**Religious Rhetoric and American Politics: The Endurance of Civil Religion in Electoral Campaigns**

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**Appendix Materials for Chapter 3**

This document contains measurement and statistical details to accompany chapter three of *Religious Rhetoric and American Politics: The Endurance of Civil Religion in Electoral Campaigns*. For additional details, please contact author at [chappc@uww.edu](mailto:chappc@uww.edu).

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**1. Content analysis codebook for selected variables**

The following is an abridged version of the codebook used for all hand-coded variables in chapters 3,4, and 5.

**Group**

Does the passage make any attempt to establish a common ingroup bond between the audience and the speaker? Speakers can accomplish this in several ways, both by explicitly mentioning a group, and through pronoun use. For example, when McCain says “We are a great and generous country, and we believe that all men and women, everywhere, are created equal and endowed by God with certain rights” he is attempting to form an ingroup attachment with message recipients – by using “we” he is implying that “we” are all members of the same group. However, when McCain says “And that is to use whatever talents I possess, and every resource God has granted me to protect the security of this great and good nation from all enemies foreign and domestic” no group bond is being formed (even though he obviously mentions country).

0 – No ingroup reference

1 – Ingroup reference

**Group Category**

Record the category of the group-based reference:

1 – All Americans, the nation, etc.

2 – Christians or Judeo-Christian

3 – A specific religious denomination (i.e. Catholics)

4 – Some other religious group (people of faith, Moral Majority, Evangelicals)

5 – Party-based or political reference (Republicans, “followers of FDR”)

6 – Geographic (“the south,” or “people of Wisconsin” or “rural Americans”)

7 – Unspecified/audience (Often will involve the word “we” or “you” or “our” without specifying to whom the pronoun refers. For example, in 1992, Clinton said “Frankly, I'm fed up with politicians in Washington lecturing the rest of us about "family values." Our families have values.” The personal pronoun in this passage could conceivably be distinguishing the group as all Americans or all Democrats. However, it is not explicit, so it is coded 7. Note that this is different than simply saying “I hope you choose me…” It must convey some common identity.

8 – Other (record)

**Civil religion**

The civil religion identity variable featured throughout the text is a summary measure of “group category,” combining both “category 1” (American) with “category 7” (unspecified audience).

**Outgroup**

Does the passage mention an “outgroup,” or some sort of opposition or challenge? There must be some attempt made at contrast or “othering.” The speaker is getting closer to the audience by identification of a common outgroup.

**Outgroup category**

Record the category of the outgroup reference.

1 – Another nation or foreign group, such as terrorists, the Soviet Union, etc.

2 – A religious denomination

3 – Some other religious group

4 – Party-based or political reference

5 – Hollywood or the media

6 – Geographic

7 – government, Washington, judges, Congress, Supreme Court etc.

8 – Unspecified

9 – Other (record)

**Culture Wars**

Is the mention of the outgroup explicitly linked to two divergent paths, two irreconcilable sides, or the like, in American politics?

0 – No, either the outgroup is another country, or the outgroup is not mentioned in terms in the context of any sort of underlying conflict in America

1 – Passage makes reference to conflict, though not explicitly tied to quasi-religious worldviews or competing value systems. For example, “the other party put their faith in big government”

2 – Passage makes reference to conflict, and explicitly tied to quasi-religious worldviews or competing value systems. For example, “the other party doesn’t believe faith has a role in politics”

**God-concept (only for passages using the word “God,” “Lord,” “Almighty,” etc.)**

Which of the following categories best characterizes the imagery with which God is depicted?

0 = God not discussed

1 = Judge-like imagery (judge, strict, master)

2 = Savior (dependable, faithful, forgiving, trusting)

3 = Maternal imagery (loving, nurturing, warmth)

4 = Paternal imagery (creator, protector, redeemer, father, under God’s watchful eye)

5 = Companion (companion, friend, always close, God in heart)

6 = Provider (God-given resources, God’s gift, God’s help)

7 = No imagery (God bless you, thank God)

**Crisis**

Does the passage refer to some impending crisis?

Some suggestion of crisis = 1

AND this crisis is imminent = 2

No crisis = 0

**Shared or pluralistic religion**

This category is related to the ingroup/outgroup distinction. Does the passage imply a common or shared religion or God in America, or discuss religion in a way that is pluralistic and/or relative and/or personal. For example, a statement about “many faith traditions in America” or “her God” would both be coded as pluralistic. A statement such as “God, family, and country have brought us together” implies a shared religion, even though it is not explicit. Please use some interpretive license here – even a statement like “God bless the U.S.A.” or “rural America, you are doing the Lord’s work” seems to suggest a shared religion or a shared set of moral precepts. As a further example, consider these two Clinton statements:

“I want to build a bridge to the twenty-first century in which we create a strong and growing economy, to preserve the legacy of opportunity for the next generation by balancing our budget in a way that protects our values, and ensuring that every family will be able to own and protect the value of their most important asset, their home.”

“And, finally, let me say the most important thing and the reason I'm here today is that we've got to build a bridge to the twenty-first century that everyone can walk across to a century where everybody who is responsible and willing to work has a chance to live their own version of the American Dream and live up to their God-given capacities.”

