variable, relative to any lower category, for a one-unit change in the independent variable (see Long 1997 for a good discussion of the relative merits of using odds ratios, relative to predicted probabilities, to display results of ordered logit equations). These odds ratios reveal that biblical inerrancy, cognitive dogmatism, and hierarchical visions of authority are all significant predictors of nationalism. In terms of relative strength, biblical inerrancy and hierarchical visions of authority are roughly equal; a one standard deviation increase in either is associated with an increase in the odds of being in a higher category of nationalism by a factor of 28–30% (i.e., the odds are 1.28 to one and 1.30 to one, respectively), holding all other variables in the equation at their means. The strength of the dogmatism variable is somewhat weaker: a one standard deviation increase is associated with an increase in the odds ratio by a factor of about 19%. Still, given the presence of multicollinearity in the model, we do not consider this difference to be of great enough magnitude to say, definitively, that dogmatism is a demonstrably weaker predictor than the other two variables.

Thus, it appears that Christian traditionalism and its corollaries can help to explain militaristic postures not only directly but indirectly as well, through the

embrace of American exceptionalism. On the other hand, the exposure to evangelical Christian culture, as captured by the interaction between biblical inerrancy and the correct identification of James Dobson, neither enhances or diminishes this basic relationship. Furthermore, unlike each of the last two equations, the Dobson variable does not, by itself, bear relation to the dependent variable. However, as was the case in the general militarism equation, religious devotionalism, as distinct from any of the elements of fundamentalism, is marginally associated with *less* nationalism.

Not surprisingly, Republicans appear more nationalistic, on average, than Democrats. Moreover, education, political knowledge, female gender, and age are all *negatively* associated with the belief that other countries should try to imitate the United States as much as possible.

Summarizing the Dynamics of “Messianic Militarism”

To recapitulate, our key findings are that even after controlling for orientations such as cognitive dogmatism, hierarchical visions of authority, devotionalism, immersion in evangelical culture, attitudes toward the Middle East, and party identification (many of which are probably endogenous to traditionalistic belief), traditionalistic Christian “believing” is significantly associated with nationalistic fervor, which in-turn predicts militarism—both generally and in the specific defense of Israel. Furthermore, traditionalistic belief also predicts militarism directly, even while controlling for nationalism. Because the estimators and selection procedures are not consistent across these models, we cannot multiply and sum coefficients in order to obtain comparisons of the direct, indirect, and total effects of these variables. However, characteristics of the data used in Study 2 enable these calculations. Thus, the full path model is discussed in detail in our presentation of that analysis, which can be found online at <http://journalofpolitics.org/articles.html>.

Relevance: The Religious Determinants of Foreign Policy Salience

If these foreign policy beliefs, which we have shown to be driven in part by elements of Christian traditionalism, are really an important front in the Culture Wars, it is essential to demonstrate that traditionalists actually take foreign policy into account when decid-

ing for whom to vote. Toward this end, we estimate, in the final equation, the degree to which respondents see foreign policy or domestic policy as more important to their presidential vote choice (Appendix B.A.4). If the variance in such priorities can be predicted by traditionalistic belief, we will have found evidence that foreign policy attitudes are not an afterthought to the “religious right,” but rather form a central component of their agenda.

The specification of this equation is identical to that predicting nationalism. First, as was the case in our first two equations, the Wald test demonstrates that the selection process was systematic, and therefore the Heckman procedure was needed. As for the main equation, biblical inerrancy is significantly associated with considering foreign policy to be more important than domestic policy, but none of the other corollaries of traditionalism demonstrate any predictive capacity. Therefore, it appears that 2004’s “moral values” voters and “security moms” were not mutually exclusive categories, but that this association is driven by particular beliefs, and not necessarily cognitive habits, psychological constructs, or social networks. These findings further suggest that the surge of traditionalistic Christians into the Republican Party over the past 30 years, which has given rise to the “religious right,” may have been driven by more than just gender politics and/or matters pertaining to the separation of church and state.

Conclusions

At the most cursory level, our story is a relatively simple one: the single most important dimension in an individual’s foreign policy belief system is militarism, and religious beliefs appear to play a profound role in shaping a militaristic posture. Using a large N internet survey, questions specifically formulated for the purpose at hand, and recent data, we have determined that evangelical doctrine is strongly associated with militarism, both directly (presumably by generating beliefs in the morality of war) and indirectly, by prompting greater nationalism—even after controlling for a variety of related influences. We have also found that individuals who profess the inerrancy of the Bible are particularly militaristic when it comes to the defense of Israel—beyond that which can be predicted from generalized militarism. Finally, these Christians attach a higher priority to foreign policy in their vote calculi than do non-traditionalistic Christians and non-Christians.

