

Presidential Use of Divine Election Cues in Foreign Policy Crises

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By

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Abstract

How can the power of religion be used for political ends? In this project, I explore how US presidential use of divine election cues activates the otherwise latent power of religion to mobilize greater foreign policy support in domestic audiences. Combining insights from religious studies, presidential communication studies, and political science, I argue that presidents' use of religious rhetorics are foreign policy cues that shape how publics understand and construct attitudes about foreign policy. However not all types of religious rhetorics are effective foreign policy cues. I focus on divine election rhetoric that claims God is on America's side, God has uniquely blessed America to be His agent in the world, and America has a religious obligation to bring about God's will in the world. When presidents use these types of divine election cues, they increase the geostrategic salience of the crisis and expectations of success. These framing effects then produce mobilization effects and higher public support for the president's foreign policy agenda. Divine election cues use religious framing and are thus more effective among religious Americans. Since there are religious Americans across the partisan spectrum, I expect the use of divine election cues can mobilize both co-partisans from the President's party *and* contra-partisans otherwise opposed to the President. Using an original dataset on presidential religious rhetoric and an original compilation of all foreign policy polls fielded during US foreign policy crises from 1946 to 2006, I find robust historical

evidence that presidential use of divine election cues do mobilize co-partisans and contra-partisans. These findings are corroborated by a survey experiment that identify the framing effects of the divine election mechanism and further evidence of the co-partisan and contra-partisan mobilization effects of divine election cues. Finally, I conclude by discussing how my empirical findings can inform and inspire further research on the role and influence of religion in international politics.

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Chapter 1: Religion and International Politics

Religion and International Politics

Does religion affect foreign policy and international politics? The history of the 20th and early 21st century certainly suggests that religion matters and has significant effects on political actors, behaviors, processes, and outcomes. On the eve of German and American involvement in World War One, Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1914 and President Woodrow Wilson in 1917 respectively issued national proclamations of prayer to beseech God for His empowering and blessing. In the buildup to World War Two, the Nazis constructed a political religion that combined Christian liturgy and rhetoric with a secular deification of the Reich. During the Cold War, the Truman and Eisenhower presidencies worked tirelessly to redefine conflict against the Soviet Union not just as a strategic contest, but an existential battle between good and evil. More recently, religion has been a potent force in non-state or sub-state political violence, used to motivate and justify rebellions, insurgencies, terrorism, and civil wars in places as diverse as Latin America, the former Soviet bloc, Africa, and the Middle East.

While 20th century classical realists like Hans Morgenthau (1965) and Reinhold Niebuhr (2002) argue that religion has significant effects on world politics and statecraft,

only recently have political scientists studied religion's effects on international political processes, behaviors, and outcomes. Scholars claiming the renaissance in the study of religion and international politics argue religion has returned from "exile" into mainstream political science (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003), political science has rediscovered the impact of faith and religion (Philpott 2009; Wald and Wilcox 2006), and proclaim the 21st century as "God's Century" (Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011). Increasingly, the debate is not whether religion matters in international politics but how it matter; as Bellin (2008) argues, research on religion and politics should be focused less on advocating "a paradigm shift in international relations [and] get on with the project of puzzle-driven research [asking] when and how religion matters in international affairs" (316).

Argument

The motivating research question of this project is how the invocation of religion changes how domestic audiences perceive and construct their foreign policy attitudes. While religion has potential political power, it only affects foreign policy and international politics when activated. One way that the power of religion can be unleashed is through political elites' use of religious rhetoric. By framing and imbuing foreign policy with religious meanings and significant, leaders can (re)shape how domestic audiences understand the crisis. Effective religious framing borrows or (mis)uses the legitimating and motivational power of religion to mobilize greater foreign policy support for leaders' foreign policy objectives. Focusing on the United States and how US presidents have used a specific type of religious rhetoric, divine election rhetoric, I will show how presidential use of divine election cues in foreign policy crises

from 1946 to 2006 increased support for the president's foreign policy agenda. Analysis of historical foreign policy polls fielded during crises reveal empirical evidence of the mobilization power of divine election cues. I also use a survey experiment to further test the divine election cue mobilization mechanism.

In this introductory chapter, I survey claims about the political power of religion and the existing international relations literature exploring religion's effects on international political processes and outcomes. Most existing studies of religion and international politics conceptualize, operationalize, and measure actors' religion or religiosity based on their religious demographics. Not only does this make religion a static independent variable, since religious demographics remain largely unchanged in the post-World War Two era, it also implies that religion always has effects on politics. However, religion is latent unless activated. While religious demographics may reflect the potential power of religion, it cannot explain when religion matters or how it is activated. While religion can be activated in different ways, I focus on one, the religious rhetoric mechanism. To test the empirical power of religious rhetoric, I examine how US presidents have used religious rhetoric during foreign policy crises. After situating my research with the existing literature on religion's role in American politics and American foreign policy, I summarize how I will empirically test my argument about political power of religious rhetoric.

The Political Power of Religion

What is the political power of religion? At a fundamental level, if politics is "the sphere of contest over the determination of values and wills" (Williams 2004, 643), religious worldviews and belongings influence how actors interpret and understand their

political identities, preferences, beliefs, and behavior. Religion and the “revelation of a sacred space makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity, to “found the world” and to live in a real sense” (Eliade 1987, 23). If politics is a constant struggle and (re)definition of presuppositions, values, and preferences, religion can be an essential anchor that provides reference points for the faithful. Indeed, “by *locating* [social and political life] within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference” (Berger 1990, 33), religion gives the faithful much-needed ontological certainty as they navigate their ever changing social and political life. By structuring the world through the lenses of the sacred, religion provides “cognitive structures in which individual and collective political preferences are formed” (Wilcox, Wald, and Jelen 2008, 878). Religious worldviews and expectations also define “rules concerning how individuals are to transact social, political, and economic business, and identifies “friend” and “enemy” according to its criteria” (Seiple and Hoover 2004, 21). They provide insights if not normative imperatives for action. When considering the range of available strategies and behaviors, the faithful often draws on “information from the worldview contained in a particular religion [for] guidance for ethical action” (Warner and Walker 2011, 118).

While serving as individual and social references, religion can also be (mis)used as a political instrument of power. As religious appeals “to supra-human and transcendent authority [can be] the ultimate legitimation to temporal political power” (Urban 2005, 7249), so political actors may invoke religion to justify political objectives, mobilize religious communities, and coerce otherwise unobtainable political outcomes. First, it can mobilize collective action. Since “there is few human action which cannot be

justified [or] clothed by religion in garments of divine magnificence and given the prestige of the absolute” (Niebuhr 2002, 52), religion is a useful way to persuade, justify, or coerce otherwise reluctant actors to take political action. The imbuing of politics with religious significance changes how the faithful interpret their political obligation. Religious entrepreneurs transform “the perception and definition of objects and activities [as] things sacralized may become the most important things to attend to and given highest priority in collective undertakings” (Tiryakian 1982, 359). By injecting politics with sacred meanings, political actors use religion to “claim general and universally valid objectives for the nation...in order to secure the highest devotion from the citizens for his enterprises” (Niebuhr 2002, 97). Claiming the religious high ground, political actors can claim for themselves “a transcendent authority that trump all others” (Zulick 2009, 135) and endow their political agenda with “an uncontested superiority over competing claims” (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003, 121). The intentional sacredlization of politics also overcomes collective action problems. As a particular political agenda or objective is sacredlized, it becomes a focal point that “holds together coalitions whose constituents’ interests are similar but not identical” (Philpott 2001, 67).

Religion can be used to justify and motivate all types of political action.

However, its justification and motivation powers are especially salient when justifying violence and the use of force.¹ While there is debate how unique “religious” versus “secular” motivations of violence are,² there are different causal pathways in which

¹ There is also significant research exploring how religion can produce and promote peace. For example, local religious actors who teach God as the sovereign and final Judge who will redress all injustice can motivate warring religious communities to stop the cycle of violence (Volf 1996).

² Cavanaugh (2009) argues that the concept of religiously motivated violence is a myth because there is no substantive difference in “religious” or “non-religious” justifications for the use of force. Instead, claims that religion “causes” violence are normatively motivated. As he argues, “violence that is labeled religious is always peculiarly virulent and reprehensible. But violence that is labeled secular hardly counts as

religion can be used to justify violence and the use of force. For example, “whenever a society must motivate its members to kill or to risk their lives, thus consenting to be placed in extreme marginal situations, religious legitimations become important” (Berger 1990, 44). A fundamental challenge in motivating the use of force is to overcome individuals’ rational fear of death. Religion can overcome these fears by contextualizing death within a grander cosmic history and sacred reward (Juergensmeyer 2003). When the faithful are convinced that the risks they take on are not senseless but in pursuit of sacred ends, they are willing to “give everything and fear nothing even if they have to pay the price of grief or death for their loyalty” (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2000, 656). This has the effect of reorienting individuals’ and communities’ risk tolerances. It does not necessarily make political actors irrational. If even in the extreme example of suicide terrorism religiously-motivated terrorists are rational in responding to incentives if devaluing their narrow self-interest of survival (Caplan 2006), the invocation of religion in politics leads to an updating of political preferences and not the abrogation of rational decisionmaking.

This is not to say that religion cannot be abused or manipulated for political ends. There is evidence to suggest that religiously-motivated political mobilization is more effective among domestic audiences with low religious knowledge. Since efforts to use religion to mobilize violence must reject the nuance if not tensions in how religious traditions both justify violence and promote peace, they are most effective among the ill-informed believers. They are more likely to be “misguided in their religious zeal and

violence at all, since it is inherently peace making. Secular violence is often necessary and sometimes praiseworthy, especially when it is used to quell the inherent violence of religion” (Cavanaugh 2009, 13).

erroneously attribute spiritual origins to profane power struggles [because] of a sort of “religious illiteracy”” (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003, 130).

Religion and International Relations: What We Know So Far

Most of the empirical research on religion and politics has focused on how religion affects war and violence. Religion can affect every aspect of conflict. It can impact “the causes or duration of a conflict; influence the identities of participants and opponents; the legitimacy of weapons and targets; the timing and location of confrontations, [and] the conceptualization of victory and defeat” (Hassner and Horowitz 2010, 203). A useful way to differentiate explanations of how religion affects conflict is through the Primordialist, Instrumentalist, and Constructivist typology developed by Hasenclever and Rittberger (2000). Primordialists, best represented by Huntington (1998), claim that religion shapes fundamental identities and interests of political actors. Conflict becomes necessary if not essential means of strengthening religious in-group identities and mobilizing believers. More than creating the sociological conditions for violence, religion offers an ideological justification of violence in describing “an ideal social order [with] supernatural rewards, and a God that sanctifies horrific violence all in the name of religious goals” (Wellman and Tokuno 2004, 294). Primordialists argue that religion is “one of the most important independent variables to explain violent interactions in and between nations” (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2000, 641).

Instrumentalist and constructivist explanations reject the deterministic logic of primordialist arguments. Instrumentalist theories claim religion rarely causes conflict but can be used to exacerbate and motivate the expansion of violence while constructivist theories argue that religion’s effects are sui generis and contingent to specific situations.

Instrumentalists view religion as an accelerant, a factor that when invoked, can worsen the intensity of violence. As Hassner (2009) shows, religious differences does not always lead to conflict; instead, political negotiations and artful diplomacy can, under certain circumstances, produce peaceful compromises in seemingly intractable conflicts such as management of religious sites. The main difference between these instrumentalist and constructivist explanations of religion's effect on violence is the agency afforded to domestic audiences when political elites and leaders invoke religion. While instrumentalists argue that "determined leaders can manipulate religious traditions at will, [constructivists argue when] political leaders contend that a given war is for the sake of God and therefore justified, others can stand up and dispute this claim [and] in the final analysis, it is then up to the audience whose arguments they trust more" (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2000, 649). Instrumentalists view religion as reified worldviews that can be used as a political instrument so that "instead of being based on fear and trembling, religion becomes a source of absolute certainty...and becomes political behavior carried out as though one were God" (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003, 166). For instrumentalists, religion is activated and best wielded as a political instrument by elites. By contrast, constructivists view religion as a contested political instrument that can have unpredictable effects based on specific interactions of both elites and other political, religious, and domestic actors.

These three competing explanations prescribe different measurement and empirical testing strategies to identify religion's effects on politics. Constructivist explanations claim religion's effects are contingent on specific interactions of religious and political actors, implying the use of process-tracing and other small-N research.

However, findings from one particular analysis do not necessarily (or cannot) translate into other situations, making it difficult to draw comparative insights or broader implications about religion's effects on politics. For example, Horowitz (2009) finds that Crusaders motivated by their religious faith had longer time horizons and thus, fought longer wars. Given the unique combination of religious belief, social mobilization, political dynamics, and historical context, it is unclear how his insights can inform other analyses of how combatants use religion in motivating their conflict behavior.

By contrast, primordialist and instrumentalist explanations enable the use of comparative methods to identify religion's effects across cases. If primordialist explanations are valid, the religious belongings and demographics of political actors would be robust predictors of conflict. Empirical research testing the "clash of civilizations" hypothesis (Huntington 1998) reveals that primordial explanations are weak predictors of conflict. Using different types of conflict data, parametrizations of religious identity, temporal windows, and modeling specifications, scholars do not find evidence that religious civilizations, identities, or blocs predict conflict and war in the international system (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; Ellis 2010; Fox 2001a, 2001b; Johns and Davies 2012; Roeder 2003; Russett, Oneal, and Cox 2000; Tuscisny 2004). Some find that that violence within religious blocs and among states of similar religions than between states with different religious traditions (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006). However, even this finding is tenuous as changing the empirical scope and measurement of religion can change whether religious difference or similarity predicts violence (Maoz and Henderson 2013). The lack of robust links between religious identities and violence is not surprising given the over-deterministic logic of primordialist

arguments. Within each religious tradition, there are different norms of war and violence (Popovski, Reichberg, and Turner 2009). There are few precepts that allow for unconditional use of force and there are intense debates about the conditions and situations where violence is permissible and justifiable. Religious texts and traditions for doctrines of violence and peace also have widely varying expectations of religion's effect on violence. Indeed, if religion "can make violence more likely, as a reading of holy texts prevails that justifies armed conflict; on the other hand, [religion] can make violence less likely, insofar as a reading of holy texts prevails that delegitimizes the use of violence in a given situation or even generally" (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2000, 649), categorical definitions of religion cannot be a cause of violence.

Instrumentalist scholars who argue that religion has a catalytic effect in instigating or accelerating conflict examine how the interactions of religion with other social and political factors predict war. Henne (2012) and Basedau, Pfeiffer, and Vullers (2014) find that institutional connections between religious and political authorities, the overlap of religion and social identities, and religious grievance increases the likelihood of violence. In civil conflicts, Toft (2007) argues that actors invoke religion to outbid competing actors increase their likelihood of victory, thus explaining why so many civil wars have a religious component. Svensson (2007) further finds that when actors in a civil war make explicit religious claims, civil wars are less likely to end in negotiated outcomes. In local environments, Neuberg et al. (2014) find that greater infusion of religion into everyday practices and discourses exacerbate tensions from rival groups' competition over resources and values, leading to higher rates of discrimination and aggression.

While instrumentalist arguments argue religion has effects only when activated, operationalization strategies rely on static measures of religion that vary less dynamically than their claims of religious activation. Though instrumentalist arguments differ from more deterministic primordialist claims, some scholars use similar measures of religion. Toft (2007) identifies a civil war as Islamic based on the dominant religious demographics of participants; the implicit claim is that the more religious a population, the more likely religion is invoked as a justification if not reason for fighting. Similarly, Basedau, Pfeiffer, and Vullers's (2014) main measures of religion are based on the religious composition of different political actors. Other measures focus on the institutional capacities of religion that rarely vary over time. Henne (2012)'s main measure of religion is based on the institutional relationship between religion and domestic political institutions while measures of religious infusion found in Neuberger et al. (2014) are based on expert informants' responses to questions about the average role that religious rituals and narratives play in their communities. Perhaps the best measurement of religion as a catalytic factor is found in Svensson (2007) who codes civil war participants' religious tradition and a dichotomous measure of whether actor(s) make explicit religious demands. However, even this is a relatively static measure since the unit of analysis is the crisis, not the crisis-year; thus whether actors make religious claims at the beginning of the crisis to justify their use of force or at the end of the crisis as a desperate attempt to bolster weak support for the use of force is indistinguishable.

Existing measures of religiosity and religious-ness are not completely uninformative. However, their lack of dynamic measurement means they are at best rough proxies for how political actors use and manipulate religion for political purposes

at specific times and critical junctions. These measures may capture the potential religious mobilization of an actor. However, if religion is a latent social and political identity that does not produce political effects until invoked, counting religious adherents cannot capture the dynamic links between religion and violence. For example, using these static measures would fail to describe how during Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, Muslim communities who were nominally Muslims “discover” themselves to be Muslims when “Serbian leaders attempting to justify ethnic cleaning [and] Westerners attempting to make sense of the Bosnian violence” began identifying them as Muslim communities and populations (Lynch 2003, 60). The disjunction between argument, measurement, and empirical testing helps explain why, despite many arguments posited about how a “country’s religious heritage may affect its overall orientation toward foreign policy and which countries are its more likely allies and enemies, how that effect occurs, the extent of its impact, and how it interacts with existing domestic political structures and groups is as yet poorly understood” (Warner and Walker 2011, 116).

Unlocking Religion’s Power with Religious Rhetoric

To improve inferences about and identification of religion’s effects on international politics, we need better theoretical explanations and empirical measures of when political actors activate religion. I argue that political elites activate the otherwise latent power of religion by using religious rhetoric in their political discourse. When they invoke religion in their political rhetoric, elites activate the religious belongings of domestic actors. The use of religious rhetoric is a type of legitimation strategy that defines threats, justifies political action, and mobilizes greater public support (Goddard and Krebs 2015). Imbuing an otherwise secular political issue with religious meanings

and significance, elites motivate domestic publics to understand politics through their preexisting religious identities and frames. This can motivate and mobilize new political support and action. After religious rhetoric is used, the faithful come to interpret a political contest as having both geopolitical and sacred significance.

The political power of religious rhetoric draws upon the intrinsic expressive and performative power of religious rhetoric. Across faith traditions, religious rhetoric is used by both supernatural deities and the faithful. When used by supernatural actors, religious rhetoric are the mechanisms they intercede in the human world; it an “manifestation of a sacred power [and] fundamental force in the creation of the cosmos” (Wheelock 2005, 5302). In many creation accounts, for example in Genesis, God spoke and the world came to being; when “God said, “Let there be light” and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). Beyond the Christian tradition, “the representation that the divine word was the agent of creation is [also] found in Babylonian, Egyptian, and Indian cosmogonies” (Burke 1970, 11). In the Christian tradition, religious rhetoric is more than just the manifestation of God’s power but also God Himself. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is portrayed as “the Word” (John 1:1); Jesus becomes as “the Word or Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, the primary “utterance” of the Father” (Ong 2000, 20), embodying both the power of God and the Good News (Gospel) of God for the world.

Religious rhetoric is not only used by supernatural actors but also by the believing faithful. When the believer uses religious rhetoric, it becomes a performative and productive act. Though unable to create new physical realities as when used by supernatural deities, the faithful’s use of religious rhetoric, for example in incantations, creates “the psychological effect of restructuring reality in the minds of people” (Ludwig

2005, 4406). It is an attempt by the faithful to communicate with the supernatural, to fellowship with God and grasp the sacred. It is an act “constrained and authorized by the mystical sacred, by a severe obligation to the realm of things beyond human capacity to alter, a realm not accessible through our pedestrian methodologies or logic, by a connection to and a desire for the supernatural” (Darsey and Ritter 2009, 555).

While religious rhetoric is directed vertically to the sacred, it can also be directed horizontally to fellow believers. Just as religious rhetoric directed to God is not merely communicative but performative and productive, so the sharing of religious words and rhetorics among believers “does not just inform but also have a purpose; [they] not only have a propositional meaning (locution) but also are a call for action, response, change of view, and commitment (illocution)” (Pennington 2012, 132). The informative and imperative to action components of religious rhetoric are virtually inseparable.

According to Saint Anselm, “one learns the faith...through being told. Indeed, whatever one may think of the theological notion that the saints can perceive the truth about God intuitively, Saint Anselm [argues] doctrine, a creed, is formulated and taught by verbal precept” (Burke 1970, 12). When religious leaders or believing laypeople use religious rhetoric to speak to their fellow brethren, they intend to persuade and motivate new action. It is not just an expression of piety but seeks “an act of the will, assent, and secures its religious end in conversion” (Boyle 2000, 88-89). When effective, religious rhetoric is an imaginative act that “invite and empower and equip the community to reimagine the world as though [God] were a key and decisive player” (Brueggemann 2007, 148). Upon hearing, the faithful are to respond; as summarized in the Book of

James, the faithful cannot ignore but must “be doers of the Word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

The effectiveness of religious rhetoric is moderated by audiences’ preexisting beliefs, expectations, and identities. The effectiveness of a sermon and “the reception of a mediation of either transformation or equilibrium happens through the interpretive receptivity of the congregation. What happens, what [religious rhetoric] can “do”, depends on the propensity of the congregation” (Brueggemann 2007, 98). The extent to which religious rhetoric is understood and found convincing or rejected and found wanting depends on audiences’ religious “knowledge, experience, maturity, and skills” (Pennington 2012, 117). While some religious audiences may “understand the signal in the way it may have been intended, [others] could just as well view the speech as bad theology” (Wuthnow 2010, 199). This suggests that religious rhetoric and by implication religious mobilization does not have uniform effects on all audiences. As in the Parable of the Sower found in the Gospels, religious rhetoric can fall on rocky soils and have no effect or fall on “good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:8).

To summarize, religious rhetoric play an essential role across religious traditions. It is used in three main ways. First, it is the creative force through which the supernatural creates and intercedes in human affairs. Religious rhetoric is also the way through which the faithful reach for and enter fellowship with the sacred. The faithful are transformed by their encounter with the faithful as religious rhetoric becomes both a performative and productive action. Third, religious rhetoric is used by religious leaders and other lay-leaders to motivate the faithful to act. While performative, this third type of religious

rhetoric also contains imperatives intended to motivate and compel hearing audiences to respond and act. However, its effectiveness is moderated by the preexisting religious identities and beliefs of the intended audience.

An analytical focus on religious rhetoric as a measure or indicator of religion's potential effects corresponds to sociological explanations of religion. Religion is a complex and constantly contested concept and practice. Instead of relying on reified categories, focusing on how the faithful discuss and describe their faith in their religious rhetorics provides nuanced and insightful measure of their religious belongings, preferences, and beliefs. As Casanova (2012) argues, "when people around the world use the same category of religion, they actually mean very different things. The actual concrete meaning of whatever people denominate as religion can be elucidated only in the context of their particular discursive practices" (27). Religious rhetoric is not just a better operationalization of individuals' and communities' religion, it also enables better measurement of when religion matters. Since religion is activated when political actors use religious rhetoric, empirical testing of religious effects on politics is also straightforward. Instead of using static measures based on static religious demographics or other proxies, when religion is activated and matters in politics can be measured dynamically by identifying specific elite use of religious rhetoric. Better measurement of religion facilitates better identification of religious effects; by comparing political behaviors and outcomes before and after the use of religious rhetoric, one can easier identify religion's effects on political actors, processes, and outcomes. Therefore, by using an empirical measurement and testing strategy that better corresponds to analytical

explanations of when and how religion affects politics, better theoretical insights and inferences can be made about religion's effects on politics.

US Presidential Use of Religious Rhetoric

As an empirical test of the political effectiveness of religious cues, I examine how US presidential invocation of religion mobilized foreign policy attitudes. First, I identify when presidents have used divine election rhetoric during foreign policy crises from 1945 to 2007. I then compare changes in foreign policy support before and after presidents' use of religious rhetoric to identify the mobilization effectiveness of religious invocations. American presidential use of religious rhetoric is a most likely case of the religious rhetoric mobilization mechanism. George and Bennett (2005) define a most likely case as one where "the independent variables posited by a theory are at values that strongly posit an outcome or posit an extreme outcome" (121).

In US foreign policy, leaders have used religion to mobilize domestic support during many foreign policy episodes. Beginning with the Puritans who first settled in New England, American leaders have used religious rhetoric to justify and motivate their foreign policies. It was essential in motivating the first campaign against the Native Americans during the Pequot War and King Philip's War of the 17th century. When faced with military setbacks, the colonists sought a religious solution through days of fasting and corporate worship. Religious rhetoric was critical in reminding the weary Puritans that God was still on their side and encouraging renewed confidence based on a religious narrative that explained their military setbacks as part of a divine plan to test and purify their faith. After corporate deliberations and prayers, the Puritans came to believe that their lack of success was caused by how "they had strayed from the path of

righteousness and provoked God's wrath...But as displeased as He might be with His chosen people, in the end the Puritans were confident that God would not let them perish" (Preston 2012, 42). These early Puritan experiences in America, echoing earlier experience in England under Oliver Cromwell, would become the blueprint for generations of Americans for whom "God's providence was central to the narration and justification of violence [and] God's unfolding plans for human history" (Murphy 2011, 534).

The use of religious rhetoric to mobilize public support during a time of crisis is prominent during times of war. During the American Revolution, elites extensively used religious rhetoric to justify and mobilize support for the war. Building on their Puritan heritage, "by the time of the American Revolution, patriots argued that God had given America a special role in history and that independence had been providentially determined" (Guyatt 2007, 4). Similarly, both the Union North and Confederate South in the Civil War argued that God was on their side and exploited the faith of their domestic audiences to mobilize support for a war that was as much about competing theological interpretations as slavery and economic interests (Noll 2006). Even presidents initially reluctant to use religious rhetoric find it useful. Though President Lyndon Johnson was reluctant to use religious rhetoric, he nonetheless used religious rhetoric to "to appease, neutralize, or enlist the same political constituency appealed to during the Dulles-Eisenhower years" (Wander 1984, 352). Religious rhetoric and imbuing of conflict with sacred significance have also played prominent roles in motivating American foreign policy in the Spanish-American War (McCullough 2011), World War One (Jenkins 2014), the Vietnam war (Settje 2011), and the Cold War (Inboden 2008; Schafer 2012).

Presidential use of religious rhetoric is most notable during the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. President Reagan's appropriation and instrumentalization of the "city on a hill" phrase is an exemplar of how religious rhetoric appeals "simultaneously to Christian conservatives—fundamentalists and evangelicals who had come together to form a crucial voting bloc—and to the broader American public" (Domke and Coe 2008, 4). The "city on a hill" phrase was used originally by Puritans as one of their motivations and goals of establishing a new religious community in the New World. However, it was not part of the American political lexicon until President Regan revived it to embody his political vision. Given its lack of preexisting connotations in American political culture, Reagan could appropriate it for his political ends as that "the metaphor had become an empty vessel into which Reagan and any other politician poured his or her own content" (Gamble 2012, 154). Its political utility and effectiveness was undeniable. While other presidents also used religion to rally opposition against the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Inboden 2008), President Regan's "city on the hill" rhetoric and was most effective in uniting "Americans together [across domestic divides] through his appeal to generalized mythic realities, and particularly when he described the United States as a God-fearing nation locked in a struggle with atheistic Communism" (Roof 2009, 290).

Similarly, President George W. Bush's use of religious rhetoric was critical in the mobilization of popular support for the 2003 Iraq War. His use of religious rhetoric enabled President Bush to activate a "Christian political culture which sees itself as uniquely blessed by God. [Indeed], the power of Bush's post-September 11 rhetoric derived in part from the way in which it effectively tapped into this tradition" (Krebs and

Lobasz 2007, 426). This was most evident in his 2003 State of the Union address. Facing lukewarm public support for potential military action, President Bush used the speech to discuss evidence that Saddam Hussein was trying to procure uranium in Africa. However, “every bit as critical in building U.S. public support for the war were 17 words delivered in the final minute of the address: ‘The liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world, it is God’s gift to humanity’” (Domke and Coe 2008, 8). President Bush would repeat the claim that God was the source of liberty and implied meaning that America was simply sharing God’s “gift” to the world in its foreign policy in speeches throughout the country in rallying the country, especially religiously-minded Americans, to support military action as both necessary and God-ordained. Though not all religious Americans were mobilized by President Bush’s religious rhetoric, as some found it to an overextension if not abuse of religion into politics, it is unlikely that President Bush could have mobilized as much public support for his foreign policy without his extensive use of religious rhetoric and imagery (Froese and Mencken 2009).

The United States is not just a most likely case but also a crucial test case of the religious rhetoric mobilization mechanism. As George and Bennett (2005) describe, if in a most likely case “the other independent variables, considered singly and together, [also] point toward the same outcome as the extreme variable, then this is a crucial case” (253). Not only do American presidents use religious rhetoric in foreign policy, but the religiosity of the American public suggests that invocations of religion are likely to be effective in mobilizing new political action. Religion explains “both Americans’ sense of themselves as chosen people and their belief that they have a duty to spread their values throughout the world....Not all Americans believe such things [but] enough believe them

that the ideas exercise profound influence over the country's behavior" (Mead 2012, 247). It is a powerful mobilization mechanism for Americans because "no other group-based appeal (e.g. to race, gender, or class) has the potential to codify political support" (Chapp 2012, 7). Religion remains a salient political force today "even as the United States became more religiously and culturally pluralistic [since] new peoples and their faiths had to adapt to a political culture [characterized by] a strongly exceptionalist Protestant identity" (Preston 2012, 11). There have been periods where Americans' belief in its divine election has undergone existential challenges, for example after World War Two when American Christians "degenerated into ambivalence, confusion, and sometimes bitter divisions over precisely how the United States should act in the world" (Inboden 2008, 6). Though the religious beliefs and belongings of Americans are increasingly diverse (Putnam and Campbell 2012), there remain a shared set of religious principles and themes that resonate among many Americans. The religious pluralism of Americans may even facilitate the political use of religion as "support for almost any conceivable foreign policy can be found somewhere [though] the balance of power among the different religious stands shift over time" (Mead 2012, 247). Indeed, taking a broader historical perspective from the first presidency of George Washington to George W. Bush, "religion [has been] the conscience of American foreign relations. US foreign policy itself has never really been idealistic...but policymaking elites merge[d] the moralism and progressivism of religion with the normally realist mindset of international politics" (Preston 2012, 7).

Though religion is a salient American social identity and shared belonging, it is easy to over-estimate how much it shapes US foreign policy and international politics.

Wuthnow (2010) warns that any “broad assertions about the role of faith in US foreign policy must be treated with caution” (189). There is no direct relationship between higher religiosity and religion having a stronger influence in politics.³ Moreover, while the religiosity of Americans suggests that religion could have a greater potential influence on politics, it cannot predict if religion will have an effect in a specific political situation.