Both statements are part of Clinton’s “building a bridge” speech, but the former suggests “shared religion” and the latter a more “pluralistic” conception. (The latter is quite interesting – I rarely saw examples of patriotism coupled with pluralism).

Also note that just simply mentioning more than one religion (i.e. “Christians and Jews” or “churches and synagogues”) doesn’t necessarily imply pluralism. For example, a statement might read “we need to get back to the faith found in our churches and our synagogues.” This is clearly a conception of shared faith, promoting American religion generally in contrast to “secularism.”

0 = unclear/neither

1 = pluralistic

2 = shared

**Blessed nation**

Does the passage accord the United States a blessed nation status? Distinguish between an explicit reference to the US as a “city on a hill,” or Americans as a “chosen people,” or a reference to country without explicitly saying the US is “special” in the “eyes of God.”

0 = No mention of country

1 = Links religion and country w/o favored nation status. Code it “1” even if religion is only linked with country in a very vague sense. For example, “The strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens” connects religion and country in a very vague sense. A statement like “American values” does the same.

2 = Accords US a special status. Statements are only coded “2” if the passage explicitly says America is somehow blessed. For example, “God is looking out for the souls of Americans”

**2. Content analysis reliability information**

In order to assess the character of candidates’ use of religious rhetoric, I “hand coded” 48 variables of theoretic interest in the summer of 2006. Several of these variables are reported in the in analyses in chapters 3, 4, and 5. In order to ensure the reliability of these variables, I conducted several waves of reliability analysis. The first wave used a 25% sample and all 48 variables were rescored by a trained coder. While most of the variables had a high degree of intercoder reliability, several of the more subjective variables suggested a lack of precision in the original codebook. Given this, the codebook went through several waves of revision, and was used again to update the dataset following the 2008 presidential election. Following this step, new reliability scores were obtained using a random 20% sample of the entire dataset.

Coders agreed 83% of the time that the passage was making a group-based appeal (kappa = .577). The ingroup category measure, used to construct both the civil religion and subgroup variables reported in chapters 3, 4, and 5 had 76% intercoder agreement (kappa = .606). The culture wars variable had high (91%) intercoder agreement but a low kappa (.36) due to intercoder disagreements on this low frequency variable. For several other variables, intercoder agreement was acceptable using the original wave of coding. Outgroup had 89% agreement (kappa = .595), Shared/Pluralistic 71% agreement (kappa = .511), Blessed 71% agreement (kappa = .505), and God concept 93% agreement (kappa = .814). Opponent, which is not discussed until chapter 5, has 95% intercoder agreement (kappa = .696).

While several of these scores are lower than ideal, several caveats should be noted. First, on several of the variables, the option to score the passage as “uncodable” depressed reliability scores. For example, while coders sometimes disagreed as to whether a passage could be coded as a shared or pluralistic passage at all, coders rarely disagreed as to whether coded passages should be scored as shared or pluralistic. Most of the disagreement came when one coder marked a passage as “uncodable.” For this reason, analysis in chapter 3 using this variable excludes “uncodable” cases. Second, these reliability scores are comparable to similar research assessing the effects of campaign stimuli. For example, Brader (2006) reports kappas ranging from .34 to .78 (p. 152).

**3. Pluralistic and shared religious rhetoric, by identity cue (to accompany Figure 3.3)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Pluralistic and shared religious rhetoric, by identity cue** | | |
| **Independent variable** | **Shared religion** | **Pluralistic religion** |
| **Passage length** | 0.033 | 0.187\*\* |
| **Culture wars** | -0.392 | 0.799 |
| **Subgroup** | -0.262 | 0.915\*\* |
| **Civil religion** | 1.804\*\* | -0.357 |
| **Constant** | -0.961 | -3.171 |
|  |  |  |
| **Nagelkerke R square** | .229 | .093 |
| **% correctly predicted** | 71.4% | 93.2% |
| Above: Entries are logit coefficients predicting shared or pluralistic conceptions of American religiosity.  \*\*p<.001 | | |

**4. Culture wars rhetoric as a vehicle to convey a moral crisis (to accompany Figure 3.4)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Culture wars rhetoric as a vehicle to convey a moral crisis** | | |
| **Identity type** | **Mean moral crisis score** | **Mean difference** |
| **No identity** | .06 | -.038\* |
| **Civil religion** | .08 | .009 |
| **Subgroup** | .15 | .073 |
| **Culture wars** | .45 | .387\*\* |
| Above: Entries are the mean level of crisis rhetoric by identity type. Positive mean difference scores indicate the identity type has higher levels of crisis rhetoric than the rest of the sample.  \*p<.05; \*\*p<.001. | | |

**5. Civil religion and God-concept**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Civil religion and God-concept** | |
| **Independent variable** | **B** |
| **Judge imagery** | -0.87 |
| **Savior imagery** | -0.177 |
| **Maternal imagery** | 0.228 |
| **Paternal imagery** | 1.234\*\* |
| **Companion imagery** | 0.11 |
| **Provider imagery** | 0.809\* |
| **No God imagery** | -0.453\* |
| **Constant** | 0.177\* |
|  |  |
| **Nagelkerke R square** | .036 |
| **% correctly predicted** | 57.1% |
| Above: Entries are logit coefficients predicting civil religion identity rhetoric.  \*p<.05; \*\*p<.001. | |