Beneath this veneer of religious doctrine, however, is a more nuanced view of the numerous ways in which religion may play a role in the political choices that citizens make. For, just like any other communication, religion involves a message (the religious doctrine), a messenger (those who deliver the message, whether directly or vicariously), and a recipient (or the characteristics of the individuals who process the doctrine). And, just as we have argued that the properties of the message are important determinants of foreign policy opinionation, so, too, are the properties of the messenger and of the recipient.

While an immersion in evangelical Christian culture (at least as measured by recognition of James Dobson) does not appear to heighten the importance of the religious doctrine as a determinant of militaristic or nationalistic beliefs, generally (or, for that matter, of the importance of foreign policy in the vote decision), it does strongly enhance Christian traditionalists' tendency to advocate an aggressive military defense of Israel—even beyond that inspired by generalized militarism or nationalism.

We find, additionally, that the cognitive styles of recipients also matter. Specifically, our evidence points to the conclusion that those who are highly dogmatic and those who attach a high priority to discipline are far more militaristic in their beliefs (in fact, these variables are stronger direct predictors than is biblical inerrancy). We also find that a disciplinary vision of authority (and, to a somewhat lesser extent, dogmatism) underlies nationalistic beliefs, as well as militaristic support for Israel. However, in this case, these predictors do not perform as well as belief in biblical inerrancy.

We also contend that this paper fits nicely into the public opinion and foreign policy literature, expanding our understanding of militarism (and, to a lesser degree, nationalism) as both independent and dependent variables. As an independent variable, we have looked closely at the impact of these abstract postures on the specific policy of Israel and on the vote decision. A far more important contribution, however, is the exploration of general militarism as a dependent variable—something that has been essentially ignored in the extant literature. While the importance of militarism (or militant internationalism) has long been acknowledged, virtually no one has examined the antecedents of this abstract belief.²¹ And our evidence demonstrates clearly that the

numerous dimensions of religion constrain the militaristic beliefs of our respondents.

We have also, in this paper, taken the important step of demonstrating the *importance* of foreign policy beliefs. Too often, public opinion research is truncated by its failure to address the “so what” question or to dig beyond the analysis of attitudes and beliefs and explore their importance in a political context. We have attempted to take this step and, in Table 2, demonstrate that traditionalistic believers are more likely, relative to individuals without such an orientation, to base their vote choices on matters of foreign policy—even in the face of stringent controls.

In the end, we are in fundamental agreement with a host of scholars and commentators who take it as a matter of faith (no pun intended) that religion is playing an increasingly greater role in U.S. electoral politics. Where we disagree, however, is in our emphasis of the correlates and consequences of such religious perspectives. The “red state” versus “blue state” dichotomy has been assumed to capture the domestic cultural views of the respective citizens. Quite simply, those from the Northeast and the West Coast have been more accepting of legalized abortion, gay rights, school prayer, “right-to-die” laws, and a generalized separation of church and state relative to those in the South and most places in the Midwest. Unsurprisingly, traditionalistic Christians live disproportionately in the South and Midwest, leading many to assume that religious orientations translate into electoral choices largely because such traditionalists advocate socially conservative domestic policies, as do most Republican candidates. We do not dispute this basic argument.

Our results, however, offer strong evidence that traditionalism plays an enormously important role in shaping the foreign policy belief systems of citizens as well. Furthermore, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which served to make terrorism (and foreign policy in general) much more salient to everyone, foreign policy concerns have become even more critical to the vote decisions cast by traditionalists than by others.

In short, we do not doubt that religion has helped shape the electoral choices made by citizens and, further, that many of these choices are influenced by the stands that candidates take on a host of domestic cultural concerns, ranging from abortion to gay rights to school prayer. These matters have in all likelihood contributed greatly to the reconfiguration of the electoral map that we have observed over the last 25 years. At the same time, however, we do not believe the story ends there. Whether revealed in ardent

²¹Although Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) argued that core values such as the morality of warfare and ethnocentrism constrain militarism, such an argument begs the question: what are the determinants of these core values?

anticommunism during the 1950s, backing for the Vietnam War in the 1960's, endorsement of the defense build-up and aggressive foreign policy posturing of the 1980s, or stalwart support for both Gulf Wars, evangelicals and other traditionalistic Christians have been more likely than other Americans to view the international interests of the United States as divinely inspired, and the hawkish pursuit of those interests as not only justified but perhaps demanded by God.

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