Plan of Dissertation

In the next chapter (Chapter 2), I use the elite cues framework to conceptualize how presidential use of religious rhetoric activates religious belongings and mobilizes foreign policy support. While presidents may use different types of religious rhetoric, I argue that the use of divine election religious rhetoric has the greatest mobilization effects. Divine election rhetoric is an explicit theological narrative that claims God is on America’s side, God has empowered and blessed America, and America has a responsibility and obligation to use God’s blessings to do God’s will in the world. When used in the foreign policy realm, divine election rhetoric elevates the strategic interests of a crisis, increases expectations of success, and frames inaction as an abrogation of religious responsibility. This mobilizes religious Americans to greater support of the president’s foreign policy agenda. However, it could also alienate less religious secular Americans. Given the distribution of religious Americans across the partisan spectrum, divine election can mobilize foreign policy support among co-partisans (from the president’s party) and contra-partisans (from the opposition party otherwise likely to

³ It is not always clear how religious belongings, concepts, and beliefs translate into politics. In the classic treatise *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr (1951) describes four ways that Christians can translate their faith into their social and public lives. The proliferation of ways that the faithful can apply (or not) their faith to their political lives means that how religious beliefs and identities are translated into politics is moderated by other factors such as expectations about the role of faith in politics. Indeed, Froese and Mencken (2009) find that religious Americans vary on their sacredization theology, or the extent to which they welcome or reject religion’s role in politics and the public sphere.

oppose the president). These mobilization effects contrast with effects of secular cues which have been shown to only have consistent mobilization effects on co-partisans.

To test the effects of divine election religious cues on foreign policy support, I compile an original database of all presidential foreign policy rhetoric during US foreign policy crises from 1946 to 2007. In Chapter 3, I describe how I identify specific instances where presidents used divine election rhetoric in 23 foreign policy crises across the 147 crises where they use foreign policy rhetoric. This creates a dynamic measure detailing when religion is most likely to have effects on political behaviors and preferences.

In Chapter 4, I use these dynamic measures of political invocations of religion to test the empirical effects of divine election rhetoric. After compiling an original dataset of 474 foreign policy polls fielded during US foreign policy crises, I examine how presidents' divine election cues affect foreign policy attitudes. Comparing foreign policy support before and after presidents' uses of divine election cues, I find they are effective in mobilizing both co-partisans and contra-partisans, especially increasing their support for the use of force. The results are robust across different parameterizations of divine election cues, statistical modeling, and comparison group of polls fielded before presidents use divine election cues.

Finally, I use a survey experiment in Chapter 5 to test the divine election cue mobilization mechanism. While historical analyses of trends in foreign policy support before and after presidents' uses of divine election cues reveal externally valid evidence of divine election mobilization effects, the experiment provides internally valid evidence that effects observed are caused by the divine election cue mechanism. The experimental

results reveal how divine election cues are effective in reframing the crisis with greater geopolitical significance and increasing expectations of victory. It also reveals further evidence that divine election cues mobilize foreign policy support among both co-partisans and contra-partisans. There is also evidence that respondents' religiosity moderates divine election mobilization effects, generating greater increases of foreign policy support among more religious respondents while having weaker if not negative effects on less religious respondents. Findings from the experiment corroborate findings from historical analyses of foreign policy attitudes that divine election cues mobilize foreign policy support among co-partisans (H1), contra-partisans (H2), and more religious Americans (H3).

In the Conclusion, I summarize my empirical findings and explore the strategic and normative implications of the effectiveness of divine election cues. I explore the normative implications of presidents' use of divine election cues, specifically how the use of divine election cues may diminish the marketplace of ideas or subvert domestic debates about US foreign policy. Second, I explore the strategic consequences of divine election mobilization effects on domestic audiences. While greater foreign policy support can increase the president's bargaining leverage, it can also be too effective and constrain the president to use more violent foreign policy strategies than he may have initially preferred. Finally, I discuss why the use of divine election cues specifically and religious appeals broadly will remain a powerful mobilization mechanism in presidents' foreign policy toolkit.

Chapter 2: Presidential Invocations of Religion in Foreign policy Crises

Unlocking the Power of Religion

In this chapter, I survey the existing scholarship on religion and American foreign policy. While important in drawing greater attention into religion's role in politics, much of the existing research is motivated by an implicit or explicit claim that Americans' religious beliefs and identities are sufficient to predict foreign policy preferences and behavior. However, such explanations do not specify the dynamic mechanisms that activate these otherwise latent religious beliefs and identities. One mechanism that can unlock the power of religion into politics is presidential use of religious rhetoric. Using elite cues theory as an analytical lens, I argue presidents' use of religious rhetorics frame foreign policy with religious meanings to mobilize greater domestic support during foreign policy crises. While presidents can use different types of religious rhetorics, I argue that divine election religious cues have the greatest mobilization effects. Divine election religious rhetoric which claims God is on America's side, God has empowered America, and America must act in response to God's blessing and providence has the greatest effect on foreign policy attitudes. They are most effective in increasing foreign policy support because they elevate the strategic and geopolitical salience of the crisis,

increases the public's expectations of victory, and frames inaction as an abrogation of religious responsibility. This religious framing resonates with religious Americans at the risk of alienating less religious more secular Americans. Given the religious-social demographics of the country where religious Americans are distributed across the partisan spectrum, religious cues mobilize both co-partisans and contra-partisans otherwise opposed to the president. By contrast, secular cues only have consistent effects on co-partisans. I conclude by describing a testing strategy to assess the empirical validity of hypotheses and testable implications of the divine election religious cues.

Religion and US Foreign policy: What We Know So Far

A core assumption guiding existing research on religion and US foreign policy is that the political actors' religious beliefs, identities, and practices shape political attitudes and behaviors. Some scholars examine how the personal faith of presidents (Bacevich and Prodromou 2005; den Dulk and Rozell 2011; Lincoln 2006; Smith 2008) and members of Congress (Collins et al. 2011) shape their foreign policy. Significant research has focused on the foreign policy attitudes and behaviors of religious Americans, especially Evangelicals. One unique characteristic of Evangelicals is their high religious practice, specifically how frequently Evangelicals attend church. In one of the earliest analyses of religion's influence on foreign policy, Hero (1973) finds that there is little difference in the foreign policy preferences of regular church attenders and less religiously-observant respondents. By contrast, Wittkopf (1986) finds that evangelical affiliation, orthodox theology, and high religious commitment is associated with anti-communist attitudes and support for higher defense spending. That finding has been challenged by more recent scholarship. For example Page and Bouton (2006) find that

the effect of religious affiliation disappears when basic attitudes and foreign policy goals are incorporated in the model. Similarly, Wuthnow (2007) finds only modest support for the claim that attendance at worship services encourages people to be altruistic in a way that influences their foreign policy attitudes.

Other research examines how Evangelicals' religious beliefs translate into foreign policy preferences and behavior. Many Evangelicals believe in "messianic militarism," the belief that Americans are critical agents of God's unfolding will; this belief has been found to correlate with stronger support of aggressive and militant foreign policy strategies (Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008). Similarly, the prevalence of premillennial dispensationalism theology among Evangelicals predisposes them to be more supportive of Israel, hold more negative views about Islam, and adopt more hawkish preferences about US foreign policy in the Middle East (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008). Given the centrality of theology and doctrine in shaping how Evangelicals view their social responsibilities and preferences,⁴ the focus on Evangelicals coincides with the growing consensus that religious beliefs, more so than belonging or behavior, are the key predictors of political attitudes and worldviews (Guth 2009). However, empirical findings are mixed. While many scholars find that Evangelicals hold unique or differentiated foreign policy attitudes and preferences compared to other Americans (Amstutz 2013; Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008; Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; Cavari 2012; Durham 2004; Guth 2009; Schafer 2012; Smidt 2005; Taydas, Kentmen, and Olson 2012), other research finds Evangelicals do not differ significantly

⁴ Not all evangelical scholars believe that there are core Evangelical doctrines or beliefs. Indeed, in his critique of modern Evangelicalism in America, Wells (1994) argues that modern Evangelicalism has minimally shared theological beliefs, having traded doctrinal rigor and a focus on redemptive theology for self-help remedies and therapeutic messages.

from other Americans in their foreign policy attitudes (Froese and Mencken 2009; Jelen 1994; Wuthnow and Lewis 2008).

The existing research on Evangelicals and foreign policy illustrates the need for better conceptualization of how and when religious beliefs, behaviors, and identities affect politics. Arguments that religious beliefs and practices are determinative of their foreign policy attitudes and worldviews must be complemented with explanations of how these religious beliefs and practices are activated. A dual focus on predispositions and a dynamic activation mechanism better corresponds to scholarly understandings of how foreign policy attitudes are formed. The dominant model of foreign policy public opinion describes how foreign policy attitudes are determined by the interactions between predispositions and situational cues (Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999). In the realm of religion, this implies that Americans' religious predispositions, beliefs, and identities have political effects when activated by external situational cues. If even for the Puritans who believed in the religious "moralization of all spheres of conduct [but for whom] at any given time [religion] may be more "dormant" than ""active" (Tiryakian 1982, 356), so the religious faith of modern Americans only have causal effects when activated by external religious stimuli.

Presidential Use of Religious Rhetoric as an Elite Cue

One mechanism that intertwines religion into foreign policy is presidents' use of religious rhetoric in their political discourse. When presidents use religious rhetoric, they transform the political pulpit into a religious pulpit and their foreign policy speech becomes like a sermon. According to the noted American theologian Walter Brueggemann (2007), sermons "summon and nurture an alternative community with an

alternative identity, vision, and vocation (56). They are an imaginative act that challenge the status quo and “invite and empower and equip the community to reimagine the world as though [God] were a key and decisive player” (Brueggemann 2007, 148). When the president uses religious foreign policy rhetoric, he is narrating a new strategic perspective and imaging foreign policy to have both geostrategic and sacred consequences. Whereas there is evidence that clergy may not always be able to change the attitudes of their congregations (Djupe and Gilbert 2008), presidential use of religious rhetoric are more effective because they are less frequent and thus, more noticed. As foreign policy is imbued with transcendental significance, so presidents want domestic audiences to adopt a new strategic outlook and motivate new strategic expectations of what is at stake in a crisis and what the United States should do.⁵

Presidents use religious rhetoric to mobilize greater foreign policy support for their foreign policy agenda. More so than in domestic political arenas, elites are more able to sway domestic publics’ foreign policy attitudes (Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Zaller 1992). When presidents use foreign policy rhetoric and speak publicly about a crisis, they aim to shape how domestic audiences react to and understand the emerging foreign policy situation. In most cases, presidents’ use of secular rhetoric is sufficient in mobilizing enough foreign policy support to achieve the president’s strategic objectives. However, in situations where secular cues are insufficient, the invocation of religion may

⁵ While religious rhetoric can shape political attitudes, political rhetoric can also shape religious beliefs. For example, during the Cold War, “by explaining America’s new role in the world in eschatological, millennial, prophetic, and apocalyptic terms, evangelicals helped fill the postwar interpretive void with religious content. While a growing number of prewar Americans had dismissed concepts such as the Antichrist, Armageddon, Judgment Day, and the Second Coming, linking these terms to the threat of totalitarian communism and nuclear warfare made [these religious concepts] very real and palpable” (Schafer 2012, 89).

be a useful rhetorical device that mobilizes a coalition of foreign policy support otherwise unlikely if only using secular foreign policy rhetoric.

The elite cues framework is most appropriate to examine the effects of presidents' use of religious rhetoric. Elite cue theory argues that during foreign policy crises, domestic audiences' foreign policy attitudes are shaped by elites' foreign policy position and support. Given higher uncertainty about the right course of action, rational audiences are reliant on the foreign policy argument of elites they already trust to inform and update their own foreign policy attitudes. This suggests that elite cues mobilize co-partisans but have no effect on contra-partisans since contra-partisan audiences are unlikely to trust the foreign policy cues of elites they already disagree with. The characteristics of foreign policy crises are especially conducive to elites having a significant influence on foreign policy attitudes. Since "international crisis situations may begin with no stable means for interpreting the discursive surroundings, the president can redefine the situation in terms that the public can understand or identify with" (Kuypers 1997, 19–20). Presidents' foreign policy statements and positions are framing devices that emphasize a particular set of lenses or values through which audiences come to understand and interpret the developing foreign policy crisis (Brewer, Graf, and Willnat 2003; Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2004; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). This type of foreign policy framing affects "how individuals should construct their attitudes toward a particular issue [and] provides away of understanding an attitude or putting it into context" (Aldrich et al. 2006, 486). By referencing beliefs or attitudes audiences already hold but may not be using as a primary interpretive lens, elite cues persuade domestic audiences to adopt new foreign policy attitudes and more strongly support a particular foreign policy agenda.

Therefore, as “political elites have the agency and flexibility to interpret the meaning of ambiguous wartime events” (Berinsky 2009, 126), so how they interpret and describe foreign policy through elite cues significantly shape the public’s understanding and interpretation of the foreign policy crisis.⁶

Types of Religious Cues

Just as there is rhetorical variations in the types of elite cues presidents use (Drury et al. 2008; McManus 2014; Wood 2012), so the religious rhetorics presidents used vary. Sometimes, presidents use implicit or coded religious rhetoric that are “plainly audible to portions of his audiences who are attentive to such phrasing, but likely to go unheard by those without the requisite textual knowledge” (Lincoln 2006, 30). When using implicit religious rhetorics, presidents want to “appeal to [the religious] in-group without rousing an out-group’s suspicions” (Calfano and Djupe 2009, 330). As they “dial-up” their religious rhetoric, presidents want to “signal to devout religious believers that they share and appreciate these citizens’ faith, but do so without pushing away religious moderates or secular-minded voters” (Domke and Coe 2008, 130). Presidents must find a balance between using coded religious rhetoric that only have effects on small numbers of religious Americans and using more explicit religious rhetoric that can mobilize more Americans at the risk of alienating more secular Americans.

Scholars of presidential communication have developed different typologies to classify the types of religious rhetorics presidents and other national leaders used.

⁶ While I focus on political elites, especially the president’s use of religious cues, other domestic elites can also use religious cues. For example, during the Cold War, leading evangelical leaders like Carl Henry explicitly interpreted American foreign policy with “a renewed commitment to the Bible. Invoking the ‘sense of divine providence’ that had once shaped an America ‘strong in spirit, dedicated to the fulfillment of God’s will,’ he saw the fight against communism as the basis for ‘sharing the world the bold witness of faith in the Redeemer’” (Schafer 2012, 88).

Examining Puritan leaders' religious rhetoric, Bercovitch (1978) describes how they created an American jeremiad sermon that reminded the Puritans that "they were a "peculiar people," a company of Christians not only called but chosen, and chosen not only for heaven but as instruments of a sacred historical design" (7). This providential rhetoric provided both justification and motivation for the Puritans' expansionist campaigns against their Native American neighbors. It would also be foundational to the growing embrace of the narrative that America is chosen by God to serve a unique role in the fulfillment and unfolding of God's plan. This narrative motivated the Puritans to not lose hope but continue their efforts to "rise to world power as part of a divine blessing bestowed on the earliest settlers and national founders" (Murphy 2009, 13).

Expanding the temporal scope of analysis from the Puritans to the American Civil War, Guyatt (2007) identifies three distinct types of providential rhetoric: judicial, historical, and apocalyptic providentialism. Echoing sentiments similar to Jonathan Edwards' infamous "Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God" sermon, judicial providential rhetoric described how God's wrath and punishment would come upon America if she failed to obey God's plan and continued on a sinful course. Judicial providentialism became a call for national reflection and a warning that continued disobedience would lead to suffering if not destruction of the nation. By contrast, historical providentialism did not emphasize God's impending punishment but God's blessing on America. As an antecedent to the later emergence of Manifest Destiny in the 18th century, historical providentialism encouraged new political action as a fulfillment of God's unique and special plan for America. The third type of providentialism, apocalyptic providentialism, uses prophetic passage such as those in the Book of

Revelation as the script of God's unfolding plan for America. Where historical providentialism was open-ended in the content of God's plan for America, apocalyptic providentialism explicitly mapped "specific books and predictions of Bible prophecy onto current events, looking to Revelation or Daniel for a primer to contemporary history" (Guyatt 2007, 3).

Coles (2002) distinguishes between Mission and Model religious rhetoric when comparing President George Bush's religious rhetoric during the Gulf War with President Clinton's religious rhetoric during the Kosovo crisis. Whereas President Bush's use of Mission religious rhetoric claimed America to be uniquely blessed by God to expand God's kingdom on earth, President Clinton's use of Model religious rhetoric de-emphasized America's unique blessing but affirmed America as the world's primer example of national reflection and pursuit of justice. Similarly, Coe and Domke (2006) distinguish between Prophetic religious rhetoric and Petitioner religious rhetoric that differ in the extent to which presidents claim or assert America as uniquely blessed. Prophetic religious rhetoric, used most frequently by Presidents Bush and Reagan, "conveys greater certainty about what a divine power wants with regard to the principles of freedom and liberty" while Petitioner rhetoric does not explicitly claim understanding of God's will for America but are "requests and gratitude for divine guidance in the nation's pursuits" (Coe and Domke 2006, 315). While presidents who use Prophetic rhetoric claim unique insight of God's will for America and confidently assert America's place in God's unfolding will, Petitioner rhetoric asked God to reveal His will for America. Roof (2009) differentiates presidential religious rhetoric with another classification scheme where "Priestly rhetoric blesses America as a chosen nation with a

special mission to fulfill and legitimate its actions” (293) and prophetic rhetoric “de-emphasizes notions of chosenness and uniqueness and, at its best, calls the country into question when it fails to live up to its own ethical ideals” (294). Finally, Bostdorff (2003) argues that President Bush’s religious rhetoric after 9/11 was a revival of Covenant Renewal rhetoric used by the later Puritans. Instead of calling for national introspection or self-examination after a national catastrophe, Covenant Renewal rhetoric blames “September 11 on evil, external enemies and casts the U.S. and its citizens as a blameless, exceptional community that had been attacked because of its goodness” (Bostdorff 2003, 298).

Analysis of presidential rhetoric in both foreign policy and domestic political realms reveals more ways to classify presidential use of religious rhetoric. Examining presidential religious rhetoric by how they activate emotion and identity, Chapp (2012) classifies religious rhetoric into two types, Cultural War and Civil Religion. While Cultural War rhetoric emphasizes “deep-seated religious differences in American society and the intractable political conflicts produced by these divisions, Civil Religion appeals, on the other hand, are nondenominational declarations of spiritualized American national identity [that] stress points of spiritual commonality among all Americans and posit a transcendent ethos that permeates American institutions and culture” (Chapp 2012, 3). In perhaps the most empirically comprehensive analysis of presidential religious rhetoric, Domke and Coe (2008) examine how presidential use of religious rhetoric is a “God Strategy” to increase domestic support for the president’s policy agenda. Focusing on presidential use of religious rhetorics in the domestic political realm, they identify four ways that presidents can invoke religion to build political support:

Presidents have to first *invoke* the nation, that is, to name it by using words such as nation, country, United States, and America. [Second], presidents then can *set apart* the nation by declaring it to be a special, distinctive place...Third, presidents might seek to *renew* the nation by calling for national revival and rebirth...Finally, presidents can *sanctify* the nation by explicitly asking God's blessing upon it. Such language creates an overt pairing of America and Providence (Domke and Coe 2008, 53).

Political Power of Divine Election Cues

Despite the proliferation classification schemes, and even the confusing adoption of similar labels to represent opposite types of religious rhetoric,⁷ I argue these different typologies can be simplified to a single dimension, whether presidents claim America as divinely chosen by God to fulfill a unique role in God's unfolding will on earth. The key differentiation in presidential religious rhetoric cues is whether they used divine election rhetoric or more generic religious rhetoric. Divine election rhetoric derives insights from Calvinist theology that argues God's election of certain believers to salvation must translate into corporate social and political action. The key claim of divine election theology is that God has chosen or specific actors for a greater role in the unfolding of divine will on earth. As Vanhoozer (2005) notes, there is a difference between "general providence, God's universal care and control of the cosmos as a whole, and special providence, God's particular interaction with specific events and individuals" (641). While most religious theologies affirm general providence, divine election theologies and rhetorics make the further claim of special providence on select individuals and communities.

⁷ The Prophetic religious rhetoric type is found in Coe and Domke's (2006) and Roof's (2009) religious rhetoric typology. However, while Coe and Domke describe Prophetic rhetoric as a confident assertion of America's unique blessing from God, Roof's conceptualization of Prophetic rhetoric is directly contradictory as it is a call to de-emphasize America's unique chosenness.

Divine election theology is a rejection of faith as a personal conversation and private commitment. Instead, religious beliefs must translate into social and political action. Instead of a wall of separation between politics and religion, divine election rhetoric states political actions are part of “fulfilling the will of the divine [as] compliance with state dictates [is] a religious duty of its citizens, all of whom are members of a shared religious tradition” (Guinn 2011, 102). Divine election is not an excuse to withdraw from the world in “fatalistic acquiescence, but [a call to act] for the fulfillment of divinely assigned tasks” (Wallace 2005, 3205). It directs the “people of God toward the fulfillment of their destiny, to guide them individually toward salvation, and collectively toward the American city of God” (Bercovitch 1978, 9).

In the foreign policy realm, divine election theology can be used to justify a rejection of American isolationism as antipathy and inaction is the abrogation of America’s religious responsibilities. In the same way that the first Calvinists and original developers of divine election theology “saw themselves as divine instruments...hard at work upon the political world” (Walzer 1982, 3), so divine election rhetoric is a call for Americans to embrace their God-ordained responsibility to engage and better the world for God. Apathy and inaction would not only be a failure to fulfill religious responsibility but could even be evidence that initial beliefs of America as chosen were misguided. While America is not the only country that has claimed chosen people status (Lehmann and Hutchison 1994), the salience of divine election rhetoric in America’s cultural and political psyche has been more persistent and enduring. Simply, divine election rhetoric is used more frequently and more extensively by American leaders than leaders from other countries.

Divine election rhetoric is an effective foreign policy cue because it resonates with public expectations of America's place in the world. Divine election and providentialist theologies justify the belief that America is "the world's leading nation, the first and greatest of democracies, the nation specially blessed by God through which all other nations will be blessed" (Skillen 2010, 90). These theologies are relevant to foreign policy because its "communal notions of chosenness, and the parallels with the ancient Israelites, lend themselves to a facility, and a familiarity, with a certain language of conflict and violence" (Murphy 2011, 534). Divine election cues do not "create the sacred as much as extending it to new realms, [connecting] a political position to an existing or latent sacredness" (Marietta 2012, 13). They invoke themes and narratives many Americans already believe, for example the "deep sense of attachment to an explicitly spiritualized understanding of America vested with a sacred sense of purpose in the world order [which] is as much a religious community as a political entity" (Chapp 2012, 12). The belief in America's divinely-ordained exceptionalism persists "even as the United States became more religiously and culturally pluralistic [as] new peoples and their faiths had to adapt to a strongly exceptionalist Protestant identity" (Preston 2012, 11). As recently as June 2015, 62% of Americans believe that "God has granted America a special role in human history", with over a third of Americans (35%) completely agreeing with that statement (*June 2015 PRRI/RNS Religion News Survey 2015*).

When presidents use divine election cues in foreign policy crises, they generate two framing effects, elevating the strategic and national interests at stake in a crisis and increasing the public's expectations of success. From a purely secular perspective, a crisis may be inconsequential. If presidents frame the crisis as part of a greater cosmic

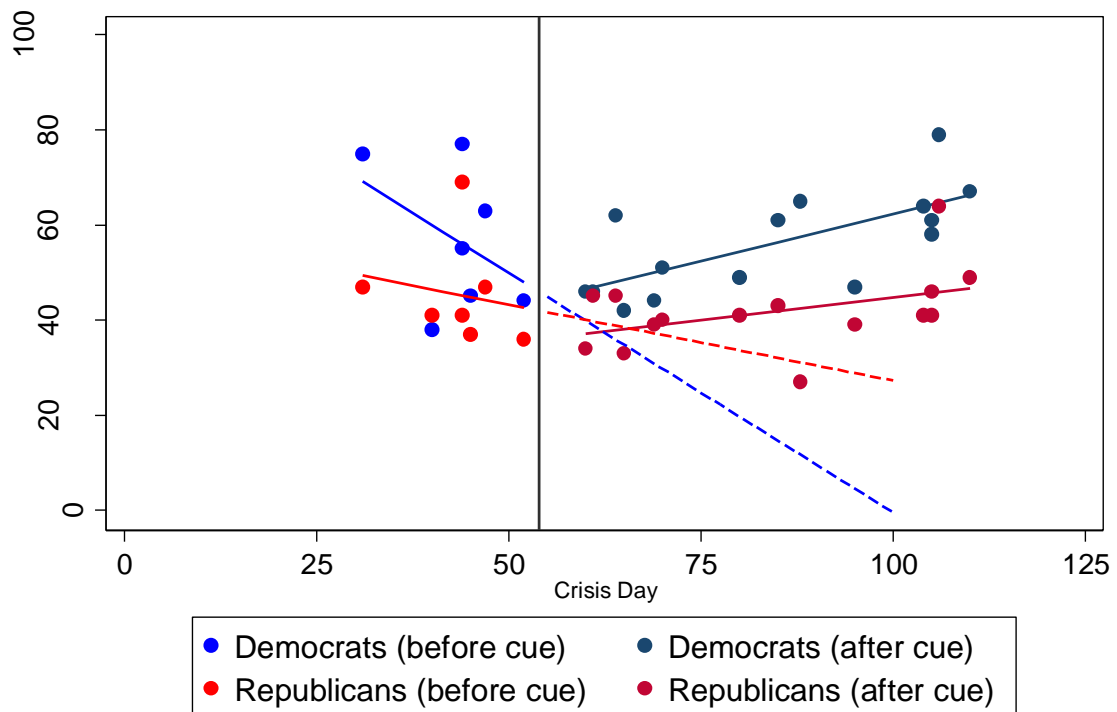
contest in God's unfolding plan in the world, domestic audiences can be persuaded that the crisis is of a greater national interest and has higher strategic value. When a president uses divine election cues during a crisis to remind Americans that "God imagined a special role for [America] in improving the world and tailored history to prepare [America] for the achievement of this mission" (Guyatt 2007, 6), the public is more likely to support the president's foreign policy agenda. Crises that seemed to have no or low national interests become more significant and more worthy of public support.

Existing research reveals that greater public beliefs of foreign policy having strategic and national salience leads to stronger foreign policy support. Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser (1999) find that "the presence of a national interest activates a militarist disposition but nullifies the effect of isolationism [as isolationists] can be convinced that intervention is necessary when a convincing case is made that U.S. interests are at stake" (563). Similarly, public support is higher when the principal policy objective of the crisis is more aligned with national and strategic interests (Jentleson 1992). Foreign policy support can also be measured as likelihood of punishing the president if he backs down in a crisis. Clare (2007) finds that publics are significantly more likely to punish leaders who back down from a salient issue than a low-salient issue of lower strategic value. Thus, while "backing down in what the public considers a low salience crisis will not necessarily result in a leader's removal from office...if a leader issues a threat on a highly salient issue, it is reasonable to expect the public to see the failure to stand firm as a sign of incompetence, and the public would therefore have an incentive to remove him/her from office" (Clare 2007, 736). While not the only way that presidents may raise the stakes of a crisis, divine election cues' framing of foreign policy

with the perspective of the sacred can be effective in imbuing a crisis with greater national and strategic interests.

The 1999 Kosovo crisis illustrates how the use of divine election cues, in this case by President Bill Clinton, raised the strategic and national interest salience of the crisis. After the failure of peace talks in February of 1999 and the start of a NATO bombing campaign in late March, Democratic and Republican support for a potential deployment of ground troops was decreasing rapidly. On April 15th, in a question and answer session with newspaper editors in San Francisco, President Bill Clinton closed his comments by arguing for new political perspectives in Kosovo. He described conditions on the ground in Kosovo as “a zero-sum game. You kick me out of my village; I’ll kick you out of your village.” President Clinton then invoked divine election theology, saying “the Bible says, wisely ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish.’ We need to have an alternative vision...They need to have more to gain by working together than they do by having constant fights with one another. They need to have—and we need to reach out and lift up, there.” More than using religious doctrine, in this case the authority of Scripture, to justify new political understandings, President Clinton argued that America has both the God-given vision that can restore peace in Kosovo and the responsibility to help “and lift up” Kosovo in obtaining peace. President Clinton’s use of this and subsequent divine election framed the crisis with religious meanings. Kosovo was no longer just a faraway crisis but one that required American action as the US has both this new vision and an obligation to intervene in Kosovo to help the fighting parties realize and obtain peace and reconciliation.

Evidence of divine election cue mobilization effects is found in trends in support for ground troops before and after President Clinton's divine election cue. As Figure 1 shows, before the divine election speech on the 54th day of the crisis, support for Ground troops was decreasing among both Democrats and Republicans.⁸



First divine election cue: Day 54
Dotted lines are counterfactual predicted support if divine election cue is not used

Figure 1: Support for Ground troops in 1999 Kosovo Crisis

⁸ The slope of the linear fit line is -1.01 (p=.03) among Democrats and -.32 (p=.26) among Republicans.

However, after April 15th, support for Ground troops was no longer declining but increasing among both Democrats and Republicans.⁹ The effectiveness of the divine election cue is evident when comparing the observed increase in support for Ground troops with the counterfactual expected decrease in support if President Clinton had not used the divine election cue.¹⁰ Though President Clinton never authorized the use of ground troops, the increased support for a potential use of Ground troops illustrates how divine election cues that elevate the geostrategic and national interests salience of the crisis are effective in mobilizing greater foreign policy support.

Second, divine election cues increase the public's expectations of success. As the author of the epistle to the Romans encouraged the first Christians that "if God is for us, who can be against us" (Romans 8:31), so divine election cues that remind the public God is on America's side increases public confidence that America will succeed. This is a bold claim that God is not neutral but for America, an ally that never disappoints or shirks. Moreover, God's providence on America is evident in her abundant resources and capabilities. America is blessed with this power because "God chose America to bless the nations of the world" (Roof 2009, 288). Expectations of success are bolstered not only because Americans can have faith God will intervene in extraordinary or miraculous ways but also because they can see how God has already endowed America with extraordinary resources and power.

When Americans are more confident of success, they are more supportive of the president's foreign policy agenda. Eichenberg (2005) finds that expectations of success

⁹ After the divine election cue, the slope of the linear fit line among Democrats is .40 ($p=.00$) and .19 ($p=.07$) among Republicans.

¹⁰ Divine election cue mobilization effects are calculated comparing the slopes of the linear fit lines before and after divine election cue. Here, I find statistically significant evidence of mobilization effects among Democrats ($p=.00$) and Republicans ($p=.09$)

are a key determinant of foreign policy support. For example, support for intervention in civil wars is low because the public believes that “civil wars are particularly intractable because of their zero-sum nature...defining “success” in such situations is difficult, and achieving it more difficult still” (Eichenberg 2005, 175). While unlikely to support crises with low expectations of success, the public is more supportive when they are more confident of mission success, most notably, when they are reminded that God is on America’s side, an ally more powerful and reliable than any multilateral partner. Similarly, Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler (2006) find that foreign policy support, measured as tolerance for casualties, is “primarily shaped by the intersection of two crucial attitudes: beliefs about the rightness or wrongness of the war, and beliefs about a war’s likely success [with] beliefs about the likelihood of success matter[ing] most in determining the public’s willingness to tolerate U.S. military deaths in combat” (8). Divine election cues increase confidence that America’s cause is right and that America since America is both fighting *for* God and *with* God on her side.

The 1990 Gulf War illustrates how the use of divine election cue can further increase expectations of success and mobilize greater foreign policy support. During the autumn of 1990, amidst the national debate about whether the US should use military force to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait as the first American troops were beginning to be deployed to the Persian Gulf, public support for Ground troops and Foreign policy approval of President George Bush’s handling of the crisis was declining among both Republicans and Democrats.¹¹ That changed on November 2, 1990 with President

¹¹ The negative slope coefficients for support of Ground troops (-.10, p=.01) and Foreign policy approval (-.12, p=.07) reflect declining support among Republicans. Similarly, there is evidence of declining support among Democrats; the slope of the linear fit line for support for Ground troops is negative (-.25, p=.00) while the negative -.13 slope for Foreign policy approval is not statistically significant (p=.18).

Bush’s Proclamation for a National Day of Prayer. In the speech, President Bush quotes the Psalms to remind the American people that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” He also reaffirmed God’s blessing and empowering of America, saying that “we know that military strength alone cannot save a nation or bring it prosperity and peace; as the Scripture speaks, “Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” Finally, he urged the American public to “give thanks to God for His mercy and goodness and humbly to ask for His continued help and guidance in all our endeavors.”

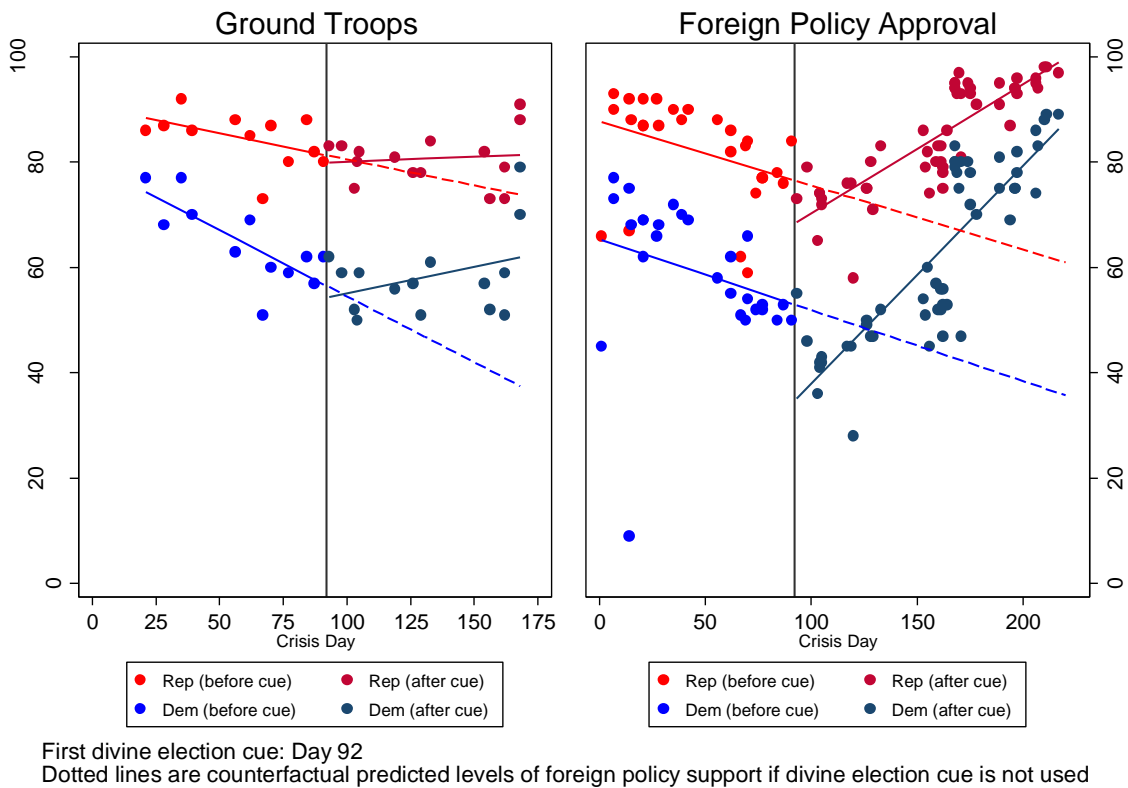


Figure 2: Support for Ground troops and Foreign policy approval in 1990 Gulf War

The effect of the divine election cue is summarized in Figure 2. After the divine election cue, Republican support for Ground troops was no longer decreasing while Foreign policy approval increased.¹² Similarly, Democrats' support for Ground troops was no longer declining while their Approval of President Bush's handling of the crisis was increasing.¹³ Compared to the counterfactual of continued declines in foreign policy support if President Bush had not used divine election cues, there is strong evidence of divine election cue mobilization effects.¹⁴ Therefore, by reminding and reaffirming that God is on America's side and will help America achieve its strategic objectives, President Bush's divine election cues increase public confidence and expectations of success, leading to higher support for and approval of his foreign policy.

Empirical Effects of Divine Election Cues

While effective, presidential use of divine election cues does not give them carte blanche to justify any political action and mobilize foreign policy support for an unlimited range of foreign policy strategies. Contrary to some scholars who claim religiously motivated actors become irrational or a-rational as religious framing prompts actors to view politics "with a moral significance that elevates them above and beyond a utilitarian-instrumental plane (Tiryakian 1982, 359), domestic audiences who hear religious cues remain rational in weighing the costs and benefits of the president's

¹² After the divine election cue, the slope of the linear fit line for Republicans' support for Ground troops is .02 (p=.73) while the slope of Foreign policy approval is .18 (p=.00)

¹³ After the divine election cue, the slope of the linear fit line for Democrats' support for Ground troops is .10 (p=.23) while the slope of Foreign policy approval is .31 (p=.00)

¹⁴ Among Republicans, the difference in slopes of linear fit lines before and after the divine election cue is statistically significant for their support for Ground troops (p=.08) and Foreign policy approval (p=.00). Similarly, among Democrats, the difference in slopes of linear fit lines before and after the divine election cue is statistically significant for their support for Ground troops (p=.00) and Foreign policy approval (p=.00).

foreign policy strategy. Religious cues are like secular cues that prompt individuals to update their foreign policy preferences and expectations. While drawing on different justifications and rationales, religious cues do not turn prudent publics (Jentleson and Britton 1998; Jentleson 1992) into unthinking mobs driven by religious passions and sacred bloodlust for violence. Despite the claims of scholars like Ginges and Atran (2011) that religion makes Americans “relatively insensitive to material consequences or to instrumental preferences regarding risk when making choices about the use of intergroup violence” (2936), divine election cues do not make Americans less rational but affects their value rankings such that they make different decisions based on an updated set of beliefs and preferences. Indeed, though publics may become more risk accepting because they believe success is more assured, they do not become warmongers eager to “give everything and fear nothing even...death” (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2000, 656).

Divine election cues may also be perceived as bad theology by very religious Americans who view the exclusivist interpretation of America as God’s chosen nation to be bad theology and the misappropriation of biblical concepts. They are likely to be familiar with the complete Biblical canon and would recognize that claims of unique blessing ignore biblical passages such as the Apostle Paul’s invitation to “Gentiles and Jews to join the Christian movement [such that] no single nation could claim exclusive redemption or a preferential status in the history of salvation” (Lehmann and Hutchison 1994, 294). Very religious Americans would also recognize that the use of religious terminology and Christian phraseology can be misused to convey extra-biblical implications. For example, though President Reagan used what seemed to be orthodox “city on a hill” rhetoric, his “theology had little to do with seventeenth-century Calvinist

views of God's sovereignty, man's depravity and Christianity's call to a life of repentance and self-denial. Indeed, Regan's optimism aligned him more closely with Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Transcendentalists' Over Soul than with anything resembling Puritanism" (Gamble 2012, 141). Religious Americans for whom faith in God is greater than any sacralized national identity are likely to recognize the misuse of theology and Scripture since

An understanding [of America as God's chosen nation] is made possible only by a separation of the story about God's providential appointment of America as a this-worldly new Israel, on the one hand, from the story of the salvation of souls in Christ for eternity, on the other. Both parts can seem to fit together because they make use of selected elements in the biblical narrative, even though the dualistic, synthetic result represents a deformation of the biblical story (Skillen 2010, 108)

There is evidence that religious Americans do reject attempts to use or instrumentalize religion for political ends. During the Civil War, some Christians found public confidence and "clarity about the workings of divine providence [problematic] because God appeared to be acting so strikingly at odds with himself [and] the assumptions on which the interpretation of providence was based flawed" (Noll 2006, 75). Similarly, "the religious rhetoric of President Bush's foreign policy [is] upsetting to some conservative and many mainline Christians who fear the contamination of their religious faith by earthly politics. This is especially true among those evangelical Protestants who attend church most often" (Froese and Mencken 2009, 112). Indeed, while some religious Americans may "want the values embodied in religious teachings to be part of politics, they do not think policies should be based only on religious arguments or that policy makers should justify initiatives by crediting themselves with divine insight" (Wuthnow 2010, 231).

The efficacy of divine election cues are also restricted by similar constraints as secular cues. First, cue effects are temporally bounded. Early in a crisis, cues are very effective; however, as domestic audiences “catch up” and become more informed about the emerging foreign policy crisis vis-à-vis elite cue-givers, the ability of elite cues to shape foreign policy attitudes decrease (Baum and Groeling 2010). Second, effectiveness of elite cues in shaping the public’s foreign policy attitudes is moderated by domestic audiences’ preexisting foreign policy dispositions and attitudes, especially predispositions about militarism, internationalism, and chauvinism (Herrmann, Isernia, and Segatti 2009; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Peffley and Hurwitz 1993). While the content of predispositions matter, the confidence domestic audiences have in their predispositions also matter since “strong predispositions reduce framing effects by increasing one’s resistance to disconfirming information” (Chong and Druckman 2007, 111). Third, situational factors such as competing frames or cues (Druckman 2004), media coverage of elites’ foreign policy speeches (Baum and Groeling 2010), and presidents’ preexisting popularity (Peffley, Langley, and Goidel 1995) affect the effectiveness of elite cues.

Divine election cues do differ significantly from secular cues in that their effects are not bounded by partisanship. When presidents use secular cues, they can only effectively mobilize and increase foreign policy support among co-partisans from the same party (Baum and Potter 2008; Berinsky and Druckman 2007; Berinsky 2007; Drury et al. 2008; Gelpi 2010; Groeling and Baum 2008; Trager and Vavreck 2011). However, divine election cues can mobilize both co-partisans *and* contra-partisans because it activates religious identities that are more fundamental than political affiliation. The

sacredlization of a particular political agenda can also undermine opposition to sacredlized objectives or strategies. By appealing to shared religious identities and belongings, political actors use religion to make “higher-order claims on behavior than do claims by groups organized around purely ethnic, linguistic, or cultural lines. [Since] it is hard to argue with the messenger of God telling you what to do, the behavioral demands are absolute compared to the sometimes ambiguous behavioral norms of citizenship” (Horowitz 2009, 168). When political actors use religion, they appeal to domestic public’s latent religious identities and belongings that can be more important than political attachments. For many, religious identities are often “at the core of individual and group identity” (Seul 1999, 558). As a fundamental identity, religious belongings are not like other identities or affiliations “that individuals adopt or discard with relative ease [but] operate at a much “deeper” or “thicker” level than, for example, identification with a particular political party or ethnic group” (Nexon 2011, 146). By invoking religions, political actors hope to activate religious identities; if successful, publics otherwise likely to oppose them due to contra-partisan attachments may be more receptive or even support actors based on shared religious commitments.

Religious and social demographics reveal the partisan and crossover partisan mobilization effectiveness of divine election cues. Divine election cues are effective among religious Americans and less effective among less religious more secular Americans. Given the distribution of religious Americans across the partisan spectrum, divine election cues should appeal to both conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats. This is evident based on demographic data from the American National Election Survey. Using frequency of attendance at church or other religious services as a

proxy for religiosity, Figure 3 summarizes the proportion of Republicans and Democrats who attend church at least once weekly and those who never attend church.

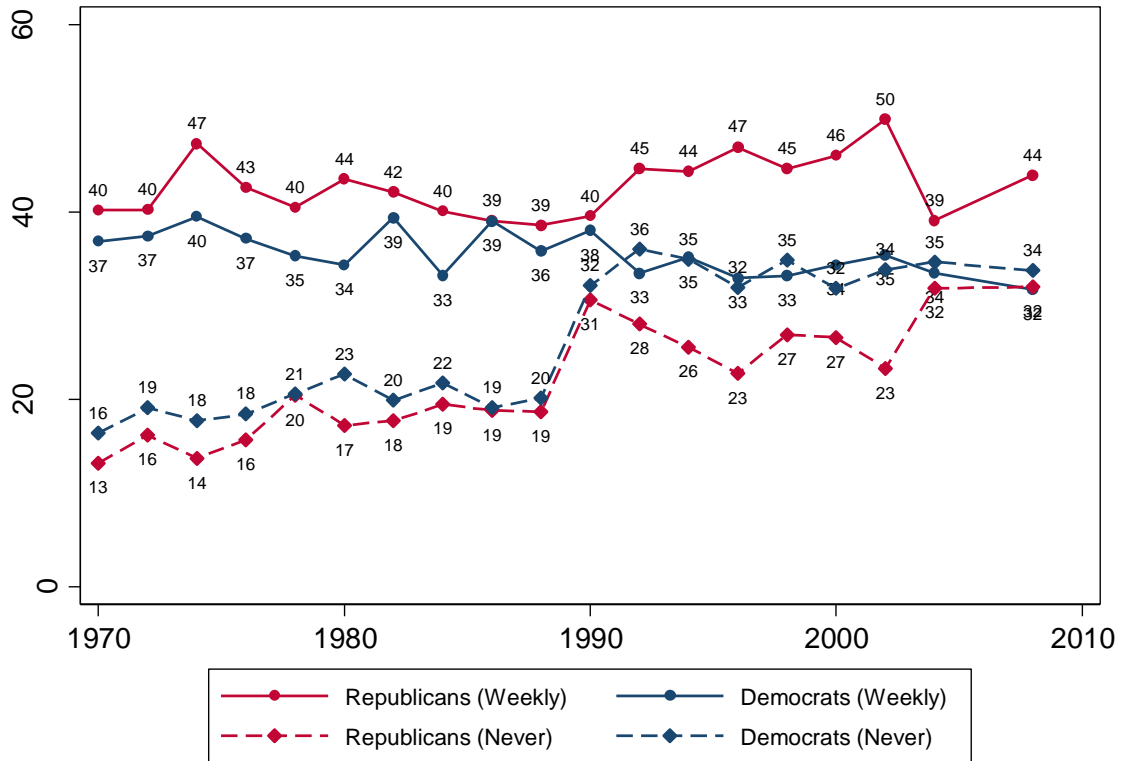


Figure 3: Church Attendance by Party

While a higher proportion of Republicans are weekly attenders, there are still significant numbers of Democrats who are weekly attenders. Despite the increase in Republicans and Democrats who never attend church beginning in the 1990s, there has been no significant decrease in the proportion of those who attend church weekly. Even in 2004 where never attenders were at the highest proportion, approximately 4 in 10 Republicans and 1 in 3 Democrats attended church every week. As a robustness check, I

calculate changes in religiosity of Republicans and Democrats over time with a 5-point measure of church attendance. The results, summarized in Figure 22 in the Appendix, show that average religiosity of Republicans and Democrats have been relatively stable from 1970 to 2008. Though there is a slight decrease in average religiosity among Republicans (from 2.26 in 1970 to 1.99) and Democrats (from 2.12 in 1970 to 1.71 in 2008), on average, partisans still attend church or other religious services about once or twice a month. Using other measures of religiosity, Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2011) point out that “similar percentages of [partisans] are very involved in church activities [and] say religion is very important in their lives” (180). Therefore, given the sizable number of both Republicans and Democrats who are religious, presidents can mobilize new coalitions of foreign policy support among both co-partisans *and* contra-partisans.

Hypotheses

Presidential divine election cues transform political pulpits into religious pulpits and foreign policy speeches into sermons. In the same way that sermons imagine new religious realities, so divine election cues imagine and imbue politics with religious meanings. When presidents use divine election cues, it raises the stakes of a crisis and increases confidence of success. Since these two attitudes are important predictors of foreign policy support, these two framing effects result in higher foreign policy support.

In contrast to secular cues that only mobilize co-partisans, divine election cues enable presidents to mobilize co-partisans *and* contra-partisans because there are significant number of religious Republicans and Democrats. Therefore, when presidents use divine election cues, they mobilize co-partisans; this co-partisan mobilization effect is summarized in H1 below. Divine election cues also generate contra-partisan

mobilization effects as contra-partisans otherwise likely to oppose the president are swayed by presidents' religious framing of the crisis; this is summarized in H2 below.

H1: Divine election cues mobilize greater foreign policy support among co-partisans than secular cues.

H2: Divine election cues mobilize greater foreign policy support among contra-partisans than secular cues

While having overall effects on partisans, divine election cue effects have greater effects on more religious respondents. Since divine election cues are effective because they frame crises with religious meanings and significance, such framing resonates more with partisans already more religious. By implication, I expect divine election cues to be ineffective or even alienate secular and low religious Americans likely to reject the greater integration of religion in politics. The moderation of divine election cue effects by religiosity is summarized in H3 below.

H3: Divine election cues are more effective among more religious partisans and have marginal if not negative effects on less religious secular partisans.

Empirical Testing

To test these hypotheses, I examine the effect of presidents' divine election cues on foreign policy support during US foreign policy crises from 1946 to 2007 ("effects of causes"). After identifying when presidents have used divine election cues, I compare support for use of force, ground troops, and approval of the president's handling of the foreign policy crisis before and after these critical junctures. This allows testing of the two main mobilization hypotheses, that divine election cues mobilize greater foreign policy support among co-partisans (*H1*) and contra-partisans (*H2*) than secular cues. The lack of historical data on respondents' religiosity means that I cannot test whether religiosity moderates divine election cue effects (*H3*) across the entire post-World War

Two era. While foreign policy polls that also ask about respondents' religiosity are not common until the 2000s, I use data on whether respondents identify with a religious tradition as a proxy for religiosity. Focusing on polls fielded during crises in the 2000s, especially the 2003 Iraq War, I compare if divine election mobilization effects differ across respondents' religiosity.

As a further test of the divine election mobilization mechanism, I use a survey experiment to examine how the divine election cue treatment increases foreign policy support. In the experiment, I vary the partisanship of the president, whether the president uses divine election cues, and the outcome of the crisis. The experiment directly tests the divine election cue mechanism ("causes of effects"), specifically if it has expected framing effects in elevating the geopolitical stakes of the crisis and increasing expectations of victory. It also tests divine election cue effects ("effects of causes") both when the president is successful and when the president is unsuccessful. While I expect divine election cues to increase foreign policy support among both co-partisans and contra-partisans when the president is successful, I also expect to find divine election punishment effects where those receiving the divine election cue are more disapproving if the president backs down in the crisis. The results of the experiment will provide evidence of divine election cue effects on co-partisans (*H1*) and contra-partisans (*H2*). Since the experiment also contains measures of respondents' religiosity, findings will reveal how religiosity moderates the effectiveness of divine election cues such that mobilization effects are greater more religious respondents but weaker if not negative among more secular respondents (*H3*).

Chapter 3: Presidents' Use of Divine Election Cues

Activating Religion with Divine Election Cues

In America's domestic and international political arenas, religion is a powerful social and political mobilization tool. However, it is latent unless activated. To use religion's potential political power, presidents can invoke religion in their political rhetorics. When presidents use religious rhetoric in a foreign policy crisis, they imbue the crisis with religious meanings and significance. In the previous chapter, I describe how presidents' use of a specific type of religious rhetoric, divine election rhetoric, are foreign policy cues that raises the strategic and national salience of a crisis and increases the public's expectations of victory. In this chapter, I describe when presidents use divine election cues during foreign policy crises. From 1946 to 2007, the US was involved in 244 foreign policy crises. From the corpus of all foreign policy speeches presidents made in 147 crises, I use manual content analysis to identify presidents' use of divine election cues in 23 crises.

After identifying when presidents use divine election cues, I analyze factors predicting when religion is invoked. While Republican presidents use divine election cues more, the likelihood and frequency of their use of divine election cues is not

statistically greater than that of Democratic presidents. I then examine how geostrategic factors, the identity of the crisis opponent, and domestic political factors affect the likelihood presidents use divine election cues. The results reveal that presidents are more likely to use divine election cues when the US is a crisis actor, the initiating event triggering the event is not violent, and the initial threat to the US is not especially grave. These findings are consistent with the expectation that presidents are more likely to use divine election cues when geopolitical stakes are low since divine election cues are effective by raising the salience of a crisis; by contrast, if geopolitical stakes are already high, there is less need and a higher risk of over-escalation when presidents use divine election cues.

Presidential Use of Foreign policy Rhetoric

Using the International Crisis Behavior dataset (ICB), I identify 244 foreign policy crises the United States has been involved in between 1946 to 2007.¹⁵ I then cross-reference this list of crises with presidential statements about each crisis in the *Public Papers of the President* database, an online database of presidential messages, statements, speeches, and news conference remarks.¹⁶ I search by the crisis keyword and opponent actor across the start and end date of the crisis as described in the ICB dataset. The results return every speech in which presidents mention the crisis keyword at least once. Since presidents may speak about a foreign policy crisis across multiple speaking opportunities each day, each of which is included as a separate entry in the *Public Papers*

¹⁵ I use the “usinv” variable in the ICB dataset to identify the crises that the US was a participant of. The measure ranges from 1-4; a value of 1 indicates that the “US was not active”, a value of 2 indicates “low-level US activity”, a 3 indicates “US covert or semi-military action”, and a 4 indicates “US direct military activity.” I include all crises where the “usinv” variable was at least 2, corresponding to low-level or higher US activity.

¹⁶ <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/>

of the President, I collect all speech(es) made from any particular day into a single speech day record. I exclude any presidential comments that do not directly address an ongoing foreign policy crisis.¹⁷ The unit of analysis of the foreign policy rhetorical dataset is crisis speech day, all public statements from the president on a single day about a specific foreign policy crisis. In total, the foreign policy rhetoric dataset I construct contains 1988 crisis speech day observations.

Sorting speech day observations by foreign policy crises, I find presidents make at least one public statement about a foreign policy crisis in 147 of 244 cases (60%). Presidential partisanship does not predict whether the president will speak publicly about a crisis. Republican presidents spoke publicly in 76 out of 133 crises (57%) while Democratic presidents spoke publicly in 71 of 111 crises (64%); the difference in likelihood of speaking about the crisis is not statistically significant ($p=.28$). Another way to measure presidents' use of foreign policy is the average number of speech days or days presidents speak at least once publicly about a foreign policy crisis. Across the 244 foreign policy crises, the average number of speeches presidents make in a crisis is 8.14; the median number of speeches per crisis is 1. There are 32 foreign policy crises where presidents speak only once during the crisis; by contrast, President Clinton spoke on 201 speech days during the 1992-1995 Bosnia foreign policy crisis. Just as there is no statistically significant difference in likelihood of Republican or Democratic presidents speaking, I find no difference in frequency of speeches by presidential partisanship. Republican presidents average 7.36 speech days per crisis while Democratic presidents average 9.08 speech days per crisis; the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.51$).

¹⁷ For example, I exclude all sections of the State of the Union where the president is talking about domestic politics or other foreign policy issues or all presidential responses to questions from the White House Press Corps that do not directly ask about the ongoing foreign policy crises.

Finally, I measure use of foreign policy rhetoric as a proportion of crisis duration. Since there are more opportunities for presidents to speak in longer crises, the speech days as a proportion of crisis days accounts for differences in opportunities to speak. On average, presidents speak on 11% of crisis days; the median frequency is 6%. The highest frequency of speech days as a proportion of total crisis days was during the 1998 Embassy Bombing crises when President Clinton spoke on 8 of 13 days in the crisis (61%). On average, Republican presidents spoke on 5% of crisis days while Democratic presidents spoke on 8% of crisis days; the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.13$). Therefore, across multiple ways to measure presidents' use of foreign policy rhetoric, Republican and Democratic presidents do not differ in how much and how frequently they speak publicly during foreign policy crises.

I then examine individual presidents' use of foreign policy rhetoric. Using the same three measures of foreign policy rhetoric, I compare when eleven presidents from Harry Truman to George W. Bush spoke during foreign policy crises. Results are summarized in Figure 4 below. President George Bush was least likely to speak during a foreign policy crisis, making foreign policy statements in only 36% of crises. By contrast, President Bill Clinton was most loquacious, making foreign policy statements in 88% of crises. Pearson Chi-square tests reveal that there are statistically significant differences in the likelihood presidents speak publicly during a foreign policy crisis ($p=.04$). Comparing the average number of times presidents speak during crises, the results reveal President Clinton used foreign policy rhetoric most frequently. While on average speaking 19 times during a foreign policy crisis, Presidents Dwight Eisenhower,

John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan average less than a half dozen foreign policy speech days during foreign policy crises.

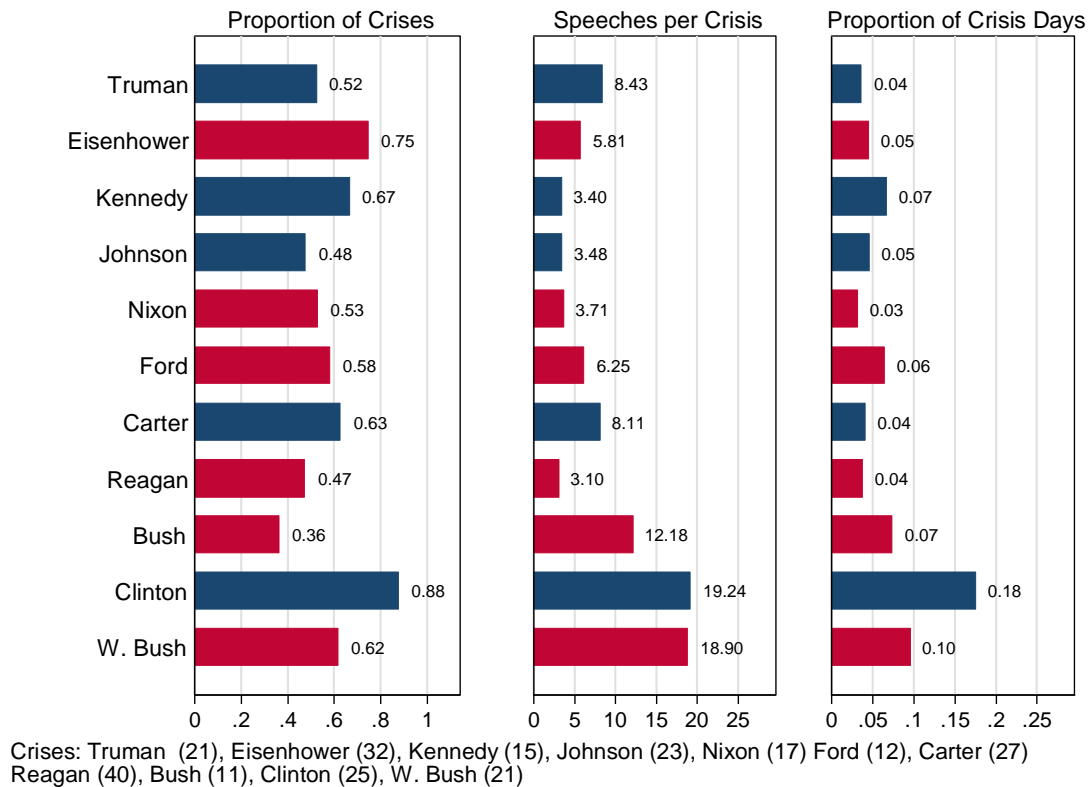


Figure 4: Presidents’ Use of Foreign policy Rhetoric

However, there are no statistically significant correlations in frequency of speeches by president ($p=.30$). Finally, comparing presidents’ use of foreign policy rhetoric as a proportion of crisis duration, President Bill Clinton is most likely to speak during foreign policy crises. However, there is no evidence of significant difference in speech days as a proportion of crisis duration by individual presidencies ($p=.64$).

The results reveal no systematic differences in when and how frequently Republican and Democratic presidents speak publicly during foreign policy crises. Though there is variation in the likelihood individual presidents speak during a foreign policy crisis and some presidents like Bill Clinton are especially loquacious, there are no statistically significant differences in the frequency that individual presidents use foreign policy rhetoric measured as speech days or as a proportion of total crisis duration. These findings suggest presidents have the same baseline opportunity to use divine election cues.

Presidential Use of Divine Election Religious Rhetoric

I then analyze when and how frequently presidents use divine election rhetoric. Since there is no existing religious rhetoric dictionary, much less a divine election rhetoric dictionary that can guide automated or semi-automated content analysis, I manually code uses of divine election cues from a close reading of all foreign policy speeches on the 1988 crisis speech days. I use a two-step identification strategy. First, I use a “wide-net” strategy to identify all speeches that contain religious rhetoric. Second, I use a “fine-comb” strategy where I go over the corpus of religious rhetoric to highlight speeches presidents use divine election rhetoric.

In the first step of identifying if a speech contains religious rhetoric, I create a preliminary list of religious keywords that presidents may use, updating the list as I find other religious phraseology that emerges in presidential foreign policy rhetoric. This dictionary contains words that directly refer to religion (*religion, religious, spiritual, faith, Christian, God, Lord, Almighty, heaven*) and religious practices (*pray, worship, bless, church, Bible, scripture*). I do not count speeches that contain phrases that have

ambiguous religious meanings (*good, evil, justice, hope, freedom*). With the rising political significance of Islam, I update my religious dictionary with words specific to Islamic practice and belief (*Islam, Moslem, Muslim, mosque, jihad, Shia, Sunni*). Using this “wide-net” identification strategy, I identify 328 speech-days where presidents made speeches containing these religious words.

I then use a “fine-comb” strategy to differentiate divine election religious rhetoric from more generic non-divine election religious rhetoric.¹⁸ As discussed in the previous chapter, divine election rhetoric differs from other types of religious rhetoric in three main ways. First, I classify a speech as containing divine election rhetoric when it contains explicit and intentional imbuing of foreign policy with religious significance and meanings. While generic religious phrases like “God bless America” are understood as cultural colloquialisms that do not significantly imbue a political situation with greater religious meanings, divine election rhetoric such as “the liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity” (1/28/2003) represents an explicit imbuing of religious meanings and significance with a particular political or geostrategic agenda. Similarly, divine election rhetoric is different from rhetoric where presidents seek to deemphasize the religious nature of a crisis, for example when President George W. Bush repeatedly claimed that America’s “enemy is not Islam” (10/6/2001) or that “our war on terrorism has nothing to do with differences in faith” (10/11/2001) in the buildup to the invasion of Afghanistan. Instead, divine election rhetoric intentionally emphasizes and interjects religion into foreign policy, for example, when asking “in all that lies before

¹⁸ I do not further categorize non-divine election religious rhetoric since I expect most Americans are unable to further differentiate religious rhetoric by their theological implications, thematic emphasis, or differing theological conceptualizations of God.

us...God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America”
(9/20/2001).

Second, religious rhetoric is classified as divine election rhetoric when presidents claim that God is on our (America’s) side and empowering America to fulfill a sacred mission. Divine election rhetoric affirms the involvement of God in the matters of man and especially the interests of the United States, His chosen agent. Contrary to other types of religious rhetoric that merely acknowledges the presence of God in human affairs, for example, stating that “Communism attacks our main basic values, our belief in God” (12/5/1950), divine election rhetoric affirms that God is empowering America to “accomplish the purpose which God intended us to accomplish” (5/18/1951). Divine election rhetoric reaffirms that since God is for America and America is fighting for God, so the public can be confident and “know that, God willing, this is a war we will win” (1/28/1991). In reminding Americans that God “is good, for His mercy endureth forever” (4/3/1951), divine election cues prompt the faithful to renew their efforts and be confident of victory, to “mount up on the wings of eagles, run and not grow weary” (5/28/1965).

Beyond imbuing politics with religious meanings and reminding Americans of how God is empowering and for America, divine election rhetoric explicitly interprets political action as religious responsibility. Divine election rhetoric is a call to action. As President Harry Truman explains, “God has created us and brought us to our present position of power and strength for some great purpose. And up to now we have been shirking it. Now we are assuming it, and now we must carry it through” (4/3/1951). As America is blessed by God, so it must act for God. Political inaction is not just a

geostrategic mistake but a rejection and abrogation of God's empowering of America. President Lyndon Johnson described it best when he said that "belief in a divine providence is not-then--an escape or a tranquilizer. It is rather a compelling challenge to men to attain the ideals of liberty, justice, peace, and compassion. It is often--as it is today in Vietnam --a call for very great sacrifice" (2/1/1968).

Using this criterion, I identify presidents as using divine election rhetoric in 23 of 147 crises where they speak publicly about the foreign policy crisis.¹⁹ Table 1 below summarizes the crises in which presidents have used divine election religious cues. Across the sample of crises where presidents speak publicly about the crisis, divine election rhetoric is used in 16% of crises. Republican presidents use divine election rhetoric in 16% of crises and Democratic presidents use it in 15% of crises; while Republican presidents are more likely to use divine election rhetoric in a crisis, the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.96$). I also examine presidents' use of divine election rhetoric as a proportion of all foreign policy rhetoric. This is calculated by dividing the total number of divine election religious rhetoric speech days by the number of crisis speech days. While Republican presidents use divine election cues in 3% of speech days, Democratic presidents use them in 2% of speech days; the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.60$). Finally, I compare when presidents first use divine election cues in crises. Republican presidents' average first use of divine election cues is on the 46th day while Democratic presidents' average first use is on the 160th day; when excluding the Bosnia crisis outlier where President Clinton first used divine election cues on the 1264th day of the crisis, Democratic presidents' average first use of divine election

¹⁹ Of the 328 crisis speech days I identify presidents as using religious rhetoric, they use divine election rhetoric on 86 days. This means that the majority of religious rhetoric used is not divine election rhetoric (74%) and just over 1 in 4 speeches with religious rhetoric contain divine election cues (26%).

cues is on the 50th day of the crisis. Regardless whether including ($p=.30$) or excluding the Bosnia crisis outlier ($p=.87$), there are no differences in how quickly Republican or Democratic presidents use divine election cues.

President	Crisis	Crisis Name	Crisis Duration	Crisis days where divine election cues are used	Total divine election cues
Truman	132	Korean War (1)	99	24, 26, 68, 76	4
	133	Korean War (2)	284	17, 35, 76, 77, 85, 185, 230, 237, 268	9
Eisenhower	140	Korean War (3)	103	101	1
	145	Dien Bien Phu	131	41	1
	154	Poland Liberalization	8	5	1
	155	Hungarian Uprising	84	9, 48	2
	168	Berlin Deadline	293	109, 128	2
Kennedy	196	Cuban Missile	36	6	1
Johnson	215	Dominican Intervention	130	34, 115	2
	225	Tet Offensive	62	2, 31, 46, 49, 59	5
Nixon	227	Prague Spring	193	143, 154	2
	246	Vietnam Ports Mining	112	39	1
	258	Final North Vietnam Offensive	138	117	1
Carter	309	US Hostages in Iran	443	82, 117, 323	3
Reagan	363	Gulf of Syrte (2)	29	5, 23	2
Bush	391	Invasion of Panama	26	6	1
	393	Gulf War	254	91, 178, 181, 183, 248	5
Clinton	403	Bosnia	1359	1264, 1327, 1350, 1358	4
	421	Zaire Civil War	221	39	1
	422	UNSCOM (1)	102	96	1
	430	Kosovo	111	54, 74, 100, 102, 110	5
W. Bush	434	Afghanistan	88	9, 20, 23, 26, 35, 36, 49, 60, 61, 79	10
	440	Invasion of Iraq	232	23, 32, 49, 50, 51, 82, 138, 139, 150, 151, 155, 161, 167, 175, 186, 194, 195, 211, 212, 224, 228, 231	22
# of Crises	23			# Divine election cues	86

Table 1: Presidential Use of Divine Election Cues in Foreign policy Crises

I also examine how individual presidents use divine election cues; results are summarized in Figure 5 below.

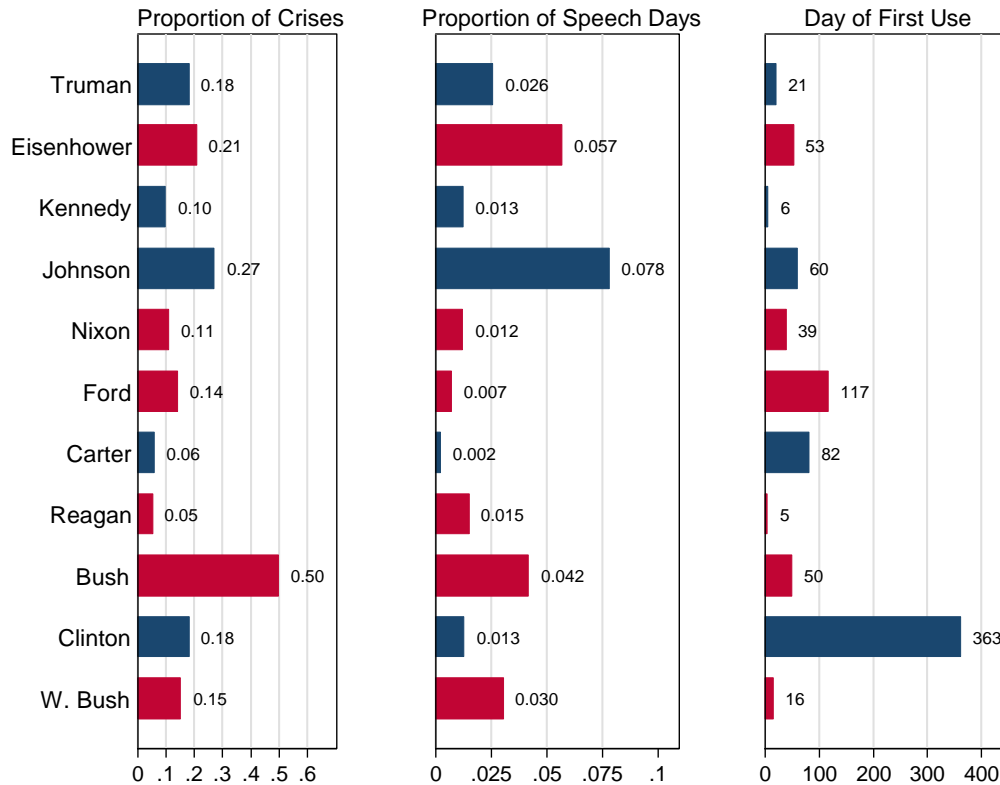


Figure 5: Use of Divine Election Cues by President

First, I examine the proportion of crises in which presidents use divine election cues. Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter are least likely to use divine election rhetoric, only using divine election rhetoric in 5% and 6% of crises respectively. By contrast, President Lyndon Johnson is more than four times more likely to use divine election rhetoric (27%) while Presidents Harry Truman (18%), Dwight Eisenhower

(21%), and Bill Clinton (18%) are three times more likely to use divine election rhetoric. President George Bush has the highest rate of using divine election rhetoric (50%), though this proportion may be misleading as he only spoke publicly about four foreign policy crises during his administration and used divine election rhetoric in two crises. While there are differences in the likelihood presidents use divine election rhetoric, the differences are not statistically significant ($p=.58$).

Second I compare how frequently presidents use divine election cues measured as a proportion of total number of speech days. This measure accounts for both the frequency of presidents' use of divine election cues and presidents' total foreign policy speeches. I find President Lyndon Johnson is most likely to use divine election cues on a speech day, using it in 8% of foreign policy speeches. By contrast, Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter are very unlikely to use divine election cues, each using divine election cues in less than 1% of speech days. While there is a range in the probability presidents use divine election cues in a foreign policy speech, differences are not statistically significant ($p=.24$).

Finally, I compare how quickly presidents use divine election cues in a crisis. President John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan are quickest to use divine election cues, with average use being the first week of the crisis. Presidents George W. Bush and Harry Truman are also quick, using divine election cues within the first three weeks of crises. By contrast, Presidents Gerald Ford and Bill Clinton are slowest to use divine election cues. Even ignoring how the Bosnia crisis skews average day of first use for President Clinton (divine election cue first used on the 1264th day of the crisis), President Clinton's average first use of divine election cue is on the 65th day of the crisis. As with the other

two measures of presidential use of divine election cues, there are no statistically significant differences in how quickly presidents use divine election cues ($p=.41$).

Just as there are no differences in how Republican or Democratic presidents use foreign policy rhetoric, so I find no differences in how Republican or Democratic presidents use divine election cues. While Republican presidents use divine election cues in a greater proportion of crises, at a higher frequency, and more quickly than their Democratic counterparts, the differences are small and not statistically significant. This contradicts Domke and Coe (2008)'s conclusion that "it is far more difficult for the Democratic party to successfully implement the God strategy" and use religious rhetoric than Republican politicians (26). While Democratic presidents may be less able to invoke religion in domestic politics, I find Democratic presidents are not significantly less likely to invoke religion during foreign policy crises compared to Republican presidents.

When comparing individual presidents' use of divine election cues, I also find no statistically significant differences in their use of divine election cues. Contrary to the misconception that President George W. Bush was unique or exceptional in his use of divine election cues, he is not most likely to use divine election cues during a crisis; President Lyndon Johnson is most likely. Moreover, he uses divine election cues less frequently than Presidents Dwight Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson, and he is less quick to use divine election cues in a crisis than Presidents John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. While President Bush does extensively use divine election cues during the 2003 Iraq War, considering his full corpus of foreign policy rhetoric against that of his predecessors reveals that he is simply following in a long tradition of presidents who invoke religion

with divine election cues in foreign policy crises. Indeed, as Preston (2012) argues, in their foreign policy, presidents who are “religious liberals and conservatives, militants and pacifists, have all called upon God to sanctify their cause and all have viewed America as God’s chosen land” (4).

Predicting Presidential Use of Foreign policy Cues

While presidential partisanship does not predict presidents’ use of foreign policy rhetoric and whether they use divine election cues when speaking about a crisis, there may be other factors that affect presidents’ decision-making calculus. There are three types of factors that may influence the president’s decisionmaking in whether or not to speak publicly about the crisis: geostrategic factors, the identity of the opponent in the foreign policy crisis, and domestic political factors. When considering whether or not to speak publicly during a crisis, presidents must first consider the geostrategic stakes of the crisis. If a president speaks during a crisis, he is drawing public attention on an otherwise inconsequential foreign policy crisis. Thus, presidents are unlikely to speak if there are low geopolitical stakes at stake. By contrast, presidents are more likely to speak publicly in important crises that are likely to have high geopolitical stakes. Geostrategic stakes are measured with five variables: whether the US is a *Crisis Actor* in the crisis,²⁰ how far away the crisis is from American borders (*Location*), how violent the event that initiated the crisis (*Trigger*), the nature of the threat against the United States (*Gravity of Threat*), and whether a particular crisis has a wider geostrategic significance beyond the local region (*Geostrategic Saliience*).

²⁰ The US can be involved in a crisis but not a crisis actor if other actors’ foreign policy behavior was not directed at the US and the US did not play a direct role in the crisis.

Second, the identity of the opponent may affect whether or not presidents speak during a crisis. Presidents are likely to use foreign policy rhetoric if opponents are more powerful or if there is previous history with the opponent, for example as part of a protracted enduring rivalry. Given the potential for a more significant confrontation with this type of opponent, it is necessary for presidents to mobilize domestic audiences. Not only would stronger domestic support enable the president to pursue a wider range of diplomatic and military strategies, but it would also increase the credibility and bargaining power of the president vis-à-vis the opponent. Three variables measure opponent identity: a composite measure of how different an opponent actor is along military capabilities, political regime, economic system, and cultural attributes (*Heterogeneity*), the power of the opponent (*Opponent Power*), and whether the crisis is with an opponent the US has confronted as part of a protracted crisis (*Protracted Crisis*).

Third, domestic political factors can affect whether presidents use foreign policy rhetoric. Since the foreign policy rhetorics of elites like members of Congress are also cues that affect the public's foreign policy attitudes, presidents may need to speak more when the opponent party is the majority to counteract congressional elite cues. Initial foreign policy support for the president can also affect whether presidents use foreign policy rhetoric. When initial support is low, presidents are more likely to use foreign policy cues to (re)frame the crisis and mobilize greater foreign policy support. To account for domestic factors, I include measures of whether Republicans are the majority in the House (*Republican House*) and Senate (*Republican Senate*), if the president's party controls none, one, or both houses of Congress (*Congress Ally*), overall initial support for the president (*Initial Approval*), initial support among co-partisans (*Co-Partisan*

Approval) and contra-partisans (*Contra-Partisan Approval*),²¹ and the partisan gap in initial support (*Partisan Gap*).

To estimate how these three types of crisis-specific factors affect presidents' use of foreign policy cues, I compare differences in the average value of these predictors in crises in which presidents do not speak publicly about a crisis and those in which they use foreign policy rhetoric. I further compare crises in which presidents use secular cues versus crises in which divine election cues are used. The results summarized in Table 2 below reveal that geostrategic factors and identity of opponent vary by whether presidents use foreign policy rhetoric during a crisis. Compared to crises in which presidents do not speak publicly about the crisis, the US is more likely to be a crisis actor in crises in which presidents use foreign policy cues; crises in which presidents speak publicly also pose a greater threat to the US and are of higher geostrategic salience. The identity of the opponent is also a strong predictor of presidents speaking publicly during a crisis. The more different an opponent is from the US in its military capability, political, economic, and cultural attributes, the more powerful it is, and the more the US has interacted with the actor as part of a protracted crisis, the more likely it is that presidents will use foreign policy rhetoric in a crisis. However, domestic congressional composition and initial support for the president does not predict whether presidents use foreign policy rhetoric.

²¹ Since foreign policy approval polls are less frequent than presidential approval polls and both presidential and foreign policy approval polls are highly correlated, I use presidential approval as a proxy for initial public support for the president's foreign policy.

	Did President speak publicly?			Type of cue used		
	No Cue (n=97)	Cue Used (n=147)	Difference	Secular (n=123)	Divine election (n=23)	Difference
Geostrategic Factors						
US Actor (0-1)	.05	.39	.34***	.32	.74	.42***
Location (0-3)	.64	.78	.14	.73	1.04	.31
Trigger (1-9)	6.33	6.29	-.04	6.48	5.30	-1.17*
Gravity of Threat (1-7)	3.03	3.41	.38**	3.35	3.78	.44
Geostrategic Salience (1-5)	1.32	2.10	.78***	1.97	2.83	.86***
Opponent Identity						
Heterogeneity (1-5)	3.28	4.01	.73***	3.91	4.57	.66**
Opponent Power (1-4)	1.73	2.01	.28**	1.95	2.30	.35
Protracted Crisis (1-3)	1.57	1.92	.35***	1.91	1.96	.05
Domestic Factors						
Republican House (0-1)	.18	.27	.10*	.26	.30	.04
Republican Senate (0-1)	.35	.34	-.01	.35	.30	-.04
Congress Ally (1-3)	1.96	1.98	.02	1.98	1.96	-.03
Initial Approval (0-100)	54.60	55.52	.93	55.34	56.52	1.18
Co-partisan Approval (0-100)	76.22	78.28	2.06	79.91	80.00	.09
Contra-partisan Approval (0-100)	36.32	37.35	1.03	38.62	41.82	3.20
Partisan Gap (0-100)	39.90	40.93	1.03	41.29	38.19	-3.11

*p<.10 **p<.05 ***p<.01

Table 2: Crisis-Specific Factors by Presidents' Use of Foreign policy Cues

I also examine whether geostrategic factors, opponent identity, and domestic factors predict whether presidents use secular or divine election cues given crises in which presidents already use foreign policy rhetoric in that crisis. The results reveal that geostrategic factors and opponent identity predict whether presidents use divine election cues. In crises in which presidents use divine election cues, the US is more likely to be a crisis actor, geostrategic salience is higher, and opponent actors are more different than the US. However, there are no statistically significant differences in domestic factors between crises in which presidents use secular cues and those in which they use divine election cues.

While the above analysis examines how these separate factors may affect presidents' choice to use or not use foreign policy cues, multivariate models can estimate the simultaneous effects of these crisis-specific factors. In the models predicting if presidents use foreign policy cues and if they use secular or divine election cues, I also include a variable to differentiate between Republican and Democratic presidents (*Democratic President*). To account for temporal and period effects, I include a *Cold War* dummy variable to identify if the crisis occurred during the Cold War (1948-1991) and a *Year* measure for the year that the crisis started. The results of these models are summarized in Table 3 below.

The multivariate models reveal that geostrategic factors and opponent identity predict presidents' use of foreign policy rhetoric. Whether the US is a crisis actor and heterogeneity of the opponent are the only statistically significant predictors of presidents speaking publicly during a foreign policy crisis (model 3.1).

	(3.1) Use Foreign policy Cue	(3.2) Use Divine Election Cue	(3.3) Timing Divine Election Cue	(3.4) Sartori Selection model
<i>Geostrategic Factors</i>				
US Actor	2.07***	3.69***	42.20***	2.20***
Location	-.08	.02	.97	-.05
Trigger	.11*	-.25**	.89	-.12**
Gravity of Threat	-.04	-1.03**	.47*	-.54**
Geopolitical Salience	.40	.26	1.06	.17
<i>Opponent Identity</i>				
Heterogeneity	.11	-.14	.69	-.05
Opponent Power	.19	1.03***	2.35***	.58***
Protracted Crisis	.78***	.59	1.67	.35
<i>Domestic Factors</i>				
Republican House	.12	-2.35	.07	-1.16
Republican Senate	-.41	1.53	4.89	.73
Congress Ally	-.00	.42	1.89**	.20
Initial Approval	-.01	.13	1.03	.06
Co-Partisan Approval	.05	-.14	.98	-.06
Contra-Partisan Approval	-.00	.02	1.04	.02
<i>Other Factors</i>				
Democratic President	.67	-2.49**	.37	-1.15**
Cold War	-.78	-.96	.25	-.52
Year	-.01	.02	1.00	.01
Observations	239	144	1210	239
R2	.24	.32		

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

(3.1) and (3.2) estimated with logit models

(3.3) estimated with semiparametric Cox survival model

(3.4) selection estimates not shown for space considerations

Table 3: Predicting Presidents' Use of Foreign policy Rhetoric

Compared to crises in which the US is not an actor, presidents are 45% ($p=.00$) more likely to speak publicly about a crisis if the US is a crisis actor.²² Similarly, compared to opponents with whom the US is not engaged in a protracted crisis, presidents are 31% ($p=.00$) more likely to speak publicly if facing an opponent from a protracted crisis and 44% ($p=.00$) more likely to speak if the US is in a long-war protracted crisis with the opponent.

Using the same set of predictors, I test if geostrategic, opponent identity, and domestic factors predict the likelihood presidents use divine election cues (model 3.2). The results reveal that presidents are 22% ($p=.00$) more likely to use divine election cues in crises when the US is a crisis actor. Presidents are also more likely to use divine election cues when initial geopolitical stakes are low. The less violent the initial trigger for the crisis and less grave the threat posed to the US, the more likely it is that presidents will use divine election cues. When the trigger initiating the crisis is a verbal, political, or economic event, presidents have a 10%, 14%, and 37% likelihood of using divine election cues in that crisis. By contrast, when the triggering event is a non-violent show of military force, an indirect use of force, or a direct use of force, presidents only have a 1%, 8%, and 2% probability of using divine election cues. This corresponds to the expected effect of divine election mobilization effects. Since one divine election cue framing effect is to increase the geostrategic and national interests salience of a crisis, the results reveal that indeed, presidents are more likely to use divine election cues when the initial geopolitical stakes are low. I also find presidents are also more likely to use divine

²² All predicted probabilities are calculated when holding other variables at their means.

election cues when the opponent is more powerful. However, while the coefficient for presidential partisanship is statistically significant, the marginal difference in predicted probabilities between Republican and Democratic presidents using divine election cues is not statistically significant. Finally, the results reveal that initial public support does not predict presidents' use of divine election cues.

To estimate how these crisis-specific factors predict the timing of presidents' first use of divine election cues, I use semiparametric Cox survival models to predict the timing of presidents' first use of divine election cues (model 3.3). The results reveal that presidents are quicker to use divine election cues when the US is a crisis actor and the opponent is more powerful; this is similar to results from Model 3.2 showing geostrategic factors and opponent identity predicts presidents' likelihood of using divine election cues. Domestic factors also predict the timing of presidents' use of divine election cues. Specifically, if the President's party is a majority in Congress (*Congress Ally*), presidents are quicker to use divine election cues in a crisis.

As a robustness check, I estimate a selection model to estimate if there are crisis-specific factors that predict presidents' use of divine election cues after factoring for selection effects (model 3.4); the selection stage of these models is whether presidents use foreign policy rhetoric in the crisis. Since whether the US is a crisis actor (*US Actor*) predicts both whether the president uses foreign policy rhetoric in a crisis and whether he uses divine election cues, I cannot use a Heckman model since the exclusion restriction is

not satisfied.²³ Instead, I estimate a Sartori (2003) selection model that produces “consistent, asymptotically normal, maximum-likelihood” estimates (130) even when relaxing the exclusion restriction requirement. The results from the selection model corroborate the finding that presidents are more likely to use divine election cues when the US is a crisis actor, the initial trigger for the event is less violent, the gravity of the threat to the US is lower, and the opponent is more powerful.

Summary of Findings

During foreign policy crises, presidents have a choice whether or not to speak publicly about the crisis. Of the 244 crises the US was involved in from 1946 to 2007, I find that presidents spoke in 147 or 60% of crises. When speaking during a crisis, presidents used divine election rhetoric in 23 crises or 16% of crises where they use foreign policy rhetoric. Comparing the use of divine election cues by presidential partisanship, I find no statistically significant difference in the likelihood that Republican and Democratic presidents use divine election cues. Contrary to findings that Democratic presidents are less likely to use religious rhetoric in domestic politics (Domke and Coe 2008), Democratic presidents are not less likely to use divine election religious rhetoric in foreign policy crises than Republican presidents.

While presidents’ partisanship does not predict whether and how much presidents use divine election cues in a foreign policy crisis, crisis-specific geostrategic factors and the capabilities of an opponent are robust predictors of whether presidents use divine election cues. Presidents are more likely to use divine election cues when the US is a

²³ Estimating a Heckman model but omitting the *US Actor* variable because it fails the exclusion restriction lead to omitted variable bias. Moreover, I find that it has a flat likelihood and the model does not converge.

crisis actor and not a peripheral participant of a crisis. Presidents are also more likely to use divine election cues in crises with low initial geopolitical stakes, when the event triggering the crisis is less violent and the initial threat to the US is not grave. This finding fits the expectation that divine election cues elevate the geopolitical stakes of a crisis. Presidents should be less likely to use divine election cues when the crisis already has high geopolitical stakes. In these crises, the use of divine election cues may over-mobilize domestic audiences such that presidents are constrained from reaching a resolution to the crisis short of the use of force. By contrast, domestic political factors such as the partisanship of Congress and initial public support for the president are not predictors of whether presidents use divine election cues.

Having identified when presidents use divine election cues in foreign policy crises, I now then test what effects presidents' use of divine election cues have on public support for the president's foreign policy. In the next chapter, I use presidents' use of divine election cues as the key explanatory variables to explain changes in the outcomes of interests, domestic audiences' foreign policy attitudes. By comparing differences in levels of foreign policy support before and after presidents' use of divine election cues, I can identify the empirical mobilization effects of divine election cues.

Chapter 4: Historical Effectiveness of Divine Election Cues, 1946-2006

Are Divine Election Cues Effective?

When presidents use divine election cues, they frame crises with religious meanings, elevate the strategic and national interests salience of a crisis, and increase public expectations of success. The observable implication of these effects is higher foreign policy support after presidents use divine election cues. Given that divine election cues are effective among religious Americans, and religious Americans are distributed across the partisan spectrum, I expect presidents' use of divine election cues mobilizes foreign policy support among co-partisans (H1) *and* contra-partisans (H2).

In this chapter, I test how presidents' use of divine election cues during US foreign policy crises increase foreign policy support. First, I compare differences in foreign policy support before and after presidents' use of divine election cues. I also compare foreign policy support after presidents use divine election cues with a counterfactual control group of crises where presidents do not use divine election cues. Across multiple parameterizations of divine election, measures of foreign policy attitudes, and model specifications, I find strong evidence that divine election cues do

increase foreign policy support among co-partisans *and* contra-partisans, especially their support for the use of force.

While the historical foreign policy polls I compile allow testing of the co-partisan (H1) and contra-partisan (H2) mobilization hypotheses, they are unsuitable in testing the hypothesis that religiosity moderates divine election cue effects (H3). Few historical polls ask respondents about their religious belongings or religiosity before the 2000s. Instead, I test the religiosity as moderator hypothesis by focusing on foreign policy support among religious and secular populations during the 2003 Iraq War crisis. The results reveal that as expected, divine election cue effects are moderated by religiosity. However, it has asymmetric effects among partisans; while religiosity moderates mobilization effects among co-partisans, it does not moderate mobilization effects among contra-partisans.

Historical Foreign policy Polls

To examine the historical effects of divine election religious cues, I compile an original dataset of all available foreign policy polls fielded during 244 US foreign policy crises from 1946 to 2007. To find foreign policy polls, I search the Roper Center Public Opinion Archives by the crisis name (and related variants) across the duration of the crisis. The search revealed 474 available foreign policy polls fielded across 45 crises. All of these polls contain at least one question measuring support for the use of force, support for ground troops, and foreign policy approval of the president's handling of the foreign policy crisis. These foreign policy questions specific to a particular foreign policy crisis are less noisy than generic foreign policy approval questions or overall presidential

approval measures,²⁴ This also guards against the confounding factor of simultaneous foreign policy crises; if there are overlapping foreign policy crises, it is difficult to interpret more generic foreign policy approval questions since it is unclear if respondents' (dis)approval is a response to developments in which foreign policy crisis. In total, there are 746 questions measuring respondents' support for use of force, Ground troops, and Approval of the president's handling of the specific foreign policy crises.²⁵ The level of analysis is foreign policy support among co-partisans, contra-partisans, and all respondents.²⁶ First I identify respondents as Republican or Democrat;²⁷ then depending on who the president is, they are classified as co-partisans (same party as the President) or contra-partisans (opposite party as the President). Finally I estimate foreign policy support "toplines" for each partisan group.

Of the 244 foreign policy crises the US was involved with, presidents used foreign policy rhetoric in 147 crises and did not speak publicly in 97 crises. No foreign policy poll was fielded in the 97 crises in which presidents do not use foreign policy rhetoric. Among the 147 crises where presidents make at least one public foreign policy statement, foreign policy polls were fielded in 45 or 31% of crises. While there is polling

²⁴ An example of the Foreign policy approval question I use is "Do you approve or disapprove of President Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq?" I do not use generic foreign policy approval question sometimes used by other studies of foreign policy attitudes, "Do you approve or disapprove of President Bush's handling of foreign policy." I also do not use foreign policy questions not related to the use of force or Ground troops since they are too specific to particular crises and not comparable across crises.

²⁵ There are 250 measures of support for Use of force across 30 crises, 136 measures of support for Ground troops across 20 crises, and 360 measures of Foreign policy approval across 33 crises. See Appendix Table A1 for listing of foreign policy questions by crises

²⁶ Following convention in study of foreign policy attitudes, I do not use survey weights.

²⁷ In the 1940s and early 1950s, many polls do not contain questions about party identification. In these cases, I estimate partisanship based on who respondents voted for in the last election. For example, respondents who voted for Truman in the 1948 election is coded as a Democrat and those who voted for Dewey coded as a Republican; respondents who did not vote are not counted as a partisan but counted in the overall sample.

data in only 20% of crises in which presidents do not use foreign policy rhetoric (25 out of 124 crises), foreign policy polls were fielded in 87% (20 of 23 crises) presidents use divine election rhetoric. I then compare the geostrategic and domestic political profiles of crises where polls were fielded against the full population of crises to determine if findings from the available data can be representative of the population of crises.

Differences between the sample and full population are summarized in Table 4.²⁸

Column (4.1) summarizes differences in profiles of the 25 crises where presidents do not use divine election cues and polls are available against the full population of 124 crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues. It reveals the US is more likely to be a crisis actor, the crisis is closer to US borders, the threat is graver to the US, and the crisis has greater geostrategic salience in crises where polls are available. The identity of opponents also differs in crises with polls fielded; in these crises, opponents are more different in military capability, political, economic, and cultural attributes. There are no statistically significant differences in domestic political factors between crises with polls fielded and all crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues. By contrast, the results summarized in Column (4.2) reveal no differences in geostrategic factors, opponent identity, and domestic factors between the 20 crises where presidents use divine election cues and polls and the population of 23 crises in which presidents use divine election cues.

²⁸ Specific average of each crisis-specific factor across whether presidents use divine election cues and whether polls are fielded are summarized in Table 8 in the Appendix.

	(4.1)	(4.2)	(4.3)
	No Divine Election Cues	Divine Election Cues	Not Use vs. Use Divine Election Cues
<i>Geostrategic Factors</i>			
US Actor (0-1)	.68***	.06	.20**
Location (0-3)	.43**	.06	.06
Trigger (1-9)	-.88	.05	.25
Gravity of Threat (1-7)	.53**	-.03	.13
Geostrategic Salience (1-5)	.99***	.08	.06
<i>Opponent Identity</i>			
Heterogeneity (1-5)	.85***	-.11	-.05
Opponent Power (1-4)	-.03	-.00	-.38
Protracted Crisis (1-3)	.09	-.01	.05
<i>Domestic Factors</i>			
Republican House (0-1)	.09	-.00	.06
Republican Senate (0-1)	.01	-.00	.06
Congress Ally (1-3)	.06	.04	.04
Initial Approval (0-100)	-1.70	-.57	-2.31
Co-partisan Approval (0-100)	-.95	-1.25	.99
Contra-partisan Approval (0-100)	-2.79	.48	-5.84
<i>Other Factors</i>			
Democratic President	.08	-.03	.11
Cold War	-.11	.02	-.11
Year	-.40	.50	1.13

Values reported in (4.1) and (4.2) are difference between crises with polls against all crises. Values reported in (4.3) are differences between crises with polls where divine election cues are not used and crises with polls where divine election cues are used
*** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$ * $p < .10$

Table 4: Differences in Profile of Crises

Comparing the profiles of crises with and without foreign policy polls reveals crises where presidents use divine election cues and polling data is available is

representative of the full population of crises in which presidents use divine election cues. However, the sample of crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues and polling data is available may not reveal inferences that hold across all crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues. Not only are there polls fielded in only 20% of all crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues, but the US is more likely to be a crisis actor in crises where polls are fielded versus the full sample of crises. Geopolitical stakes are also higher in crises where polls are fielded.

While not a representative sample of the population of crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues, the sample of crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues is comparable to the sample of crises in which presidents use divine election cues. The results summarized in Column (4.3) show that the only difference between the 25 crises in which no divine election cues are used and the 20 crises in which presidents use divine election cues is the likelihood that the US is a crisis actor; there are no differences in other geostrategic, opponent identity, or domestic political factors. This suggests that the non-representative sample of crises in which presidents in which do not use divine election cues is a more similar and appropriate “control” comparison group to the sample of crises in which presidents use divine election cues. In Chapter 3, I find that presidents are more likely to use divine election cues when the US is a crisis actor. If comparing the full sample of 23 crises in which presidents use divine election cues against the 124 crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues, there would be selection bias and misidentification of comparative divine election cue mobilization effects. To overcome potential selection bias, comparisons should be made between

crises with more similar likelihoods of the US as a crisis actor since that predicts likelihood of using divine election cues. In the sample of crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues and polls are available, the US is a crisis actor in every crisis. This sample profile counteracts potential selection bias effects since they are crises where presidents are more likely to use divine election cues. Therefore, comparison of foreign policy support in this sample of 25 crises with the 20 crises in which presidents use divine election cues will reveal unbiased estimations of comparative divine election mobilization effects.

Effects of Divine Election Religious Cues on Foreign policy Support

When presidents use divine election religious rhetoric, they frame foreign policy with religious meanings and mobilize greater support among religious Americans. Since religious Americans are distributed across the partisan spectrum, divine election cues can mobilize foreign policy support among co-partisans (*H1*) and contra-partisans (*H2*). To test these hypotheses, I compare foreign policy support before and after presidents' use of divine election cues. Multiple specifications of religious cues are used to triangulate findings. First I compare aggregate foreign policy support before and after the president's first use of divine election rhetoric. The use of divine election rhetoric sacredlizes a crisis and imbues foreign policy with religious and sacred meanings. By examining levels of foreign policy support before and after this critical junction, I identify the aggregate effects of divine election rhetoric on foreign policy attitudes. Second, I test for first divine election cue effects. Using a temporal discontinuity design, I compare foreign policy support in the 100 days before and after presidents' first use of

divine election rhetoric. Third, I calculate cue count effect to determine if additional uses of divine election cues produce additive effects on foreign policy support. As a robustness check, I also compare differences in foreign policy support *between* crises in which presidents use divine election cues and crises where they do not. Since there are no differences in the profiles of crises in which presidents use divine election cues and those in which they do not, the sample of crises no divine election cues are used is an appropriate “control” group for crises who receive the divine election cue “treatment.”²⁹ Differences in foreign policy support across these two types of crises can be interpreted as comparative divine election treatment effects.

In my first analysis, I compare levels of foreign policy support before and after presidents’ first use of divine election rhetoric. Presidents use divine election rhetoric to sacredlize the crisis with religious significance, making their first use of divine election cues a critical juncture. Evidence of divine election mobilization effects are increases in foreign policy support after presidents’ use of divine election cues. Figure 6 below summarizes aggregate levels of foreign policy support among co-partisans, contra-partisans, and all partisans across each of the three measures of foreign policy attitudes. Among co-partisans, support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval are higher after presidents’ first use of divine election cues. Support for the use of force increases from 56% to 83%, support for Ground troops increases from 63% to 71%, and

²⁹ In the crises where presidents do not use divine election rhetoric cues, presidents use secular cues and the first cue occurs almost always occurs before the first poll fielded in the crisis. This implies that polls from non-divine election religious cue crises measure foreign policy attitudes of respondents who have already received a secular cue treatment. Thus, differences in foreign policy support reflect marginal mobilization effects of divine election cues versus secular foreign policy cues.

approval of the president's handling of the foreign policy crisis increases from 68% to 77%.

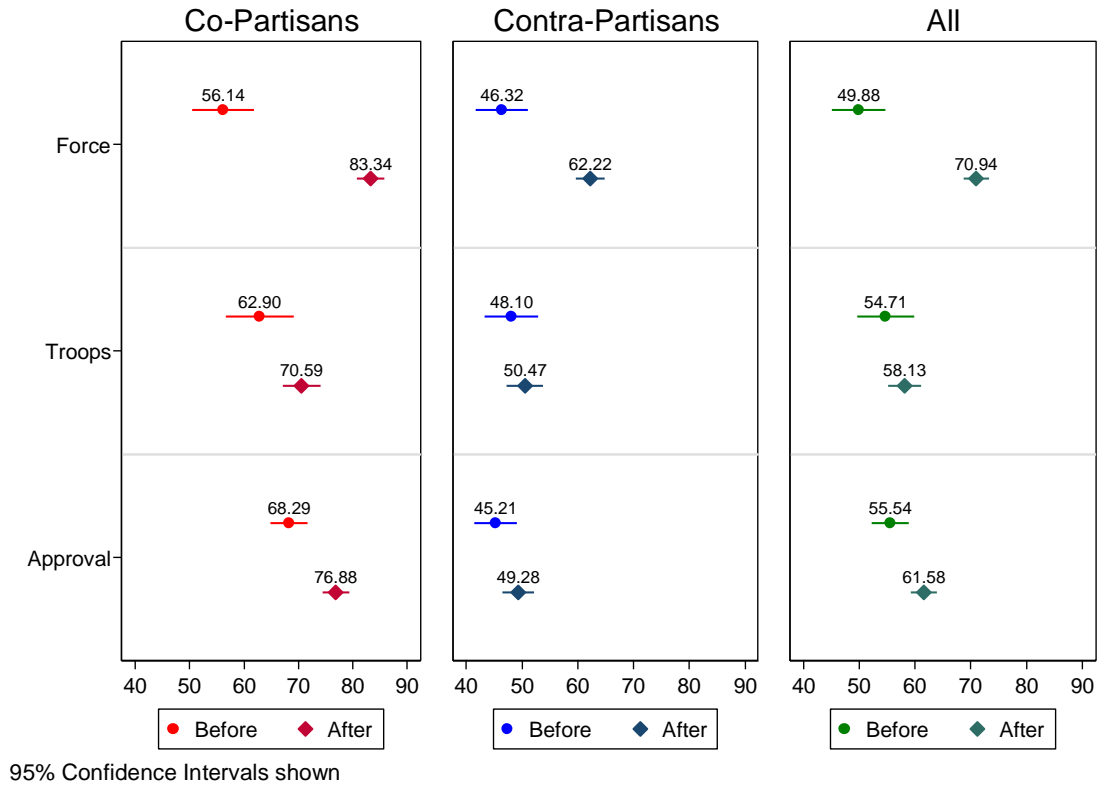


Figure 6: Foreign policy Support Before and After First Divine Election Cues

I find a similar trend among contra-partisans. After presidents use divine election religious cues, contra-partisans' support for the use of force increases from 46% to 62%, support for ground troops increases from 48% to 50%, and foreign policy approval increases from 45% to 49%. Not surprisingly, as foreign policy support among both co-

partisans and contra-partisans increases, overall foreign policy support also increases.

Overall support for use of force increases from 50% to 71%, support for Ground troops increases from 55% to 58%, and Foreign policy approval increases from 56% to 62%.

I then compare changes in foreign policy support in the 100 days before and after presidents' first use of divine election cues, summarized in Figure 7 below.

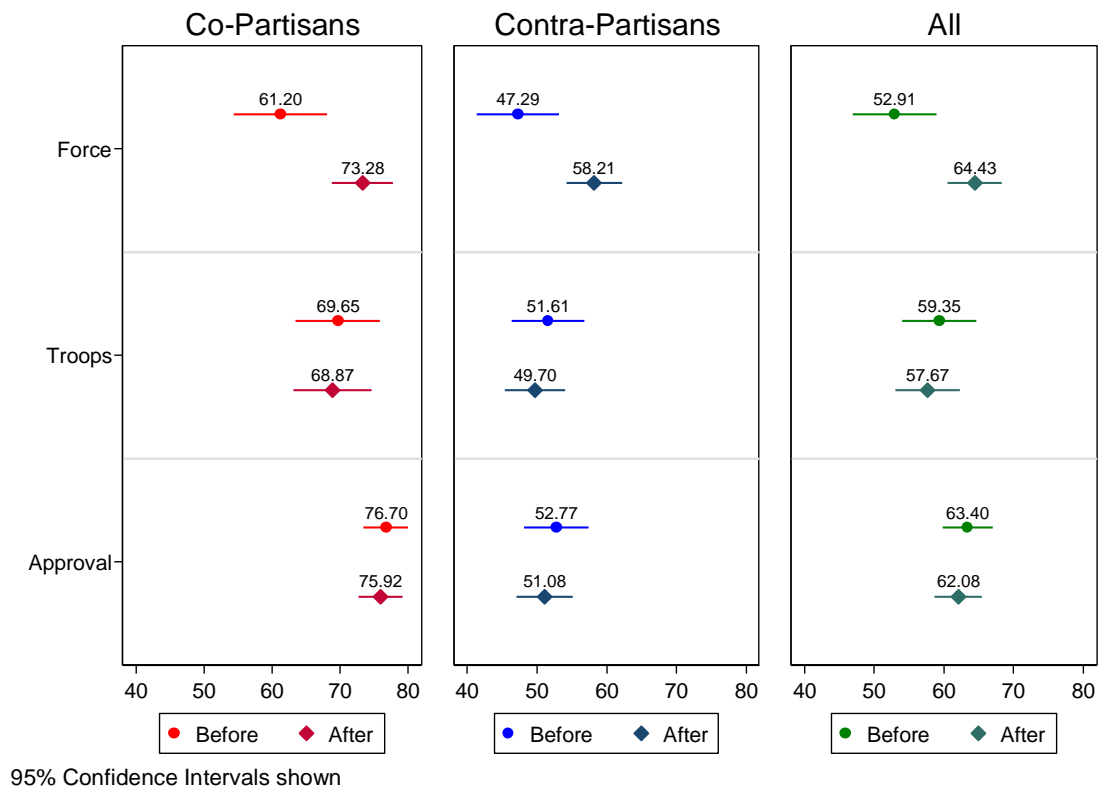


Figure 7: Foreign policy Support in 100 Days Before and After First Cue

Narrowing the temporal window reveals increases in support for use of force among co-partisans (from 61% to 73%), contra-partisans (47% to 58%) and all partisans (53% to 64%). However, support for ground troops does not increase among all three partisan audiences, decreasing from 70% to 69% among co-partisans, from 52% to 50% among contra-partisans, and 59% to 58% among all partisans. Similarly, there are slight decreases in approval of the president's handling of the foreign policy crisis. Among co-partisans approval decreases from 77% to 76%, among contra-partisans approval decreases from 53% to 51%, and among all respondents approval decreases from 63% to 62%.

Finally, I examine whether there is a relationship between the number of times that presidents use divine election cues and subsequent foreign policy support. In Figure 8, I plot level of foreign policy support among co-partisans and contra-partisans against the number of divine election cues presidents used before the poll. The number of previous divine religious cues ranges from 0 to 21 (0 to 14 for polls measuring support for ground troops). Linear fit lines estimate the relationship between greater use of divine election cues and foreign policy support. The results reveal more frequent use of divine election cues increase support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval among co-partisans.³⁰ There are also positive correlations between presidents' use of divine election cues and support among contra-partisans though only the correlation of support for use of force is statistically significant.³¹ These results suggest

³⁰ Among co-partisans, the slope of the linear fit lines of support for use of force is 1.88 (p=.00), 1.77 (p=.00) for Ground troops, and 1.37 (p=.00) for Foreign policy approval.

³¹ Among contra-partisans, the slope of the linear fit lines of support for use of force is .58 (p=.00), .56 (p=.20) for Ground troops, and .17 (p=.29) for Foreign policy approval.

additive divine election mobilization effects as more frequent use of divine election cues correlates with higher foreign policy support.

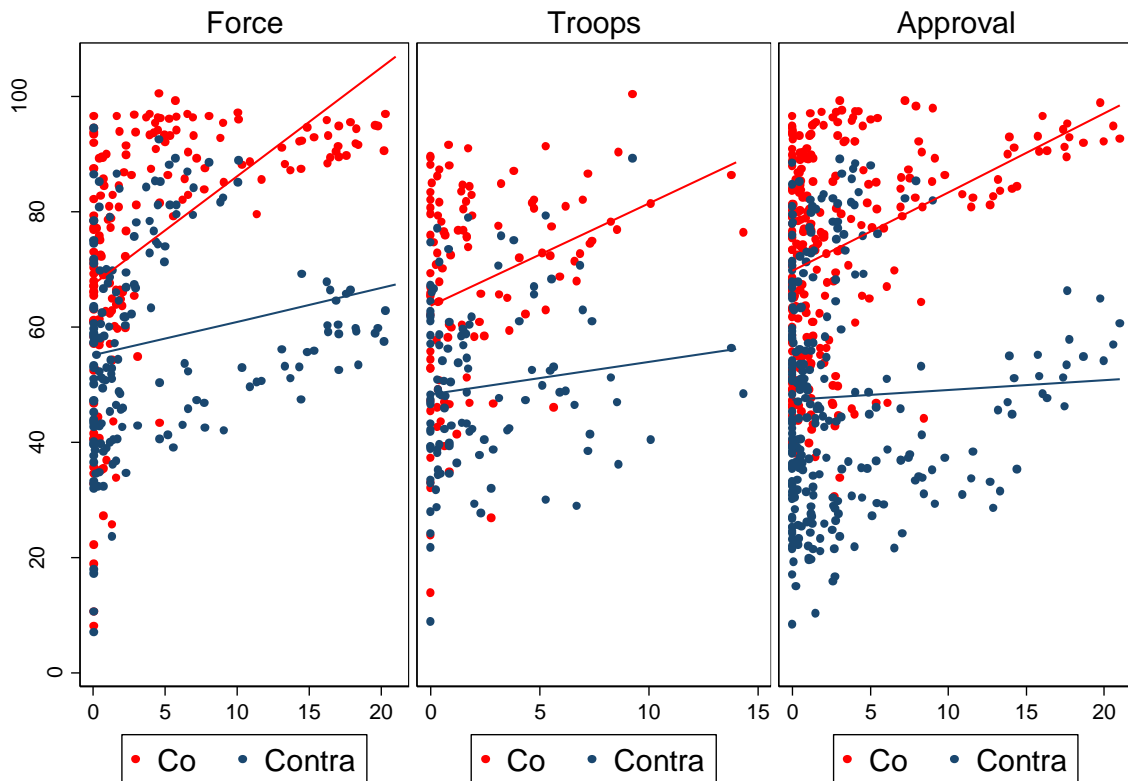


Figure 8: Foreign policy Support by Number of Divine Election Cues

To identify the effect of presidents' use of divine election cues on foreign policy support, I identify changes in co-partisan, contra-partisan, and all respondents' foreign policy support before and after presidents' use of divine election cues. In these models,

the only independent variables are the respective parametrizations of divine election cues as dichotomous or a count variable. The results of the regression models are summarized in Figure 9 below.

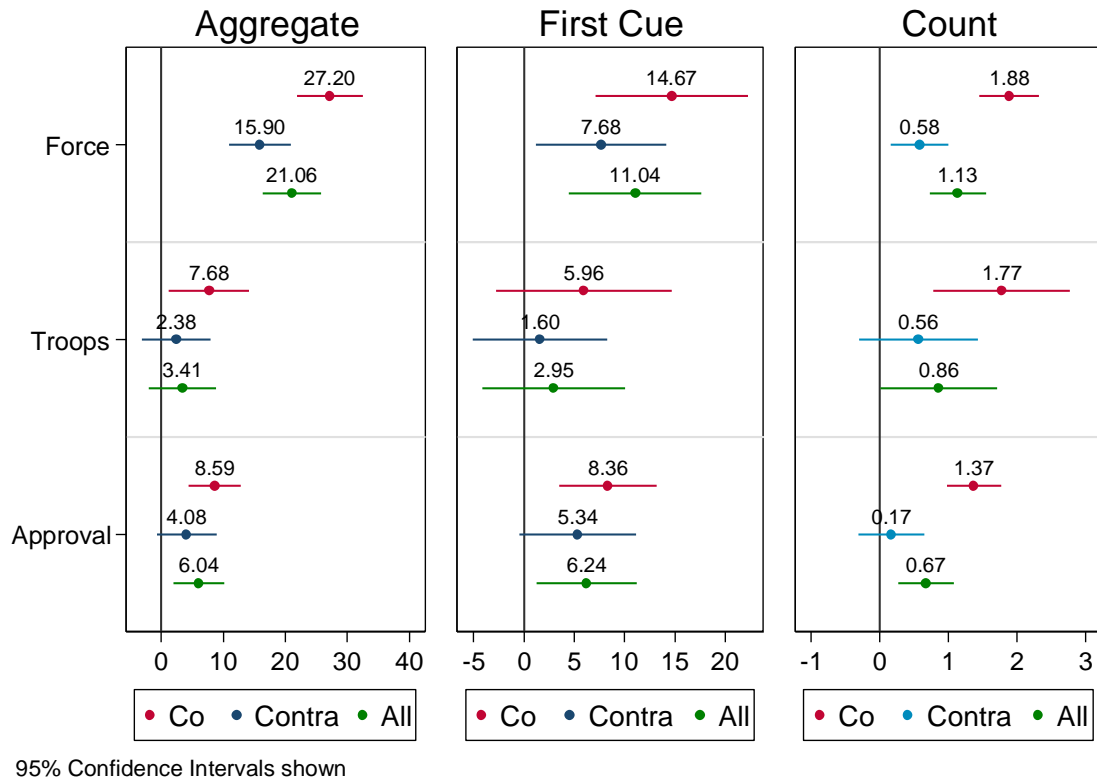


Figure 9: Divine Election Cue Effects on Foreign Policy Support

The results reveal aggregate divine election cue effects among co-partisans as the increases in co-partisans' support for use of force of 27 points, ground troops of 8 points, and foreign policy approval of 9 points are all statistically significant. This is strong

evidence for the co-partisan mobilization hypothesis (H1). There are also aggregate divine election cue effects on co-partisans' support for use of force, which increases by 16 points. However, increases in contra-partisans' support for ground troops and foreign policy approval are not statistically significant. These results provide some evidence for the contra-partisan mobilization hypothesis (H2). First cue divine election cue effects provide further evidence for H1 and H2. After presidents' first use of divine election cues, co-partisans' immediate support for use of force and foreign policy approval increases by 15 and 8 points respectively. Similarly, the first divine election cue increases contra-partisans' immediate support for use of force by 8 points while the 5 points increase in foreign policy approval is statistically significant at the $p=.07$ level. Finally, results from analysis of divine election cue count effects reveal co-partisan and contra-partisan mobilization effects. Presidents' additional use of divine election cues has a marginal effect of increasing co-partisans' support for use of force by 2 points, support for ground troops by 2 points, and foreign policy approval by 1 point. There are also additive count effects among contra-partisans, though only the effect on support for use of force is statistically significant; additive effects of divine election cues on contra-partisans' support for ground troops and foreign policy approval is positive but not statistically significant at conventional levels.

Using presidents' use of divine election cues as the only predictor of foreign policy attitudes, I find robust evidence for co-partisan (H1) and contra-partisan (H2) mobilization effects. To check the robustness of those results, I re-estimate divine election cue effects using three alternate model specifications; each model specification

includes different sets of crisis-specific controls. First, I estimate regression models that include dynamic temporal controls. Since polls are sparse and I do not have enough observations in each crisis to use traditional time series methodologies, I account for potential auto-regressive processes (AR) by including the level of foreign policy support from the *Last Poll* from the same polling house and potential moving average (MA) temporal processes by including a counter for the day of crisis that the poll is fielded (*Day of Crisis*). I also include a *Year* variable for the year that the poll is fielded.

Second, I re-estimate divine election cue effects when factoring for crisis-specific geopolitical and domestic political factors; these attributes are static and do not vary within crises. I account for the geopolitical context of a crisis with the following variables: if the US is a crisis actor during the crisis (*US Crisis Actor*), how far the crisis was from the Americas (*Location*), how violent the initial event that that initiated the crisis was (*Trigger*), if a particular crisis has a wider geostrategic effect beyond the local region (*Geostrategic Salience*), the gravity of the threat to the US (*Gravity*), how different the opponent is along attributes of military capabilities, political regime, economic system, and culture (*Heterogeneity*), if the opponent is a small, middle, greater, or superpower (*Opponent Power*), if the crisis is part of a protracted or enduring rivalry (*Protracted Crisis*), and if the crisis occurred during the Cold War (*Cold War*). I also include variables describing the domestic political environment: if the President is a Republican or Democrat (*President Party*), if Republicans control the House (*Republican House*) and Senate (*Republican Senate*), if the President's party is a majority in none,

one, or both houses of Congress (*Congress Ally*), and initial support for the President at the start of the crisis (*Initial Approval*).

Third I estimate models with presidential dummy variables. I create a series of dichotomous dummies measuring whether crises occurring during the presidencies of Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, or Clinton.³² The excluded and base category of comparison president is President George W. Bush.

The results of these three alternate model specifications, summarized in Table 9 in the Appendix, reveal the robustness of the findings that presidents' use of divine election cues mobilizes foreign policy support among co-partisans (H1) *and* contra-partisans (H2). When presidents use divine election cues, they mobilize stronger support among co-partisans, especially support for the use of force. Increases in support for use of force are statistically significant regardless of whether divine election mobilization effects are parameterized as aggregate effects, first cue effects, or additive count effects. There are also statistically significant additive count effects on co-partisans' support for ground troops and foreign policy approval; these effects are consistent across most of the model specifications containing different sets of crisis-specific controls. The results also reveal that mobilization effects on contra-partisans' support for the use of force is robust across all parameterizations of divine election cue effects and sets of crisis-specific controls.

³² For crises that span multiple presidencies, I code the crisis as occurring under the president based on crisis days. For example, though the Iran Hostages crisis does not end until the first day of the Reagan administration, I code that as a crisis occurring under President Carter. Similarly, though the Bosnia crisis begins in the first few months of the presidency of George Bush, I classify it as being under President Clinton since the rest of the over three year duration of the crisis occurred after President Clinton took office.

This provides further evidence that presidents can mobilize contra-partisans when divine election cues are used.

Comparative Effects of Divine Election Religious Cues on Foreign policy Support

When presidents use divine election cues, they increase foreign policy support among co-partisans and contra-partisans. The analysis above reveals evidence of mobilization effects through comparisons of foreign policy support before and after presidents' use of divine election cues. Another way to identify mobilization effects is through between-crisis comparisons of foreign policy support after presidents used divine election with foreign policy support in crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues. Using crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues as the counterfactual "control" group and crises in which presidents use divine election cues as the observed "treatment" group, I identify comparative divine election "treatment" effects. This is a valid comparison because, as summarized in Table 4 above, the 25 crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues have similar crisis-specific characteristics as the 20 crises in which presidents use divine election cues.

The scatterplots in Figure 10 below compare foreign policy support across crisis duration from crises in which presidents use foreign policy rhetoric but not divine election cues and crises after presidents' first use of divine election cues. Linear trend lines illustrate the divergence in foreign policy support in the observed control and treatment groups. Among co-partisans, support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval is decreasing over crisis duration in the "control" crises in which

presidents do not use divine election cues.³³ However, in crises after presidents use divine election cues, support is increasing.³⁴

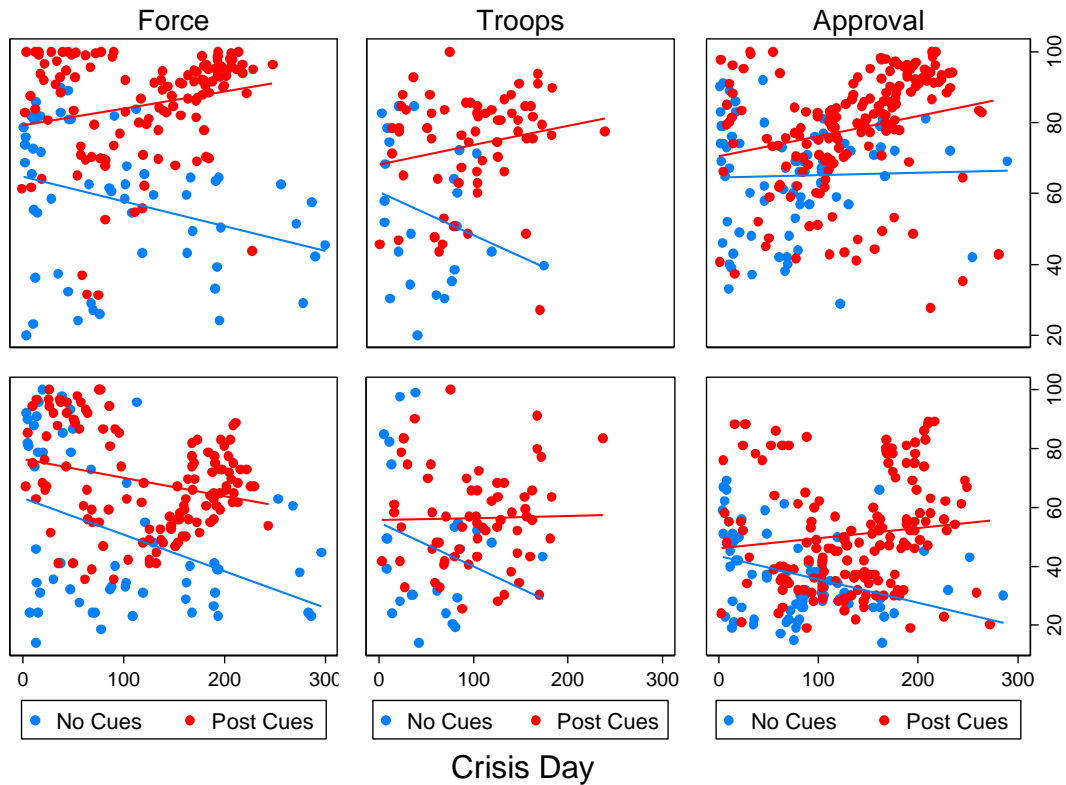


Figure 10: Foreign Policy Support without and after Divine Election Cues

³³ In crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues (“control”), the slopes of the linear fit lines for support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval are $-.07$ ($p=.02$), $-.12$ ($p=.20$), and $.01$ ($p=.81$) respectively.

³⁴ In crises in which presidents use divine election cues (“treatment”), the slopes of the linear fit lines for support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval are $.05$ ($p=.01$), $.05$ ($p=.12$), and $.06$ ($p=.00$) respectively.

Comparing the slopes of the linear fit lines reveals statistically significant differences between the negative slopes for crises no divine election cues are used and positive slopes for crises after presidents use divine election cues.³⁵ This is further evidence of comparative divine election mobilization effects as foreign policy support is higher in crises in which presidents use divine election cues than crises they do not. A similar difference between observed control and treatment crises is evident when comparing contra-partisans' foreign policy support. While support for Use of force, Ground troops, and Foreign policy approval are decreasing over the duration of a crisis, the decreases are steeper in crises where presidents do not use divine election cues compared to crises where presidents use divine election cues.³⁶ Differences are most pronounced in contra-partisans' approval of the President's handling of the foreign policy crisis.³⁷

To calculate comparative divine election cue effects, I compare foreign policy support in crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues with foreign policy support in crises in which presidents use divine election cues. Differences in foreign policy support between counterfactual control crises and treatment crises are summarized in Figure 11 below. The results reveal strong evidence for H1 that divine election cues mobilize foreign policy support among co-partisans.

³⁵ The difference of .12 in slopes of co-partisans' support for use of force is statistically significant ($p=.00$), the difference in slope of .17 in slopes of co-partisans' support for Ground troops is statistically significant ($p=.02$), but the difference of .05 in slopes of co-partisans' Foreign policy approval is not statistically significant ($p=.17$).

³⁶ In crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues ("control"), the slopes of the linear fit lines for support for Use of force, Ground troops, and Foreign policy approval are -.11 ($p=.00$), -.12 ($p=.22$) and -.08 ($p=.00$) respectively. By contrast, in crises in which presidents use divine election cues ("treatment"), the slopes of the linear fit lines for support for Use of force, Ground troops, and Foreign policy approval are -.06 ($p=.00$), .01 ($p=.86$), and .03 ($p=.15$) respectively.

³⁷ The difference of .11 in slopes of Foreign policy approval linear fit lines is statistically significant ($p=.00$). However, the .5 difference in slopes of support for use of force ($p=.12$) and .11 difference in slopes of support for Ground troops ($p=.12$) are not statistically significant.

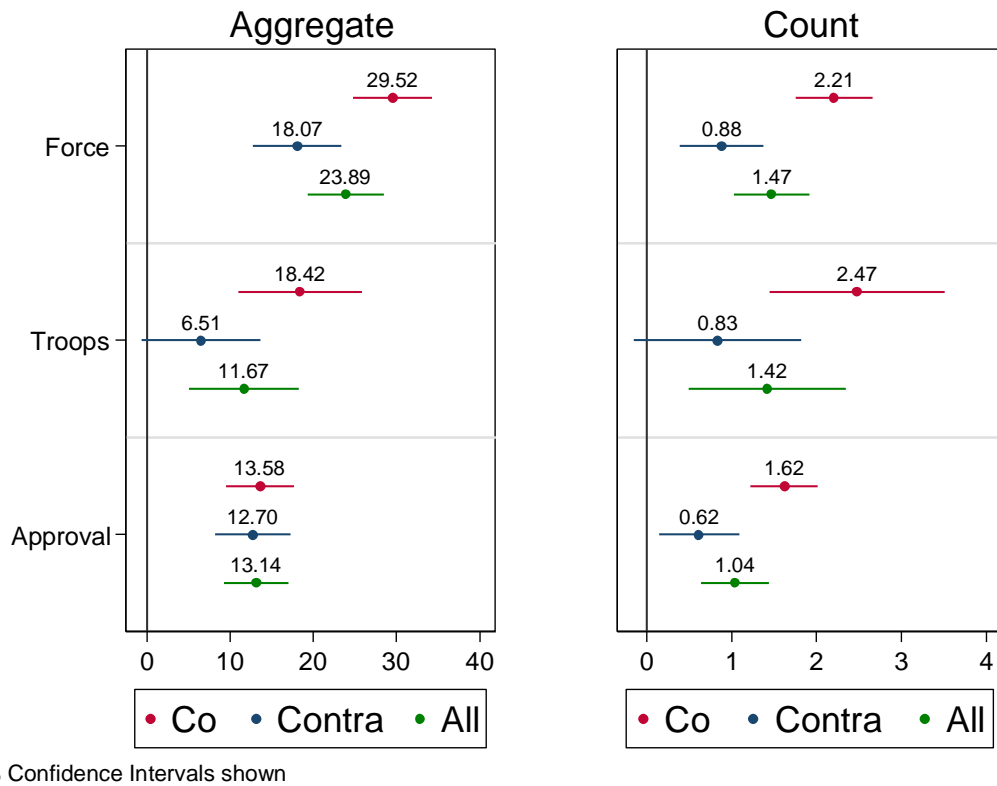


Figure 11: Comparative Divine Election Cue Mobilization Effects

Compared to crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues, support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval is significantly higher among co-partisans after presidents' use of divine election cues. Similarly, contra-partisans' support for use of force and foreign policy approval is higher after presidents' use of divine election cues, revealing evidence for H2. Contra-partisans' support for ground troops is also higher than in crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues, but the difference is only statistically significant at the $p=.07$ level.

I also calculate comparative count effects to identify additive divine election cue effects compared to crises in which presidents do not use divine election cues. The results corroborate findings of comparative divine election treatment effects. Each additional time presidents use divine election cues in a crisis, it increases support for use of force, ground troops, and foreign policy approval by 2 points among co-partisans. Greater use of divine election crises also contra-partisans' support for use of force and foreign policy approval; additive divine election count effects on contra-partisans' support for Ground troops is higher but only statistically significant at the $p=.10$ level. Finally, to check for robustness, I estimate comparative divine election cue effects with models that also account for temporal effects, crisis-specific geostrategic and domestic political factors, and presidential dummies; results of these models are found in Table 10 in the Appendix. The results reveal that comparative divine election cue treatment effects are consistent when controlling for different types of crisis-specific factors.

Presidential use of divine election cues are expected to mobilize greater foreign policy support among co-partisans *and* contra-partisans. Comparing foreign policy support within crises before and after presidents' use of divine election cues reveals strong and robust evidence of predicted mobilization effects. Evidence of co-partisan and contra-partisan mobilization effects are also found when juxtaposing foreign policy support after presidents' use of divine election cues with foreign policy support in counterfactual "control" crises in which presidents never use divine election crises. Together, these findings provide significant empirical evidence that divine election cues

are effective in mobilizing greater foreign policy support among co-partisans (H1) and contra-partisans (H2).

Religiosity Moderating Divine Election Cue Effects

Examining historical foreign policy polls enable testing of the two main hypotheses, that divine election cues increase foreign policy support among co-partisans (H1) and contra-partisans (H2). However, it is not suited to test H3, the expectation that divine election cue effects are greater among more religious respondents. Very few foreign policy polls include questions about respondents' religious belonging and religiosity. It is not until the 2000s that survey companies included questions about respondents' religious preferences, behavior, and beliefs. In lieu of testing this hypothesis across all crises, I focus on polls fielded during the 2003 Iraq War to test how religious predispositions moderate the effectiveness of divine election religious cues among respondents. Of the 67 polls fielded during the crisis, fewer than a dozen polls ask respondents about their religious behaviors and beliefs. Instead, I use respondents' religious preference as a proxy for religiosity. Respondents who do not identify with any religious tradition (Nones) are classified as low religious or secular while respondents who identify with any religious tradition are classified as religious. I expect divine election cues to be more effective among respondents who identify with a religion than in Nones who do not identify with a religious tradition.

In Figure 12, I plot support for use of force and foreign policy approval by religious preference.³⁸ During the 2003 Iraq War, President George W. Bush first used

³⁸ There are not enough polls asking about support for Ground troops for analysis.

divine election cues on the 23rd day of the crisis; this intervention is represented by the vertical dotted line. Linear fit lines are overlaid that capture the change in respondents' foreign policy support after the first use of divine election cues.

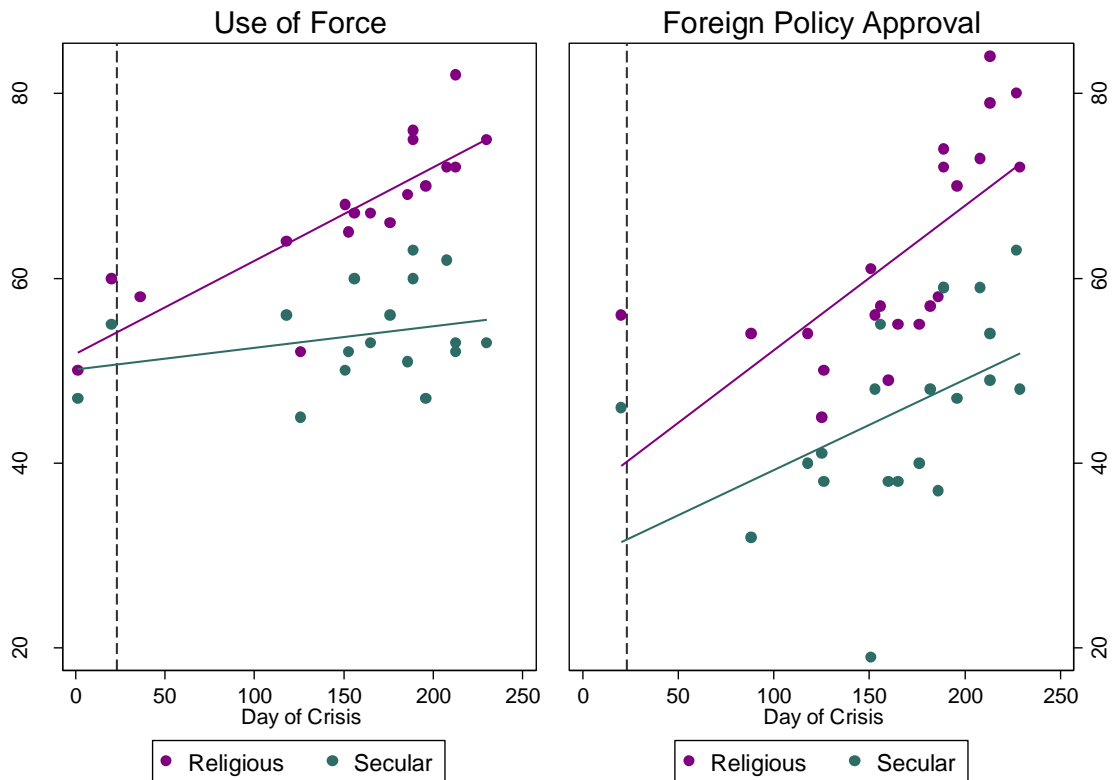


Figure 12: Foreign Policy Support in 2003 Iraq War by Religiosity

Using the slope of the linear fit lines as a measure of the effect of divine election cues on support for use of force reveals that religious respondents are mobilized by the divine

election cue. By contrast, secular respondents are not mobilized and do not have higher support for use of force after the divine election cue.³⁹ Divine election cues are also more effective among religious than secular respondents as the difference in linear fit lines between religious and secular respondents are statistically significantly.⁴⁰

The differential effectiveness of divine election cues is further illustrated by comparing support for use of force before and after the first divine election cue. Support for use of force among religious respondents increased from 55% to 69%; the 14 point increase is statistically significant ($p=.02$). Among secular respondents, support for use of force increases from 51% to 54% after the divine election cue, but the increase of 3 points is not statistically significant ($p=.44$). These findings suggest divine election cue mobilization effects are greater in more religious respondents but have no effects on secular respondents.

A similar result is found when comparing divine election cue mobilization effects on respondents' Foreign policy approval of the president's handling of the crisis. The slopes of the linear fit lines reveal divine election cue mobilization effects on both religious and secular respondents.⁴¹ Mobilization effects are greater on religious respondents, as evidenced by a statistically significant difference in the slope of their linear fit lines. While the slope of the linear fit line among Religious respondents is steeper than the slope of the linear fit line among Secular Nones, suggesting greater

³⁹ The slope of the linear fit line for Religious respondents is .10 ($p=.00$) while for secular Nones, the slope is .02 ($p=.16$)

⁴⁰ The .08 difference in slopes of the linear fit line between Religious respondents and secular Nones is statistically significant ($p=.00$).

⁴¹ The slope of the linear fit line for Religious respondents is .16 ($p=.00$) while the slope for secular Nones is .10 ($p=.05$).

mobilization effects among Religious respondents, there is no difference in mobilization effects on Religious respondents and secular Nones.⁴²

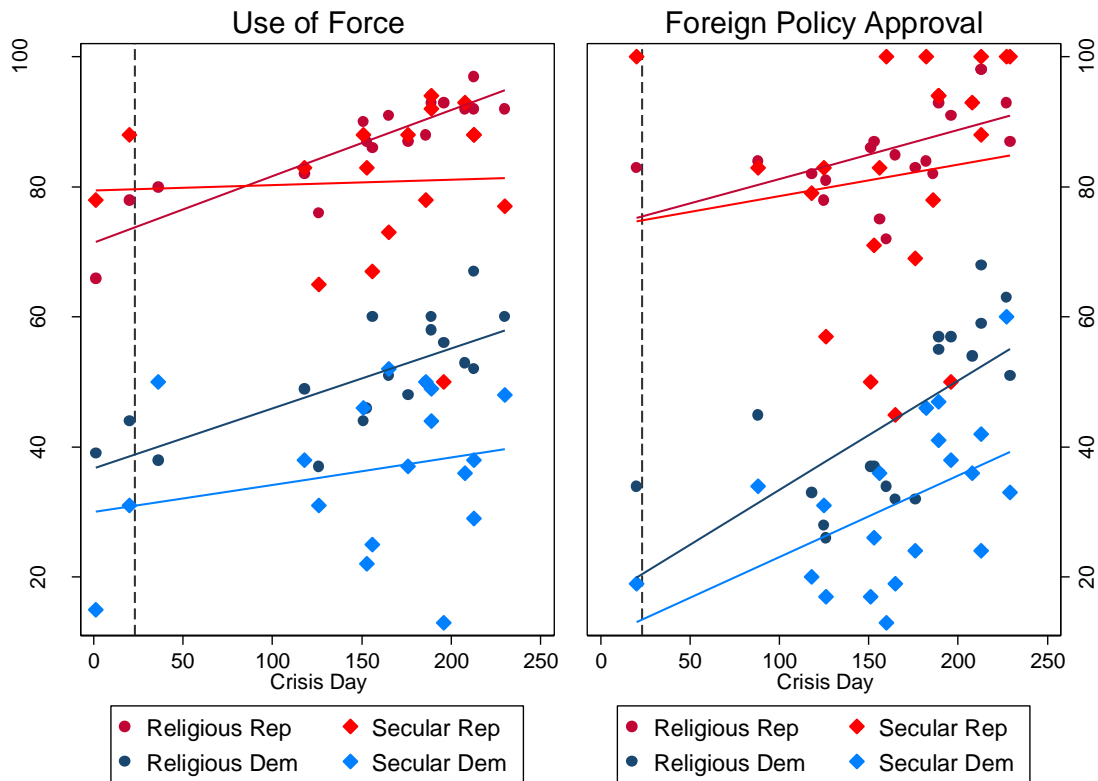


Figure 13: Foreign Policy Support in 2003 Iraq War by Religiosity and Party

Next I examine differences in divine election cue mobilization effects by religiosity and partisanship; plots of support by religious and secular partisans are summarized in Figure 13. The results reveal that President Bush’s divine election cue

⁴² The .06 difference in slopes of the linear fit line between Religious respondents and secular Nones is statistically significant ($p=.03$).

had no effect in increasing support for use of force and Foreign policy approval among secular Republicans.⁴³ By contrast, divine election cues are effective in mobilizing religious Republicans to greater support for use of force and foreign policy approval of President Bush's handling of the crisis.⁴⁴ Comparing the relative difference in foreign policy support among religious and secular Republicans also reveals religious Republicans are more mobilized than secular Republicans.⁴⁵ This is further evinced when comparing average foreign policy support before and after the divine election cue. Among secular Republicans, average support for use of force decreases 2 points after the divine election cue while Foreign policy approval decreases by 19 points. However, among religious Republicans, support for use of force and Foreign policy approval increased by 17 points and 3 points respectively.

The moderating effect of religiosity on divine election cue mobilization effects among contra-partisans is more mixed. The divine election cue generates statistically significant crossover mobilization effects on religious Democrats' support for use of force and Foreign policy approval.⁴⁶ While having no effects on secular Democrats' support for the use of force, the divine election cue increases Foreign policy approval of

⁴³ The slopes of the linear fit lines for secular Republican's support for use of force (.01) and Foreign policy approval (.05) are both not statistically significant, with p-values of .79 and .58 respectively.

⁴⁴ The slope of the linear fit of Religious Republicans' support for use of force is .10 (p=.00) and .08 (p=.00) for Foreign policy approval.

⁴⁵ The .10 point difference in slope of linear fit line between religious and secular Republicans' support for use of force is statistically significant (p=.10). However, the .03 point difference in slope of the linear fit line between religious and secular Republicans' Foreign policy approval is not statistically significant (p=.70).

⁴⁶ The slope of the linear fit line for religious Democrats' support for use of force is .09 (p=.00) and .17 (p=.00) for Foreign policy approval.

secular Democrats.⁴⁷ There are also no statistically significant differences in the relative effectiveness of divine election cues on religious and secular Democrats.⁴⁸ Comparing average foreign policy support before and after the divine election cue reveals religiosity does not seem to moderate divine election mobilization effects. Support for use of force increases 10 points among religious Democrats and 15 points among secular Democrats. Similarly, Foreign policy approval increases by 11 points among religious Democrats and 13 points among secular Democrats. This suggests that religiosity has a weaker moderating effect on contra-partisans as there are similar increases in foreign policy support among religious and secular Democrats.

Pooling all respondents reveals evidence for H3 that divine election cues are more effective in mobilizing religious respondents than secular respondents. However, disaggregating respondents by partisanship reveals religiosity has divergent moderating effects. Among co-partisan Republicans, the divine election cue has greater effects among more religious co-partisans. However, among contra-partisan Democrats, there are no significant differences in mobilization effects between religious and secular respondents. These findings suggest that religiosity may have asymmetric moderating effects across domestic audiences' partisanship; while religiosity moderates effects among co-partisans, religiosity has weaker moderating effects on contra-partisans.

⁴⁷ The slope of the linear fit line for secular Democrats' support for use of force is .04 ($p=.36$) and .13 ($p=.00$) for Foreign policy approval.

⁴⁸ The .05 difference in slopes of the support for use of force linear fit lines between religious and secular Democrats is not statistically significant ($p=.33$). Similarly, the .04 difference in slopes of the Foreign policy approval fit lines between religious and secular Democrats is not statistically significant ($p=.29$).

Summary of Findings

If divine election cues are effective, they should have effects on foreign policy attitudes during US foreign policy crisis. To test hypotheses on co-partisan and contra-partisan mobilization effects, I compiled an original dataset of 474 foreign policy polls fielded across 45 US foreign policy crises. From these polls, I extracted three measures of foreign policy support: support for the use of force, support for ground troops, and foreign policy approval of the president's handling of the foreign policy crisis.

Mobilization effects are identified in three ways. First, aggregated effects are found by comparing average foreign policy support before and after presidents' first use of a divine election cue. Second, first cue effects are identified by comparing levels of foreign policy support one hundred days immediately before president's first divine election cue to levels of support one hundred days afterwards. Finally, comparing foreign policy support given additional uses of divine election rhetoric in the preceding period before the poll was fielded reveals evidence of additive count effects. Analyses reveal strong evidence of co-partisan and contra-partisan mobilization effects across these three measurement strategies. For robustness, I also compare foreign policy support after presidents use divine election cues ("treatment" group) with support in crises in which presidents never use divine election cues ("control" group). The between-crisis analyses reveal strong evidence of comparative divine election mobilization effects on both co-partisans and contra-partisans.

Together, these findings provide significant evidence that divine election cues mobilize foreign policy support among both co-partisans (H1) *and* contra-partisans (H2).

Effects are strongest on co-partisans' and contra-partisans' support for the use of force. These empirical findings are consistent across different specifications of divine election effects, foreign policy measures, and sample of foreign policy crises. Therefore, as expected, presidents' use of divine election cues effectively mobilizes greater foreign policy support among co-partisans. Divine election cues also have consistent effects in increasing foreign policy support among contra-partisans otherwise likely to oppose the president's foreign policy agenda.

However, the use of divine election cues is not a panacea that can sway foreign policy attitudes in all foreign policy crises. The 1979-1980 Iran Hostages crisis illustrates how the presidential use of divine election cues can sometimes only slow the rate of declining public support. After the fall of the embassy in Tehran in November 1979, the inability of the Carter administration to recover the hostages translated to deteriorating Approval of President Carter's handling of the foreign policy crisis.

As Figure 14 shows, Foreign policy approval was declining among co-partisan Democrats and contra-partisan Republicans since the start of the crisis.⁴⁹ On January 25, 1980, in a speech at the Conference of Mayors' Winter Meeting, President Carter commented that the crisis "has aroused the finest elements of the American spirit. America has been brought to its knees by this incident, not in submission but in prayer [as] 220 million Americans, blessed in every possible way, have become almost completely obsessed with concern and hope about just 50 people. It shows that our commitment to human rights is not just a theory."

⁴⁹ Evidence of declining support is reflected in the slopes of the linear fit line; among Democrats, the slope $-.33$ ($p=.00$) and $-.42$ ($p=.00$) for Republicans.

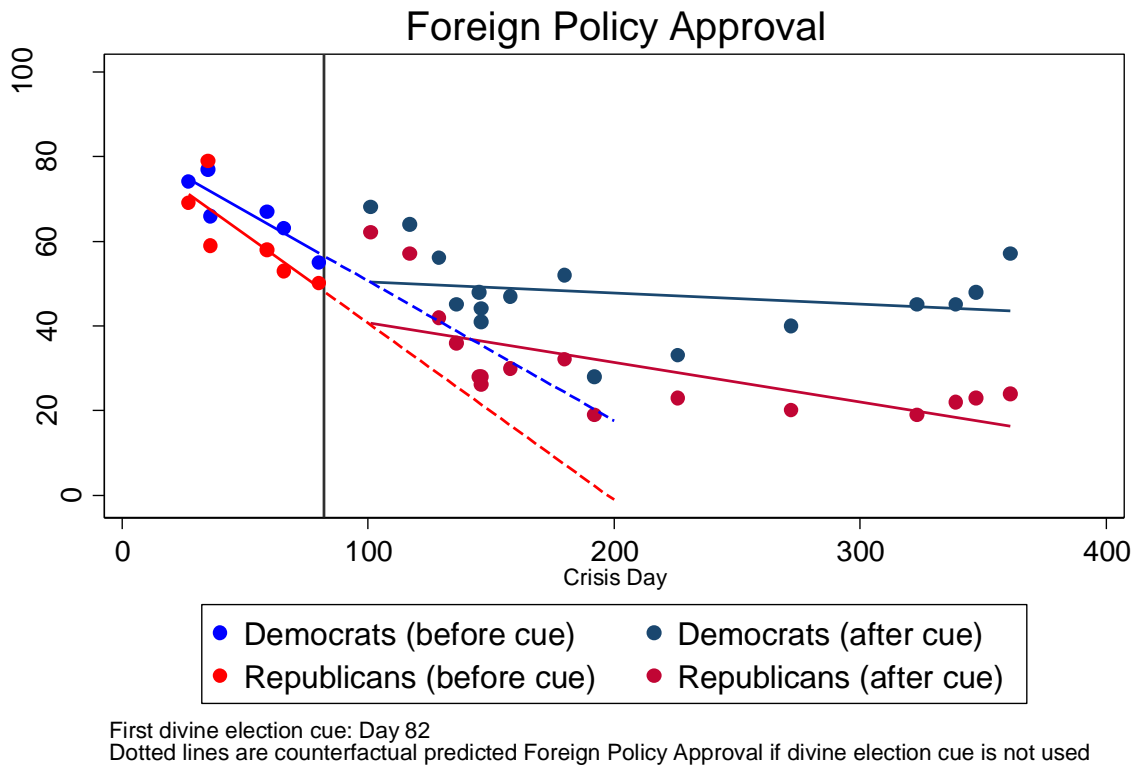


Figure 14: Foreign policy approval during the 1979-80 Iran Hostages Crisis

In this first use of divine election cues, President Carter reminds the American people of their unique national character blessed by God to protect human rights. By reframing the foreign policy setback as a test of how America uses its blessing from God and pursues its mission to promote freedom and human rights, President Carter attempted to change the narrative of the crisis and trajectory of foreign policy disapproval.

Without the use of divine election cue, foreign policy approval of President Carter's handling of the crisis would have continued to decline. After the divine election

cue, the decline in foreign policy approval was slowed, as evinced by less negative slopes on linear fit lines. Among co-partisan Democrats, initial steep declines in foreign policy approval had ceased and reached a steady state of (dis)approval. The divine election cue also reduced the rate of declines in contra-partisans' foreign policy approval.⁵⁰

Comparing the observed levels of foreign policy approval with the counterfactual expected levels of approval if President Carter had not used divine election cues reveals further evidence of a statistically significant divine election mobilization effect.⁵¹ This case illustrates that divine election cues can be effective in increasing foreign policy support. However, its effectiveness may also be measured as the slowing down of otherwise rapid declines in foreign policy rather than the reversal of declining support to increasing support.

To corroborate these historical findings, I use a survey experiment to test the divine election mobilization mechanism. Having identified how presidents' use of divine election cues increase foreign policy support among co-partisans and contra-partisans ("effects of causes"), the survey experiment in the next chapter will test if increases in foreign policy support are generated by the divine election cue mechanism ("cause of effects"). It will also enable testing of the religiosity as moderator hypothesis (H3) since the survey includes better measures of respondents' religiosity than foreign policy polls analyzed in this chapter.

⁵⁰ After the divine election cue, Foreign policy approval was decreasing at a rate of $-.03$ ($p=.34$) among Democrats and $-.09$ ($p=.00$) among Republicans.

⁵¹ The decrease in slopes between linear fit lines after and before the divine election cue is statistically significant for Democrats ($p=.00$) and Republicans ($p=.00$).

Chapter 5: Experimental Tests of Divine Election Mobilization Mechanism

Causes of Effects

In the previous chapter, I find historical evidence that presidential use of divine election cues mobilize greater foreign policy support among co-partisans (H1) and contra-partisans (H2). These effects are consistent across different specifications of divine election cue effects, statistical models containing different controls for crisis-specific factors, and whether compared to levels of foreign policy support before Presidents use divine election cues (within-crisis analyses) or foreign policy support in crises in which presidents never use divine election cues (between-crisis analyses). While having effects on increasing support for ground troops and foreign policy approval of the President's handling of the foreign policy crisis, divine election cues have the most robust and significant effects on support for the use of force. Examining foreign policy support during the 2003 Iraq War crisis also reveals evidence of religiosity moderating divine election cue mobilization effects (H3).

In this chapter, I use a two-stage two-vignette survey experiment to test the divine election religious cue mechanism. A survey experiment can reveal if the observed effects

identified in the last chapter are generated by the divine election mobilization mechanism. By showing the internal validity of these findings, the experimental results will increase confidence that mobilization effects found in Chapter 4 are indeed caused by the divine election cue mechanism. The experiment first tests divine election mechanism framing effects. Divine election cues are effective in mobilizing greater foreign policy support because it raises the geostrategic and national interest salience of a crisis. In the experiment, this is measured by respondents' agreement that US national and strategic interests are at stake in the crisis. Divine election cues also mobilize foreign policy support by increasing public expectations of success, measured by respondents' Confidence in the President's handling of the crisis.

The two-stage design of the experiment also identifies divine election cue mobilization and inverse punishment effects. Since divine election cues elevate the geopolitical stakes and expectations of success in a crisis, they mobilize greater support for the President. They motivate respondents to reward the President with higher support if he is successful in the crisis; in the crisis, success is measured by analyzing the foreign policy support of respondents who receive the President Send Troops update vignette. However, divine election cues can also generate greater punishment costs. Respondents who are mobilized to expect success will be more disapproving of the President if he subsequently fails in the crisis. Like other types of domestic punishment effects, it is often difficult to empirically observe divine election cue punishment effects.⁵² In the

⁵² As Schultz (2001) points out, if presidents know they will suffer greater domestic punishment if they make a particular type of initial commitment (in my case, using divine election cues), presidents would not make that type of initial commitment. The experiment allows me to manipulate the crisis outcome so that I can measure how respondents would react to an otherwise unlikely to be observed outcome.

experiment, I identify divine election punishment effects by comparing the foreign policy attitudes of respondents assigned to the President Back Down vignette. Evidence of divine election punishment effects is counterfactual evidence of divine election mobilization effects.

Third, the experiment enables more precise identification of divine election effects. The two-stage vignette design enables identification of between-group *and* within-group treatment effects. Triangulating results from between-group analyses that compare foreign policy support between respondents in the treatment or control groups with within-group analyses comparing how respondents update their foreign policy attitudes reveals more precise identification of treatment effects. The experiment also facilitates testing of the hypothesis that religiosity moderates divine election mobilization effects. Instead of relying on proxies in the analysis of historical foreign policy attitudes, the experiment measures respondents' religious behavior as measured by their frequency of church attendance. This enables comparison of foreign policy attitudes between more and less religious respondents to identify how preexisting religiosity moderates divine election cue mobilization and punishment effects.

The results reveal the divine election cue mechanism has expected framing effects in raising respondents' perception of the geopolitical stakes of the crisis and expectations of success. While divine election cues are not effective in mobilizing greater support for the use of force, they do mobilize greater Approval of the President and stronger expectations the President will do the Right Thing if President sends troops. These effects are generated when both co-partisan and contra-partisan Presidents use divine

election cues. This is evidence of co-partisan (H1) and contra-partisan (H2) divine election cue mobilization effects. I also find evidence that mobilization effects are moderated by respondents' religiosity (H3). While divine election cues mobilize greater support among more religious respondents, it has minimal if not negative effects on less religious respondents. These findings reveal that observed historical effects of divine election cues are caused by the divine election cue mobilization mechanism. It also reveals further evidence of divine election cue mobilization effects on foreign policy support among co-partisans, contra-partisans, and more religious respondents.

Survey Design

Instead of using the treatment and post-test measurement design used commonly in foreign policy experiments, I use a two-stage two vignette experimental design that more closely replicate the sequence of events in a foreign policy crisis. While there is variation in how specific foreign policy crises play out, there is a sequence of key events that almost always occur during a foreign policy crisis: First, there is a Trigger that initiates the crisis. Then the President provides his Initial Response, usually public comments to draw public attention to the crisis, convey intentions, and set (or lower) expectations of future foreign policy action. After the President's initial comments about the emerging crisis, the public forms Initial Attitudes about the best course of action and how much they support the President's stated foreign policy strategy. Most foreign policy crises do not end immediately after initial comments by the President. Instead, there is a Major Response ranging from diplomacy to more forceful strategies to try and bring about a preferred outcome or prevent undesired outcomes. The President's Major

Response is followed by Updated Attitudes as the public reacts to the administration's crisis strategy in updating their level of foreign policy support given initial baseline expectations.

This experiment begins with an introduction of crisis Trigger and the President's Initial Response. The vignettes first identify the President as a Republican or Democrat and whether he uses divine election rhetoric or secular rhetoric in speaking about the crisis. There is no true "control" group since it is unlikely Presidents make no public statement about important foreign policy crises. Thus, treatment effects are marginal effects or differences in foreign policy attitudes between respondents assigned to secular rhetoric treatment groups and respondents assigned to divine election religious rhetoric treatment groups. The four vignettes respondents can be assigned to are summarized in Table 5 below; the text that varies across the four treatment groups is underlined.

After the initial vignette, respondents' Initial Attitudes are assessed with three foreign policy measures. Respondents are asked whether they agree that US national and strategic interests are at stake (Interests), whether they are confident the President will do the right thing in handling the foreign policy crisis (Confident), and whether they support the use of force to support the US ally under threat (Force).⁵³

⁵³ Each question measures foreign policy support along a five-point scale from Strongly Agree/Support to Strongly Disagree/Oppose. To aid interpretability of results, I re-parameterize each variable as a dichotomous Agree/Support variable. Unsure or uncertain responses in the original variable are coded as not Agree/Support. There is evidence that these three measures capture distinct foreign policy attitudes since their joint Cronbach alpha value is only .60.

<p>Republican President, Secular Rhetoric We will describe one approach <u>Republican</u> Presidents have taken, and ask whether you approve or disapprove.</p> <p>A country has mobilized its army along the border with its neighboring state, a US ally.</p> <p>The President, who is a <u>Democrat</u>, condemned the aggression of the threatening country.</p> <p>In his statement, the President said “America stands against those who threaten their neighbors’ freedom.”</p> <p>The President reiterated that “America will stand with our allies against aggression that threatens decent and just people everywhere.”</p> <p>The President concluded by reassuring the American people that he will “uphold and defend the interests of our country” in responding to this crisis.</p>	<p>Democratic President, Secular Rhetoric We will describe one approach <u>Democratic</u> Presidents have taken, and ask whether you approve or disapprove.</p> <p>A country has mobilized its army along the border with its neighboring state, a US ally.</p> <p>The President, who is a <u>Democrat</u>, condemned the aggression of the threatening country.</p> <p>In his statement, the President said “America stands against those who threaten their neighbors’ freedom.”</p> <p>The President reiterated that “America will stand with our allies against aggression that threatens decent and just people everywhere.”</p> <p>The President concluded by reassuring the American people that he will “uphold and defend the interests of our country” in responding to this crisis.</p>
<p>Republic President, Divine Election Rhetoric We will describe one approach <u>Republican</u> Presidents have taken, and ask whether you approve or disapprove.</p> <p>A country has mobilized its army along the border with its neighboring state, a US ally.</p> <p>The President, who is a <u>Republican</u>, condemned the aggression of the threatening country.</p> <p>In his statement, the President said “America stands against those who threaten their neighbors’ freedom, <u>God’s gift to the world.</u>”</p> <p>The President reiterated that “<u>As God is on our side</u>, America will stand with our allies against aggression that threatens decent and just people everywhere.”</p> <p>The President concluded by reassuring the American people that he will “<u>with God’s help</u>, uphold and defend the interests of our country” in responding to this crisis.</p>	<p>Democratic President, Divine Election Rhetoric We will describe one approach <u>Democratic</u> Presidents have taken, and ask whether you approve or disapprove.</p> <p>A country has mobilized its army along the border with its neighboring state, a US ally.</p> <p>The President, who is a <u>Democrat</u>, condemned the aggression of the threatening country.</p> <p>In his statement, the President said “America stands against those who threaten their neighbors’ freedom, <u>God’s gift to the world.</u>”</p> <p>The President reiterated that “<u>As God is on our side</u>, America will stand with our allies against aggression that threatens decent and just people everywhere.”</p> <p>The President concluded by reassuring the American people that he will “<u>with God’s help</u>, uphold and defend the interests of our country” in responding to this crisis.</p>

Table 5: Foreign policy Vignettes

Respondents are then randomly assigned to an update vignette that informs them about the President’s Major Response; this third treatment factorial varies whether the President did nothing or sent troops in response to an invasion of the US ally. Table 6 summarizes the two update vignettes respondents are randomly assigned to; text that varies between the two update vignettes is underlined.

Back Down	Send Troops
Three days later, the threatening state’s army invaded the territory of the US ally.	Three days later, the threatening state’s army invaded the territory of the US ally.
The President, who is a (Republican/Democrat), <u>did not send troops to aid the US ally.</u>	The President, who is a (Republican/Democrat), <u>immediately authorized the use of force to aid the US ally</u>

Table 6: Update Vignettes

After the update vignettes, respondents’ Updated Attitudes are measured with two questions: if they approve of the President’s handling of the crisis (Approve) and whether they were confident the President will do the right thing in a future crisis (Right Thing).⁵⁴

Respondents are also asked manipulation check questions and a battery of demographic questions. In total, respondents are assigned to one of eight treatment groups based on a full 2x2x2 factorial treatment design. The first vignette varies whether the President is a

⁵⁴ As with the first three measures of foreign policy support, responses originally along a five-point scale are re-parameterized as a dichotomous Support/Approve variable to aid interpretability. The Cronbach alpha of the two variables is .63, suggesting that they are measuring distinct foreign policy attitudes.

Republican or Democrat, and whether he uses a Secular Cue or Divine Election Cue.

Respondents are then assigned to either the Send Troops or Back Down update vignette.

Testable Empirical Implications

The experiment design enables testing of divine election cue mechanism framing

effects. I hypothesize divine election cues elevate the geostrategic and national interest

salience of the crisis. Evidence for this framing effect is found if respondents in the

divine election cue treatment group have higher agreement US Interests are at stake.

Second, divine election cues increase public audiences' expectations of victory.

Expectations of success are measured by respondents' confidence the President will do

the right thing in the crisis. Since Presidents' cues are the frames that increase

expectations of success, greater confidence in the President is correlated with higher

expectations of success. Thus, respondents who receive the divine election cue treatment

should have greater confidence in the President than respondents who receive the secular

cue control.

The aggregate effect of divine election cues elevating the geopolitical stakes and

increasing expectations of success is higher public support for the President's foreign

policy. Since there are religious respondents across the partisan spectrum likely to

respond to how divine election cues (re)frame the crisis with religious meanings, I expect

higher foreign policy among both co-partisans (H1) and contra-partisans (H2).

Respondents' foreign policy support is measured twice in the crisis after each of the

vignettes. After the first vignette, respondents assigned to the divine election cue

treatment groups should have greater support for the use of force than respondents in the

secular cue control group. After the President Sends Troops, divine election cues should also mobilize greater approval of the President's handling of the crisis and stronger expectations the President will do the right thing in a future crisis.

While divine election cues mobilize greater foreign policy support, its use can also lead to greater punishment if the President fails in the crisis. As the use of divine election cues mobilizes stronger support when the President is successful, it can also lead to greater disapproval if the President is unsuccessful. These divine election cue punishment effects are identified by comparing the decrease in approval of the President's handling of the crisis and expectations the President will do the right thing in a future crisis among respondents receiving the President Back Down update. Respondents who receive the divine election cue should have greater decreases in support compared to respondents who receive the secular cue treatment control.

Finally, since divine election cues use religious frames to motivate new political support, its effects should be greater among more religious respondents (H3). Using the frequency of church attendance as a measure of religiosity, I differentiate between respondents who never or seldom go to religious services to those who go at least monthly. Divine election mobilization effects are expected to be greater among more religious respondents; conversely, divine election cues should have smaller if not negative mobilization effects on less religious respondents.

Expected empirical effects are summarized in the testable implications below. First, foreign policy support is higher among respondents who receive the divine election cue treatment. Second, divine election cue effects are moderated by crisis outcome: in

successful crises, divine election cues mobilize greater public support for the President but when the President fails, divine election cues lead to greater punishment. Finally, I expect greater increases and decrease of foreign policy support among more religious respondents who receive the divine election cue treatment; by contrast, divine election cues should have small if not negative effects on less religious secular respondents.

Experiment Sample Demographics

Respondents for the survey experiment were recruited in April 2015. First, a nationally representative adult sample was recruited through Qualtrics. Given cost constraints, student respondents are also recruited to supplement the limited number of respondents in the nationally representative sample. Students in political science classes were given the chance to take the survey for extra credit. They were also invited to send the survey link to their friends; some students then received additional extra credit if respondents they invited to take the survey were chosen randomly from the pool of referred respondents.

Table 11 in the Appendix summarizes the demographic profile of the 735 Qualtrics-recruited respondents, the 688 student-recruited respondents, and the pooled sample of 1423 respondents. The full sample of respondents matched the national partisanship breakdown of 39% Republicans, 48% Democrats, and 13% Independents as identified in 2014 Pew Research Center polls.⁵⁵ The full sample is also gender-balanced

⁵⁵ The Pew Research Center calculated the 2014 national party identification profile by pooling the 25,010 respondents who took part in a 2014 Pew poll. Respondents who initially identify as an Independent but then answer they lean to the Republican or Democratic party are coded as a Republican or Democrat respectively.

with a proportion of 49/51 of male to female respondents. 74% of respondents are white, 55% of respondents have at least some college education, and the average age is 38.

To maximize the ability to identify crossover mobilization effects, Qualtrics-recruited respondents were assigned to crossover presidential treatment groups. Those who identify as Republican were randomly assigned to either the Democratic president divine election cue group or the Democratic president secular cue group. Similarly, Democrats were assigned to either the Republican president divine election cue group or the Republican president secular cue group. Independents were randomly assigned to one of four initial treatment groups. Respondents in the student sample were randomly assigned to a treatment group regardless of their partisanship. Respondents were randomly assigned to receive either the Back Down or Send Troops update vignette; they are assigned to update vignettes that correspond to the party of the President in the initial vignette. Checking if the randomization mechanism is successful, I analyze if there is a correlation between partisanship, gender, ethnicity, or education and assignment to one of the eight treatment groups. The results, summarized in Table 11 in the Appendix, reveal there are no statistically significant correlations between demographic profile and treatment assignment, suggesting that the randomization mechanism was successful.

Divine Election Cue Mobilization Effects after First Vignettes

Given successful randomization, comparison of foreign policy support across divine election cue treatment and secular cue control groups reveals divine election cue mobilization effects. Since the experiment uses a hypothetical foreign policy scenario and asks respondents to imagine the President to either be a Republican or Democrat, I

only count respondents who pass the manipulation check asking if they can correctly identify the President's partisanship; 85% of respondents passed the manipulation check.

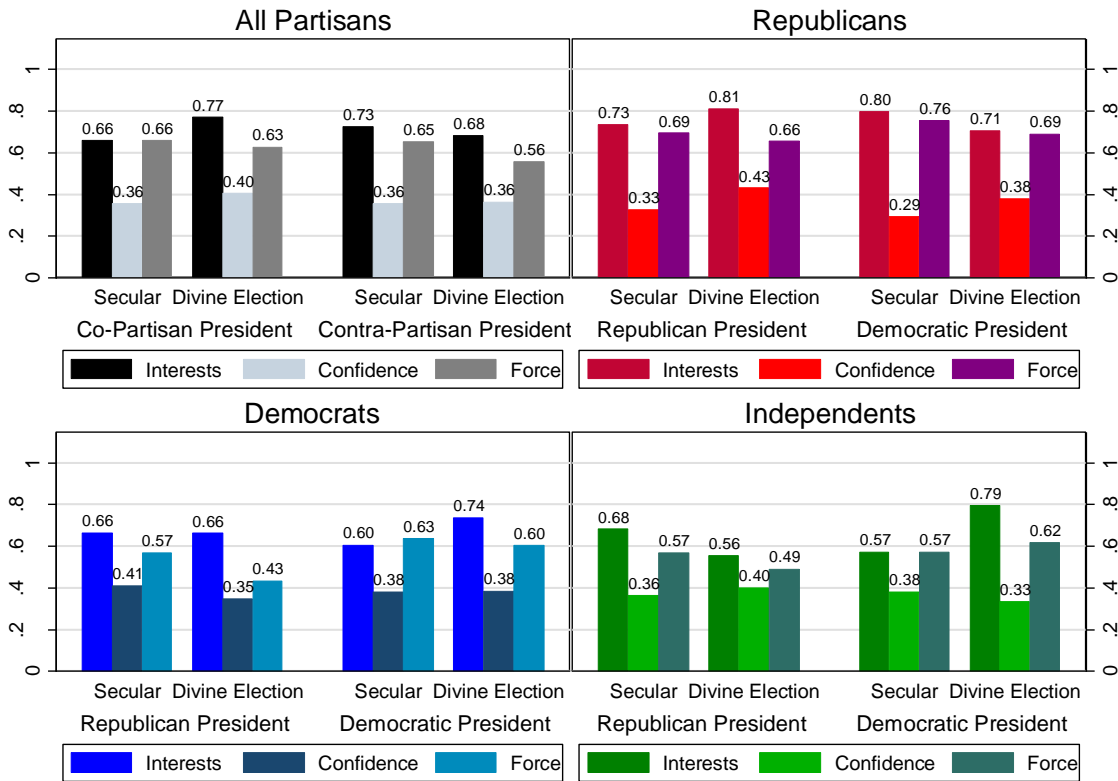


Figure 15: Foreign Policy Support after First Vignettes

Figure 15 above summarizes respondents' Interests, Confidence, and Force after the first vignettes. I pool respondents by partisanship and whether the President in the vignette is from their party (co-partisan) or the opposite party (contra-partisan). Then respondents

are disaggregated by their party identification (Republicans, Democrats, or Independents) and whether cues are given by a Republican or Democratic president.

To test for divine election cue framing effects, I compare respondents' agreement US interests are at stake in the crisis and confidence the President will do the right thing across treatment and control groups. Respondents who receive the divine election cue from a co-partisan President have higher Interests by 11 points ($p=.06$) though the 5 point increase in confidence is not statistically significant ($p=.45$); this is evidence of co-partisan divine election mobilization effects. When pooling all respondents, there are no statistically significant contra-partisan divine election mobilization effects on interests ($p=.19$) or confidence ($p=.85$). However, contra-partisan mobilization effects are found when disaggregating respondents by their party identification. For example, the Democratic President's use of divine election cue mobilizes greater confidence the President will do the right thing by 9 points ($p=.08$) among contra-partisan Republican respondents. A Democratic President also mobilize greater agreement of US interests among Independents by 22 points ($p=.03$).

Given evidence of divine election cue framing effects on respondents' geostrategic perceptions and expectations of success, I expect divine election cues generate stronger support for the use of force. However, I do not find evidence of divine election cue mobilization effects as results show divine election cues do not mobilize greater support but may even decrease support for the use of force. The President's use of divine election cues reduce support for the use of force among co-partisans by 4 points, though the decrease is not statistically significant ($p=.59$). However, the negative

effect on contra-partisans is statistically significant as divine election cues decrease support for use of force by 10 points ($p=.01$). These unexpected findings hold when disaggregating respondents and Presidents by party affiliation. The negative effects of divine election cues on support for use of force is most exemplified by the 14 point decrease in support for the use of force among Democrats when the Republican President uses divine election cues.

Having found that divine election cues mobilize higher agreement of US interests at stake and higher confidence the President will do the right thing but not more support for the use of force, I examine if religiosity moderates these mobilization effects. Using the frequency of church attendance as a proxy for religiosity, I differentiate between low religious respondents (who never or infrequently attend religious services) and high religious respondents (who attend church at least once a month).⁵⁶ Figure 16 summarizes mobilization effects on low and high religious respondents.⁵⁷

The results reveal religiosity does not moderate respondents' agreement that US Interests are at stake in the crisis. Religiosity does have some moderation effects on confidence the President will do the right thing and support for use of force. Mobilization effects on confidence are greater in more religious Republicans, increasing their confidence by 14 points ($p=.04$) while having no statistically significant effect on less religious Republicans ($p=.46$).

⁵⁶ In the full sample, the ratio of low and high religious respondents is 62% to 38%. While the ratio favors more religious respondents among Republicans (46% high religious to 54% low religious), it favors less religious respondents among Democrats (66% low religious to 34% high religious) and Independents (71% low religious to 29% high religious).

⁵⁷ I do not expect that the potential moderating effect of respondents' religiosity further interacts with the partisanship of the President giving divine election cues. Therefore, when disaggregating respondents by party affiliation, I do not also differentiate by president party.

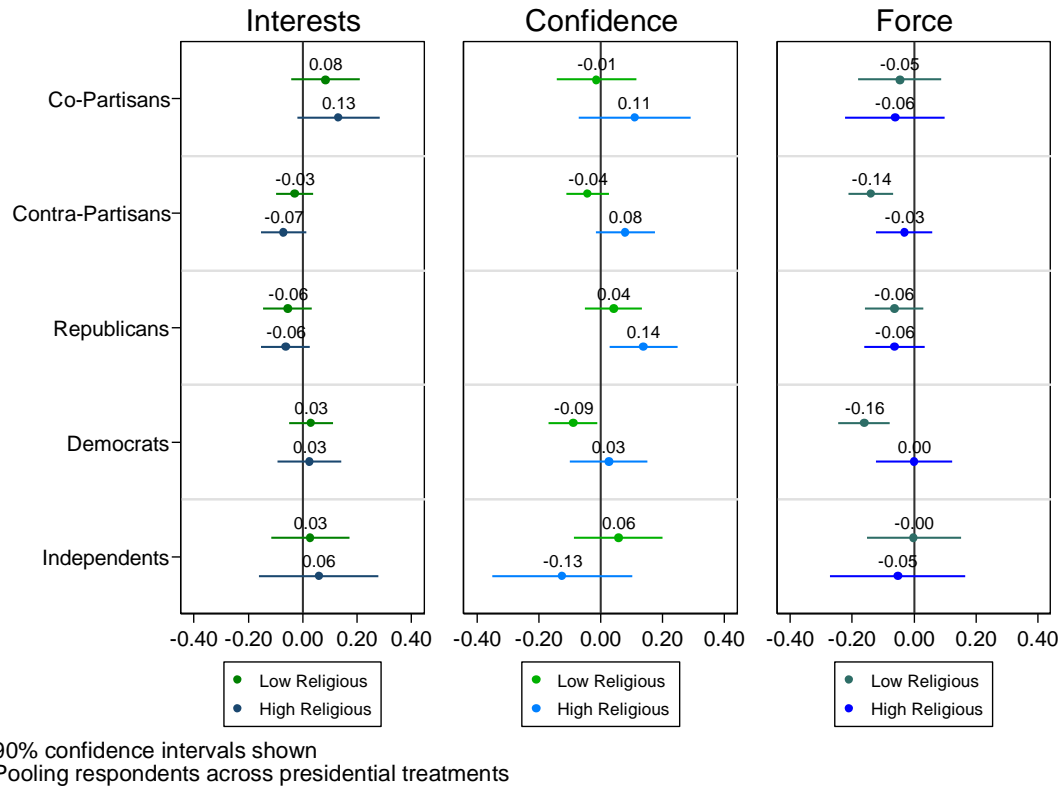


Figure 16: Divine Election Cue Effects on Initial Foreign policy Support by Religiosity

There is also evidence for the inverse implications of the religiosity as moderator hypothesis as mobilization effects are negative among less religious respondents. Less religious Democrats who receive divine election cues have lower confidence in the President by 9 points ($p=.06$) and support for the use of force by 16 points ($p=.00$). Pooling partisans, respondents who receive a divine election cue from a contra-partisan President reduces support for use of force by 14 points ($p=.00$). These findings suggest religiosity is a moderator of divine election mobilization effects; while cues have greater

mobilization effects on more religious respondents, it also has negative effects on less religious respondents.

Divine Election Cue Mobilization Effects if the President Sends Troops

While divine election cues have expected framing effects but do not mobilize initial support for use of force, I expect it mobilizes greater foreign policy support when the mission is successful. In the experiment, the success outcome is the President sending troops to help the US ally. Figure 17 below summarizes approval of the President's handling of the crisis and expectations the President will do the right thing among respondents who receive the President Send Troops update vignette. Pooling all partisans, divine election cues have mobilization effects on approval and right thing attitudes of co-partisans; however, the respectively 2 point ($p=.80$) and 13 point ($p=.15$) mobilization effects are not statistically significant. Disaggregating respondents by party reveals co-partisan mobilization effects are statistically significant among Democrat respondents who receive cues from a Democratic President. While the 13 point ($p=.27$) mobilization effect on Democrats is not statistically significant, the almost doubling or 25 point increase ($p=.04$) in Democrats' expectation the President will do the right thing in a future crisis is statistically significant. Independents are also mobilized when the Democrat President uses divine election cues. However, due to small sample size⁵⁸, the 16 point effect on approval ($p=.28$) and 22 point effect on right thing ($p=.13$) attitudes are not statistically significant.

⁵⁸ Only 42 Independents receive the Democratic President Secular cue control or Democratic President Divine Election cue treatment groups and the President Send Troops update vignette.

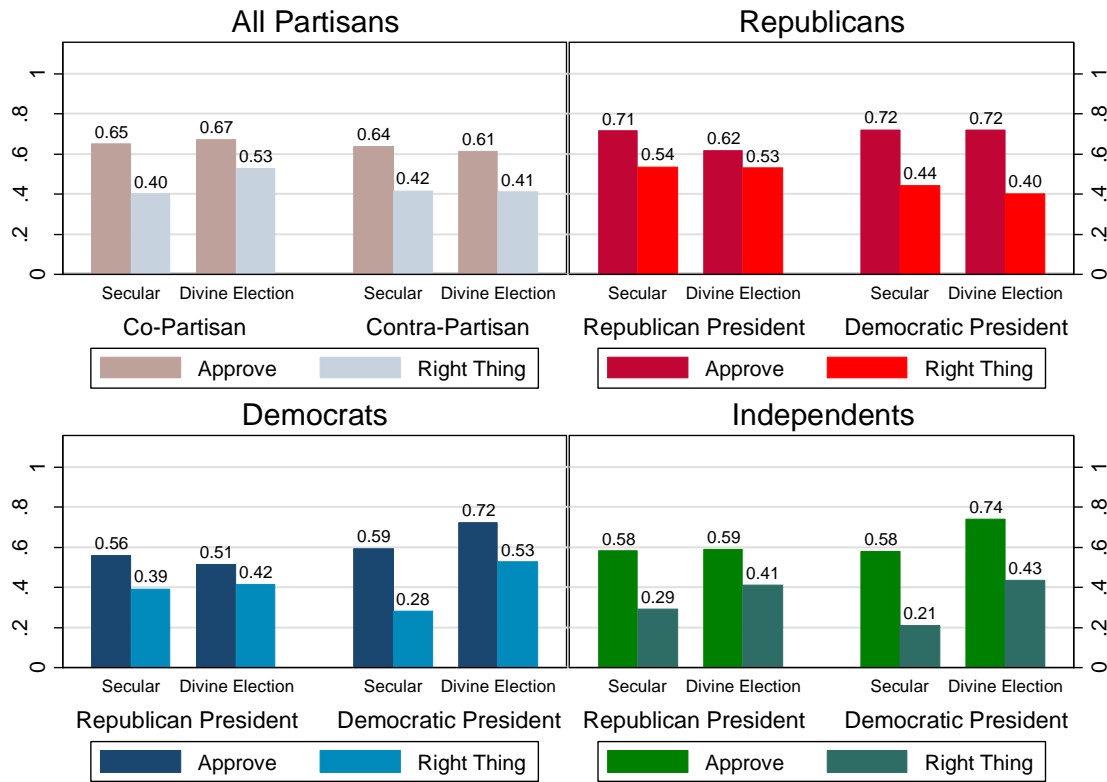
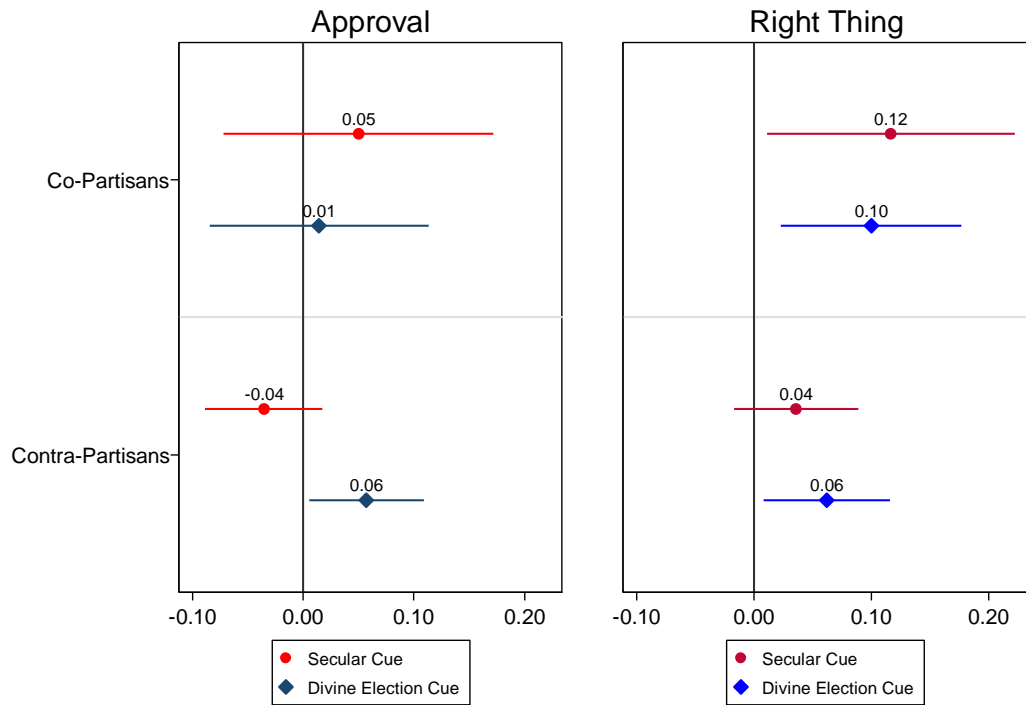


Figure 17: Foreign Policy Support if President Sends Troops

To more precisely measure divine election mobilization effects, I use within-group analysis to better identify mobilization effects. In the previous analyses, divine election mobilization effects were calculated by finding the difference in foreign policy support between respondents who receive the divine election cue treatment or secular cue control. Within-group analysis examines the difference between respondents' initial foreign policy attitudes (measured after the first vignette) and updated attitudes (measured after the Send Troops vignette). Treatment effects are calculated as the

change from initial support for the use of force to approval of the President's handling of the crisis and the change from initial confidence the President will do the right thing to expectations the President will do the right thing in a future crisis.



90% confidence intervals shown
 Approval is change from initial support for use of Force
 Right Thing is change from initial Confidence in president

Figure 18: Within-Group Divine Election Cue Effects if President Sends Troops

Co-partisan and contra-partisan within-group treatment effects are summarized in Figure 18 above. Compared to their initial support for the use of force, the President who

follows up an initial use of divine election cue by sending troops increases contra-partisans approval of the President's handling of the crisis by 6 points ($p=.07$). There are similar contra-partisan mobilization effects as expectations the President will do the right thing in a future crisis is 6 points higher ($p=.06$) than initial confidence the President will do the right thing in the current crisis. Expectations the President will do the right thing is also 10 points higher ($p=.03$) than initial confidence among respondents who receive the divine election cue treatment from a co-partisan President. These within-group analyses reveal further evidence that divine election cues mobilize stronger foreign policy support among co-partisans and contra-partisans, especially in shaping their expectations that the President will do the right thing in a future crisis.

Finally I examine if religiosity moderates mobilization effects when the President is successful. The results summarized in Figure 19 reveal evidence of differential effects by respondent religiosity, especially when disaggregating respondents by their party affiliation. Among low religious Democrats, divine election cues have no statistically significant effect on approval ($p=.32$) or right thing ($p=.88$) attitudes. However, divine election cues mobilize greater support among more religious Democrats; their approval and right thing attitudes are 20 points ($p=.09$) and 26 points ($p=.03$) higher respectively than religious Democrats who receive the secular cue.

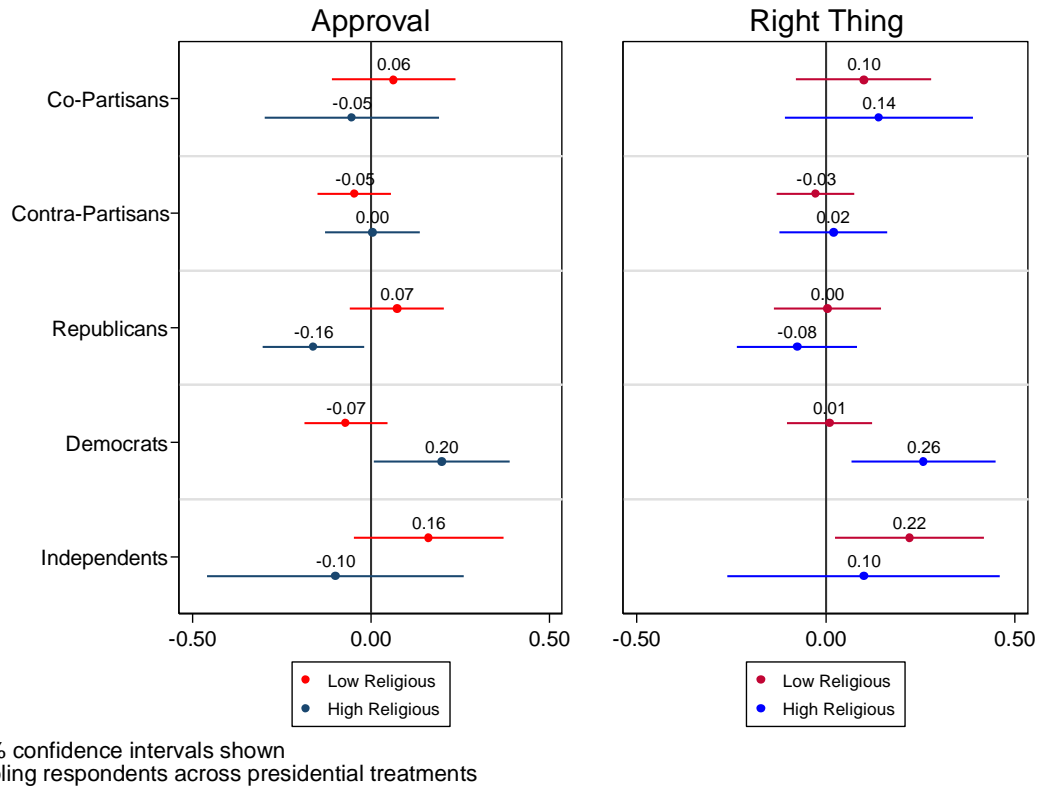


Figure 19: Divine Election Effects on Final Foreign Policy Support by Religiosity

However, I find unexpected moderation effects among Republicans. While divine election cues have the expected effect of not mobilizing less religious Republicans, it has the unexpected effect of decreasing foreign policy support among more religious Republicans. Divine election cues have negative effects on more religious Republicans, decreasing their approval by 16 points ($p=.06$); they also have 8 point lower expectations the President will do the right thing though that unexpected negative effect is not statistically significant ($p=.43$). It also has unexpected moderation effects on

Independents as less religious Independents are more mobilized by divine election cues than more religious Independents.

To summarize, analyses of foreign policy support after the President follows through on an initial commitment reveals evidence of divine election mobilization effects on co-partisans (H1) and contra-partisans (H2). Some mobilization effects that are not statistically significant when using between-group analyses are statistically significant when calculated using within-group analysis. There is also evidence that religiosity moderates the effects of divine election cues (H3). However, while divine election cues are more effective on more religious Democrats, it has the opposite effect among Republicans and Independents; among these two respondents, divine election cues have greater effects on less religious respondents but weaker if not negative effects on more religious respondents.

Divine Election Cue Mobilization Effects if the President Backs Down

While divine election cues generate positive mobilization effects when the President sends troops and the crisis is successful, I also expect they generate punishment effects if the President is unsuccessful in the crisis. In the experiment, punishment costs are identified by examining the foreign policy attitudes of respondents who receive the President Back Down update vignette. As summarized in Figure 20 below, foreign policy support for the President is low when he backs down in the crisis.

Compared to respondents who receive secular cues, foreign policy support is lower when respondents receive a divine election cue from co-partisan and contra-

partisan presidents. Co-partisan and contra-partisan divine election cue punishment effects are consistent when disaggregating respondents by their party affiliation.

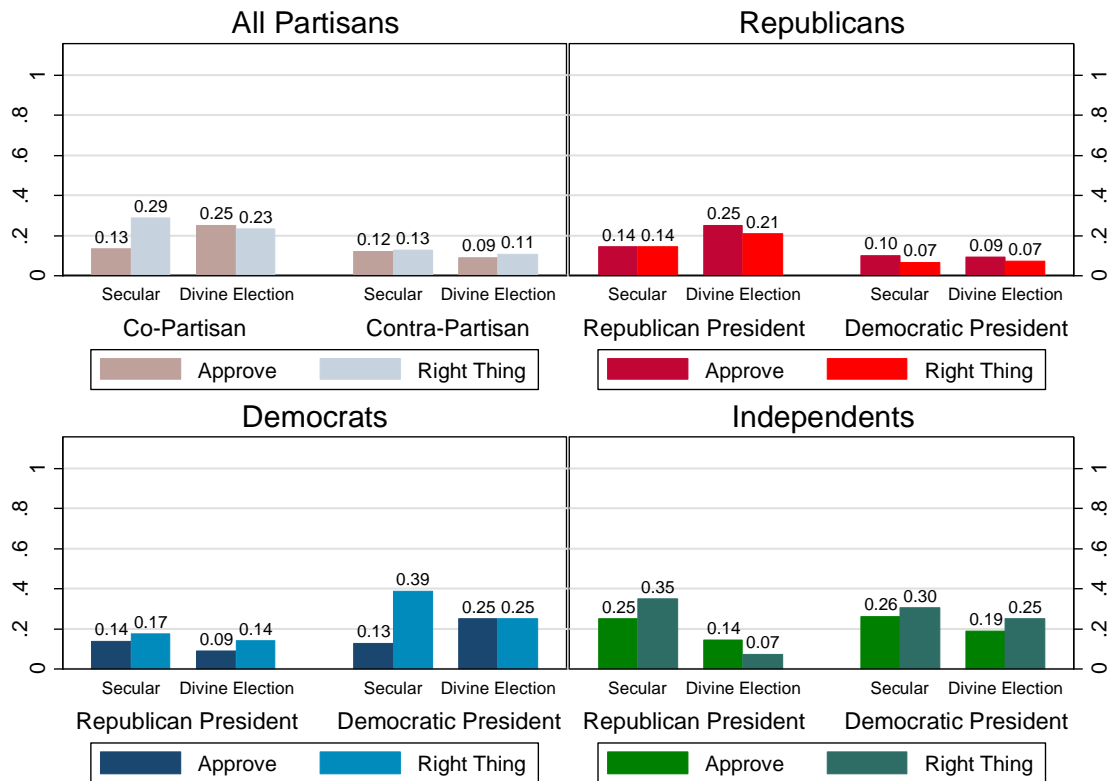


Figure 20: Foreign Policy Support if President Backs Down

Democrats who receive the divine election cue from a Democratic President punish him with lower approval and right thing attitudes when the President backs down. Democrats who receive the divine election cue from a Republican President and Republicans who

receive the divine election cue from a Democratic President also punish the President when they back down. Independents punish Republican and Democratic Presidents who use divine election cues and back down. However, given low levels of foreign policy support in the secular cue control group, it is difficult if not impossible to find statistically significant effects; for the differences between the divine election cue and secular cue groups to be statistically significant, support in the divine election treatment group to be near zero or even below zero. By contrast, statistically significant punishment effects are identifiable when closer to one in three respondents support the President in the secular cue control group than one in ten respondents. Among Independents assigned to Republican President vignettes, 35% expect the President will do the right thing in a future crisis if the President used secular cues while only 7% expect the same if the President used divine election cues before backing down; the 28 point divine election punishment effect is statistically significant ($p=.02$).

I also examine if religiosity moderates divine election cue punishment effects. Having found that divine election mobilization effects are greater in more religious respondents, I expect divine election punishment effects are correspondingly greater in more religious respondents. However, the results reveal religiosity is not a moderating factor. As Figure 21 below summarizes, divine election punishment effects do not differ between low and high religious respondents. While high religious respondents punish Presidents who use divine election cues more than if the President had used secular cues, divine election cue punishment effects are not statistically significant in more religious

(and less religious) Independents. These findings provide evidence against the expectation that religiosity moderates divine election cue punishment effects.

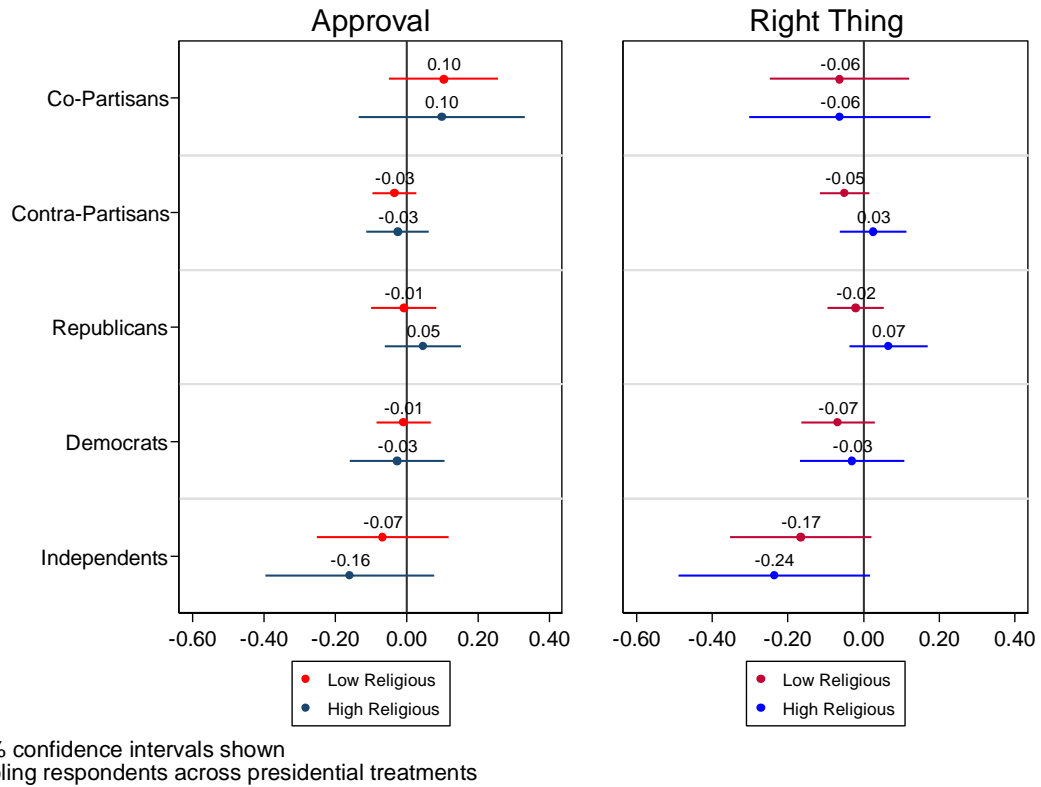


Figure 21: Divine Election Cue Punishment Effects by Religiosity

Summary of Experimental Findings

In the experiment, foreign policy attitudes are measured after an initial vignette and again after an update vignette. After the first vignette containing information about

the party of the President and whether he used divine election cues, respondents are asked if they agree that US interests are at stake in the crisis, if they are confident the President will do the right thing in the crisis, and if they support the use of force. The findings reveal evidence of divine election framing; there is higher agreement of US interests among co-partisans and confidence in the President among contra-partisans, especially among Democrats when a Republican President uses divine election cues. There is also evidence that framing effects are moderated by respondents' religiosity; increases in support, especially confidence in the President, are greater among more religious respondents. By contrast, less religious respondents who receive divine election cues have lower confidence in the President and support for the use of force. However framing effects do not translate into mobilization effects as divine election cues do not increase respondents' initial support for the use of force.

Next I examine respondents' foreign policy attitudes after the update vignette. Comparing foreign policy support after the President Send Troops update can reveal evidence of divine election mobilization effects while foreign policy support after the President Backs Down update can reveal evidence of divine election punishment effects. I find divine election cues are effective in mobilizing stronger approval of the President's handling of the crisis and expectations the President will do the right thing in a future crisis among contra-partisans who receive the President Send Troops update. Divine election cues also mobilize stronger right thing expectations among co-partisans. Religiosity moderates these mobilization effects, especially among Democrats.

However, there is no evidence respondents punish Presidents more if they use divine election cues and then back down. While respondents' approval and right thing attitudes are lower if when the President uses divine election cues and back down, the low sometimes single-digit support for Presidents who back down after using secular cues means it is very difficult if not impossible to identify statistically significant divine election punishment effects. There is also no evidence that respondents' religiosity moderates (non-existent) divine election punishment effects.

In sum, the experimental results reveal evidence for the effectiveness of the divine election cue mechanism. Divine election cues generate framing effects, elevating the geostrategic salience of the crisis and expectations of victory. I also find evidence of expected divine election cue mobilization effects. While it does not have mobilize greater support for the use of force, divine election cues do mobilize greater support for Approval and expectations the President will do the Right Thing among co-partisan and contra-partisan respondents; this is evidence for the co-partisan (H1) and contra-partisan (H2) mobilization hypotheses. There is also evidence for H3, that religiosity moderates divine election mobilization effects; not only do divine election cues have a greater mobilization effect on more religious respondents, they have marginal if not negative effects on less religious respondents. Therefore, the results of the evidence increase confidence that observed divine election cue mobilization effects during US foreign policy crises found in Chapter 4 are generated by the divine election cue mechanism.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications

Effectiveness of Divine Election Cues

The secularist status quo of political science claims that religion is epiphenomenal and has no real observable effects on political actors, processes, and outcomes (Wald and Wilcox 2006). Building on the emerging theoretical and empirical scholarship challenging this assumption, this dissertation reveals the effectiveness of presidents' use of religious rhetoric cues, especially divine election cues, in mobilizing greater public support during foreign policy crises. When US presidents use divine election foreign policy cues, they elevate the national interest and geopolitical salience of a crisis while increasing public expectations of success. These framing effects result in mobilization effects as domestic audiences, both co-partisans from the president's party and contra-partisans otherwise likely to oppose the president, become more supportive of the president's foreign policy agenda. In contrast to secular foreign policy cues that only effectively mobilize co-partisans, divine election cues mobilize both co-partisans and contra-partisans as religious appeals and framing resonate with religious Americans.

Since there are religious Americans across the partisan spectrum, divine election cues can mobilize both along and across partisan divides.

After creating an original dataset identifying when presidents have used divine election cues during US foreign policy crises, I examine the empirical effects of these divine election cues on historical foreign policy attitudes. I find that presidents' use of divine election cues increase public support among co-partisans and contra-partisans. Mobilization effects are robust across different parameterizations of divine election effects, statistical models, and sample of foreign policy crises. While also increasing public support for ground troops and approval of the President's handling of the crisis, divine election cues have the most consistent and significant effects on increasing support for the use of force. Though analysis of historical foreign policy attitudes reveals robust evidence for the co-partisan (H1) and contra-partisan (H2) divine election cue mobilization hypotheses, the lack of polls that also measure respondents' religiosity means it is impossible to test the third hypothesis that respondents' religiosity moderates divine election cue effects. Instead, I test H3 by examining foreign policy support among religious and secular populations during the 2003 Iraq War crisis. The results reveal that divine election cue effects are moderated by religiosity.

My analyses of historical trends in US foreign policy attitudes during foreign policy crises from 1946 to 2006 reveal divine election cue are effective in mobilizing domestic publics. I then use a survey experiment to show that observed increases in foreign policy support are caused by the divine election cue mechanism. The experiment includes five measures of foreign policy support to measure if the divine election cue

mechanism elevates the geostrategic salience of the crisis, increases expectations of victory, and mobilizes greater foreign policy support for the President's foreign policy agenda. The findings reveal co-partisan and contra-partisan framing effects on agreement that US Interests are at stake in the crisis and confidence in the President. While there are no mobilization effects on support for use of force, there are mobilization effects on approval of the President's handling of the crisis and expectations the President will do the right thing in a future crisis among both co-partisans and contra-partisans. These results are further evidence of co-partisan (H1) and contra-partisan (H2) divine election mobilization effects. I also find evidence that religiosity moderates mobilization effects (H3); while divine election cue mobilization effects are greater among more religious respondents, they have marginal or negative effects among less religious respondents.

Implications and Future Research

When presidents use divine election cues, they do not do so in a rhetorical vacuum. As a type of rhetorical legitimation strategy (Goddard and Krebs 2015), divine election cues are spoken in arenas where political meanings and support are being contested by other actors. In the domestic realm, competing elite discourses can decrease the effectiveness of presidential foreign policy cues (Druckman 2004). However, from the perspective of rhetorical coercion theory (Krebs and Jackson 2007), divine election cues could be a foreign policy rhetoric that undermine opponent elites' ability to contest the president's claims. The rhetorical buildup to the 2003 Iraq War exemplified how President George W. Bush's use of religious and divine election rhetorics made it very difficult for rhetorical counter-narratives and different religious interpretations to

challenge his narrative (Krebs and Lobasz 2007). Future analysis can reveal if presidents' use of divine election cues do have these coercive effects on elite foreign policy discourse, specifically, if divine election cues coerce elites otherwise opposed to the President to take rhetorical positions that are less opposed to if not directly supportive of the President. Findings from this analysis will also inform the normative and public policy debates about the importance of the marketplace of ideas in US foreign policy decisionmaking. For example, if divine election cues are found to stifle debate and reduce opportunities for elite opposition to be expressed, one possible conclusion to draw is that the use of religion undermines the deliberative practices of foreign policy decisionmaking and may increase the risk of suboptimum outcomes or unintended foreign policy decisions.

Other research should also explore the strategic implications of divine election cue mobilization effects. When presidents make decisions regarding if and how to mobilize domestic audiences, they must also consider the strategic effects of successful mobilization effects. In this project, presidents' use of divine election rhetoric is analyzed within the elite cues framework. However, presidents' use of religious rhetorics can also be examined within the audience costs framework (Fearon 1994, 1995, 1997; Schultz 1998, 2001a). From the audience costs framework, leaders "dial in" how much audience costs they want to generate during a crisis by the type of foreign policy rhetoric they use (McManus 2014; Sechser 2011; Tarar and Leventoglu 2009; Wood 2012). Presidents face a risk-reward calculus when deciding how much audience costs to generate. When leaders use foreign policy rhetorics that mobilize greater audience costs,

they increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis a crisis opponent. With a stronger public mandate, leaders may be empowered to pursue a wider range of foreign policy strategies while their bargaining claims become more credible. Presidents' bargaining claims are also more credible. However, generating too much audience costs by over-mobilizing domestic audiences can have negative effects. Instead of empowering crisis bargaining, domestic audiences become constraints that make negotiated outcomes more difficult. Divine election mobilization of greater support for the use of force may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Whereas leaders may have wanted to mobilize support to create bargaining leverage, domestic audiences may be over-mobilized that they prefer the use of force to an otherwise achievable negotiated outcome. In these cases, generating excessive audience costs increase the likelihood of the use of force and bargaining failure (war). By analyzing presidents' use of divine election cues within the audience costs framework, new insights will be revealed that describe how religious mobilization of domestic support empowers or constrains foreign policy crisis bargaining behavior and outcomes.

Relatedly, future process tracing and comparative case studies should examine if presidents use divine election cues intentionally to justify an intended use of military force. There is research suggesting that leaders who use aggregate foreign policy rhetorics were already "resolved to fight [and] sought to use the crisis diplomacy to justify attacking" (Snyder and Borghard 2011, 439). Given the critical role that religion plays in justifying and legitimating the social use of violence (Berger 1990), presidents may use religious and divine election cues to mobilize greater support for the use of force

so that the public supports a later use of military force. Or the process tracing may reveal that presidents use divine election cues without a prior intention or preference use force. Instead, they find themselves too efficient in mobilizing public support for the use of force that they become constrained to use military force or face greater domestic punishment for backing down in the crisis. Examining drafts of speeches and internal discussions about the inclusion of divine election rhetoric in key foreign policy speeches can reveal if presidents use divine election cues to build public support for an already determined foreign policy strategy or do not fully anticipate expected effects of divine election cues.

Religion and the Future of US Foreign policy

As Schlesinger (1977) notes, since the founding of the country, Americans have held the belief that America is exceptional, more chosen and more blessed as the “New Israel” than other nations. This belief, derived from the Christian Calvinist tradition, would later take on more secular expressions in the idea of Manifest Destiny and more contemporary ideas about American Exceptionalism. However, the religious foundation of this belief of America as chosen and empowered by God to act for God in the world has never faded. As recently as June 2015, 62% of Americans believe “God has granted America a special role in human history”, rebounding from a “low” of 51% in June 2011 (*June 2015 PRRI/RNS Religion News Survey 2015*). Not only do Americans believe that America is exceptional, but they believe America is exceptional *because* God chose America to be exceptional.

In this dissertation, I show how presidents from Harry Truman to George W. Bush have used divine election rhetorics, narratives, and cues to affect American foreign policy attitudes. In stark contrast to his predecessors, President Barack Obama did not use divine election cues during the foreign policy crises in his administration. He has not necessarily shied from talking about religion's influence on international politics and foreign policy, for example in his 2009 speech in Cairo addressing relations with the Muslim world or his comments in 2014 about the targeted killing of Yazidis and other religious minorities by *ISIS*. He has attempted to revive the jeremiad and calls for religious self-reflection (Bercovitch 1978; Bostdorff 2003), most notably in his speech at the 2015 National Prayer Breakfast. Moreover, like President George W. Bush who declared that Al-Qaeda was misusing Islam, President Obama insisted in September 2014 that *ISIS* was "not Islamic." However, President Obama's use of religion has been criticized by both religious and secular Americans. Religious Americans contend President Obama has not sufficiently emphasized America as God's chosen power or her unique blessing; on the other hand, secular Americans oppose any mention of religion in politics. President Obama's missteps may be due to his invocations of America's relationship with God that are misaligned with historical precedent and public beliefs. Instead of asserting that America is chosen by God, President Obama emphasizes the need for self-reflection if not repentance; instead of embracing God's blessing on America as imperative for renewed engagement with the world, President Obama advocated inward reflection of how America may have failed God's mandate for America. Though such a narrative may be a more complete theological narrative of

God's blessing as available for all peoples and the responsibilities of the faithful, it is a narrative that does not resonate in the American political sphere.

President Obama's inability to use religious appeals is perhaps unsurprising given the growing bifurcation of America's religious landscape. In the past, most Americans were of moderate religiosity. However, the distribution of American religiosity is increasingly bimodal, with growing numbers of secular unaffiliated Nones and a consistent bloc of very religious Americans. The increasing hollowing out of lukewarm or casually religious Americans implies that future religious appeals must increasingly appeal to highly religious Americans to be effective. Generic religious phrases like "God bless America" or rhetoric that does not emphasize a narrative of America as uniquely blessed by God are unlikely to sway religious Americans. Instead, leaders may have to use more explicitly religious rhetorics such as divine election rhetoric to appeal to and mobilize religious Americans at the cost of alienating growing proportions of secular Americans. That national politicians like Ted Cruz would use rhetoric proclaiming "God's blessing has been on America from the very beginning of this nation, and I believe God isn't done with America yet" during the launch of his 2016 presidential campaign (Corasaniti and Healy 2015) suggests that divine election rhetorics remain a powerful appeal for American publics.

Though America's social and religious landscape is changing, religion will likely continue to have a significant effect on political preferences, processes, and outcomes. President Obama's ineffectual use of religion should warn future presidents that attempts to invoke inclusive and less triumphalist religious narrative are likely to fail. Instead, for

religion to be an effective mobilization of foreign policy support, even if only among more religious Americans, presidents must use more explicitly exclusive and assertive religious rhetorics. Therefore, as future presidents are likely to revive the use of divine election rhetorics and cues that have proven effective in the past but forsaken during the Obama presidency, so the findings and implications of this study will be increasingly relevant in informing understandings and predictions of presidential invocations of religion to change foreign policy attitudes and mobilize greater support for his foreign policy agenda.

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Appendix A: Additional Figures and Plots

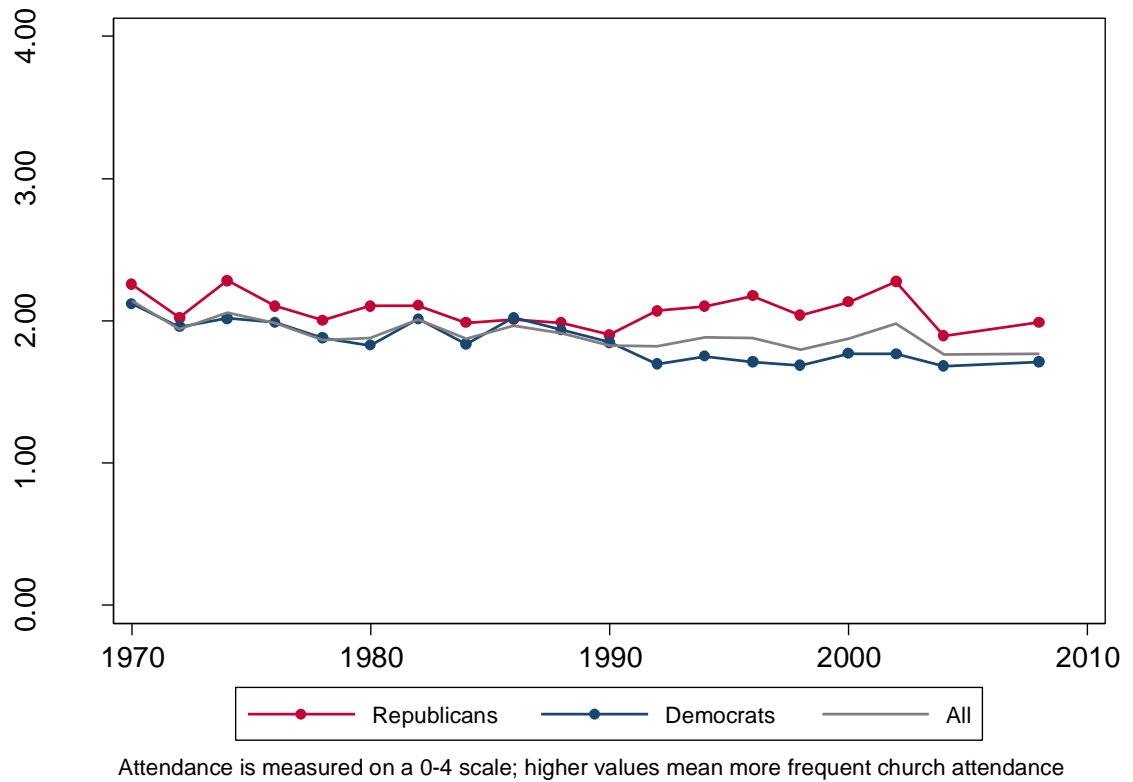


Figure 22: Average Church Attendance by Party

No divine election cues					Divine election cues used				
Crisis #	Name	Force	Troops	Approval	Crisis #	Name	Force	Troops	Approval
123	Berlin Blockade	2	2		132	Korean War 1	2		4
125	Chinese Civil War	0		5	133	Korean War 2	1	4	10
146	Taiwan Strait 1	2	3	1	140	Korean War 3	1	1	
152	Suez Nationalization	2		1	145	Dien Bien Phu	4		1
165	Iraq-Lebanon		1		155	Hungarian Uprising			2
166	Taiwan Straits 2	1			168	Berlin Deadline		2	
185	Berlin Wall	3			215	Dominican Intervention		1	
210	Gulf of Tonkin			1	225	Tet Offensive	2	2	2
213	Pleiku		1		227	Prague Spring		1	
222	Six Day war			1	246	Vietnam Ports Mining	1	2	
224	Pueblo			1	258	North Vietnam Offensive	1		
230	Vietnam Spring Offensive			4	309	Iran Hostages			22
237	Invasion of Cambodia			1	363	Gulf of Syrte 2	5		3
249	Christmas Bombing			2	391	Invasion of Panama	1		2
303	Afghanistan	1		1	393	Gulf War	45	27	82
343	Grenada		2		403	Bosnia	17	17	41
408	North Korea Nuclear 1	13		9	422	UNSCOM 1	7		10
411	Haiti	4	12	24	430	Kosovo	17	22	26
412	Iraq Troops Kuwait	3	2	7	434	Afghanistan	23	10	12
419	Desert Strike	2	1	5	440	Invasion of Iraq	48	23	53
427	US Embassy Bombings	2		1					
429	UNSCOM 2	6		4					
441	North Korea Nuclear 2	12		15					
448	Iran Nuclear 2	18		3					
450	North Korea Nuclear 3	4		4					
Total		73	24	90			175	112	270

Table 7: Foreign policy Polls by Foreign policy Crises

	No Divine Election Cues		Divine Election Cues	
	All	With Polls	All	With Polls
<i>Geostrategic Factors</i>				
US Actor (0-1)	.32 (.24, .41)	1.00 (1.00, 1.00)	.74 (.54, .93)	.80 (.61, .99)
Location (0-3)	.73 (.56, .91)	1.16 (.93, 1.39)	1.04 (.69, 1.40)	1.10 (.73, 1.47)
Trigger (1-9)	6.48 (5.97, 6.98)	5.60 (4.34, 6.86)	5.30 (3.86, 6.72)	5.35 (3.79, 6.91)
Gravity of Threat (1-7)	3.35 (3.13, 3.57)	3.88 (3.56, 4.20)	3.78 (3.33, 4.23)	3.75 (3.30, 4.20)
Geostrategic Saliency (1-5)	1.97 (1.75, 2.18)	2.96 (2.41, 3.51)	2.83 (2.26, 3.39)	2.90 (2.35, 3.45)
<i>Opponent Identity</i>				
Heterogeneity (1-5)	3.95 (3.71, 4.19)	4.80 (4.46, 5.14)	4.96 (4.30, 5.61)	4.85 (4.26, 5.44)
Opponent Power (1-4)	1.95 (1.79, 2.11)	1.92 (1.54, 2.30)	2.30 (1.83, 2.78)	2.30 (1.79, 2.81)
Protracted Crisis (1-3)	1.91 (1.80, 2.02)	2.00 (1.73, 2.27)	1.96 (1.62, 2.29)	1.95 (1.56, 2.34)
<i>Domestic Factors</i>				
Republican House (0-1)	.27 (.19, .35)	.36 (.16, .56)	.30 (.10, .51)	.30 (.08, .52)
Republican Senate (0-1)	.35 (.26, .43)	.36 (.16, .56)	.30 (.10, .51)	.30 (.08, .52)
Congress Ally (1-3)	1.98 (1.82, 2.15)	2.04 (1.64, 2.44)	1.96 (1.53, 2.38)	2.00 (1.54, 2.46)
Initial Approval (0-100)	55.34 (53.14, 57.53)	53.64 (48.72, 58.56)	56.52 (50.84, 62.20)	55.95 (49.45, 62.45)
Co-partisan Approval (0-100)	78.39 (76.25, 80.52)	77.44 (72.26, 82.62)	77.70 (70.63, 84.76)	76.45 (68.47, 84.43)
Contra-partisan Approval (0-100)	36.95 (34.19, 39.71)	34.16 (27.84, 40.48)	39.52 (31.69, 47.36)	40.00 (31.27, 48.73)
<i>Other Factors</i>				
Democratic President	.48 (.39, .57)	.56 (.35, .77)	.48 (.26, .70)	.45 (.21, .69)
Cold War	.75 (.67, .83)	.64 (.44, .84)	.74 (.54, .93)	.75 (.54, .96)
Year	1976 (1973, 1979)	1976 (1968, 1984)	1975 (1967, 1983)	1975 (1967, 1984)
Crises	124	25	23	20
<i>95% confidence intervals in parentheses</i>				

Table 8: Comparing Profiles of Crises With and Without Foreign policy Polls

Model Specification	Effect				Aggregate				First Cue Effect				Count Effect			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<i>Co-Partisans</i>																
Force	27.20*** (2.70)	11.37*** (2.73)	14.79*** (2.28)	18.00*** (2.14)	14.67*** (3.80)	12.84*** (3.70)	13.20*** (3.27)	15.79*** (3.48)	1.88*** (.22)	.66*** (.19)	1.02*** (.23)	.62** (.24)				
Troops	7.68** (3.27)	3.87 (2.50)	2.36 (2.21)	4.62** (2.11)	5.96 (4.36)	2.67 (3.20)	-2.07 (2.60)	.26 (2.47)	1.77*** (.50)	.73* (.39)	1.40*** (.39)	1.43*** (.41)				
Approval	8.59*** (2.13)	1.91 (1.29)	.38 (1.34)	3.03** (1.39)	8.36*** (2.45)	3.42** (1.72)	1.20 (1.65)	2.38 (1.80)	1.37*** (.20)	.26** (.13)	.65*** (.18)	.34* (.19)				
<i>Contra-Partisans</i>																
Force	15.90*** (2.55)	4.47* (2.33)	10.13*** (2.28)	13.28*** (2.77)	7.68** (3.26)	5.38 (3.32)	8.32*** (3.12)	10.23*** (3.59)	.58*** (.21)	.19 (.17)	1.12*** (.21)	-.09 (.29)				
Troops	2.38 (2.77)	1.66 (2.37)	-3.35 (2.11)	.42 (2.40)	1.60 (3.34)	.16 (2.99)	-5.02 (2.50)	-2.03 (2.45)	.56 (.44)	.48 (.36)	.51 (.40)	.33 (.48)				
Approval	4.08* (2.45)	.69 (1.54)	-2.32 (1.93)	-.47 (2.16)	5.34* (2.93)	1.96 (1.95)	-1.71 (2.15)	-1.53 (2.45)	.17 (.24)	.07 (.15)	.98*** (.26)	-.19 (.29)				
<i>All Respondents</i>																
Force	21.06*** (2.38)	7.04*** (2.30)	11.99*** (2.14)	15.42*** (2.28)	11.04*** (3.32)	8.49** (3.26)	10.55*** (3.01)	12.83*** (3.33)	1.13*** (.20)	.35** (.16)	1.01*** (.21)	.17 (.25)				
Troops	3.41 (2.74)	2.24 (2.19)	-1.45 (1.95)	1.45 (2.07)	2.95 (3.54)	1.47 (2.84)	-4.22 (2.31)	-1.43 (2.27)	.86** (.43)	.49 (.33)	.88** (.36)	.74* (.41)				
Approval	6.04*** (2.09)	.97 (1.24)	-1.02 (1.55)	1.45 (1.70)	6.24** (2.52)	1.93 (1.54)	-.96 (1.71)	-.12 (1.99)	.67*** (.21)	.13 (.12)	.94*** (.20)	.14 (.23)				

*** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$ * $p < .10$

Model (1): No covariates (2): Temporal covariates Model (3): Crisis-specific covariates; Model (4): Presidential dummies

Table 9: Robustness Checks of Divine Election Cue Effects

Effect Model Specification	Aggregate				Count Effect			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<i>Co-Partisans</i>								
Force	29.52*** (2.39)	11.05*** (2.44)	23.06*** (3.62)	28.40*** (2.36)	2.21*** (.23)	.74*** (.19)	1.64*** (.32)	2.19*** (.23)
Troops	18.42*** (3.74)	5.02 (3.56)	-3.97 (5.73)	1.82 (3.57)	2.47*** (.52)	.64 (.39)	1.45*** (.48)	.98* (.55)
Approval	13.58*** (2.08)	4.19*** (1.43)	.74 (2.60)	9.36*** (1.78)	1.62*** (.20)	.27** (.13)	1.03*** (.22)	1.09*** (.18)
<i>Contra-Partisans</i>								
Force	18.07*** (2.70)	4.91** (1.96)	14.06*** (3.53)	22.07*** (2.83)	.88*** (.25)	.25* (.15)	1.65*** (.28)	1.51*** (.26)
Troops	6.51* (3.59)	3.67 (3.08)	-4.04 (5.19)	-3.56 (3.91)	.83* (.50)	.58* (.34)	.96** (.45)	-.41 (.62)
Approval	12.70*** (2.32)	3.98** (1.53)	2.57 (3.40)	6.61*** (2.44)	.62** (.24)	.18 (.14)	1.66*** (.28)	.97*** (.25)
<i>All</i>								
Force	23.89*** (2.31)	6.66*** (1.92)	18.87*** (3.27)	25.53*** (2.41)	1.47*** (.23)	.38*** (.15)	1.58*** (.28)	1.82*** (.23)
Troops	11.67*** (3.32)	3.32 (2.97)	2.19 (4.85)	.08 (3.41)	1.42*** (.47)	.46 (.32)	1.42*** (.40)	.27 (.54)
Approval	13.14*** (1.96)	3.56*** (1.32)	2.43 (2.82)	8.19*** (2.00)	1.04*** (.20)	.18 (.12)	1.48*** (.23)	1.07*** (.21)

*** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$ * $p < .10$

Model (1): No covariates; (2): Temporal covariates (3): Crisis-specific covariates; (4): Presidential dummies

Table 10: Robustness Checks of Comparative Divine Election Cue Effect

Attribute	Sample			Balance
	Qualtrics	Students	All	
Republican	0.41	0.38	0.39	p=.77
Democrat	0.47	0.47	0.47	p=.59
Independents	0.12	0.16	0.14	p=.82
Male	0.52	0.46	0.49	p=.12
White	0.83	0.64	0.74	p=.52
College-educated	0.62	0.49	0.55	p=.38
Age	48	26	38	

Table 11: Experiment Sample Demographics and Balance