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Conceptualizing Evangelical Influence in U.S. Foreign Policy: Caught between Structural Realism and Neoliberal Institutionalism

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Abstract

The Presidency of George W. Bush did much to spotlight the role of Evangelical Christians in the political realm. However, it is arguable that every president since Jimmy Carter has had at least some ties with evangelicalism. The first aspect of this paper is to pin down what an evangelical is. Existing literature on the subject we argue is inadequate and has led to much misunderstanding of evangelical Christians and to simplistic coding procedures in quantitative studies. Second, we narrow this paper into a specific discussion of evangelical influence in foreign policy. Over 80 percent of evangelicals supported Bush in 2000 and 2004, which gave significant evangelical influence in his foreign policies especially regarding Iraq. We note that his administration was critiqued for utilizing “selective engagement” in Iraq rather than a theoretically robust and comprehensive strategy. We also argue that the evangelical role in foreign policy begins to resemble a more overarching strategy. This foreign policy leans mainly on structural realism but also to some degree on neoliberal institutionalism. This paper presents a more holistic influence in foreign policy that will lead to a better understanding of a) what an evangelical is and b) how that relates to foreign policy.

Introduction

When it comes to evangelicals in the United States and a discussion of foreign policy, there are numerous, seemingly contradictory statements one could make. For example, most evangelicals in the United States care much more about areas of domestic policy such same-sex marriage, abortion, and prayer in schools (Wilcox 1996). Yet, many evangelicals are also enamored with eschatological predictions and how they will play out in the world; carefully crafted U.S. foreign policy can play an intimate role if Gentiles support the state of Israel (Hagee 2006). Evangelicals in the United States, more so than almost any other group, support a strong and robust military and also support foreign interventions if and where they are deemed necessary (Baumgartner et al 2008; Wilcox 1995, 50). Many evangelicals in the United States support an aggressive stance towards “evil” states like Iran, Cuba, North Korea, Burma, Zimbabwe, and Belarus as well as numerous states that persecute Christians (Duerr 2009, 132). However, many evangelical Christians are also on the front lines of the effort to heal Rwanda, stop slavery in Sudan, and promote religious freedom in places like China and the Middle East (Mead 2006; Hertzke 2004; Aikman 2003). Evangelicals in the United States spend copious amounts of money on foreign missions to help and feed the poor, provide clean drinking water, teach basic skills, and provide healthcare and assistance. In sum, evangelicals in the United States are caught between some basic tenets of realism and liberalism. This, in many ways, led to support of neoconservative policies during the Presidency of George W. Bush; although, many evangelicals remain cautious of neo-conservatism. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these neoconservative policies will return even in the next Republican administration (whether that happens in 2012, 2016, 2020 or later) because they are

currently unpalatable in much of the United States. With the unlikely return of neoconservative policies, we are left to question what stance evangelicals will have with regards to foreign policy moving forward. With this paper, we seek to speak to the gap in the literature regarding evangelicals and foreign policy. Either evangelicals are seen as the main supporters of the Bush administration and of hawkish policies in the Middle East or they are the main providers of food aid and calls for upholding human rights, rarely are they described as both. This seemingly contradictory stance has, we feel, not been synthesized in a manner that adequately describes the current stance of evangelicals today. This paper begins the process of conceptualizing a more holistic evangelical foreign policy.

Before we go any further, however, it is best to pause and think about a few questions. In this article we examine two sets of questions. First, we feel that it is necessary to take a step back. There is a basic definitional question that must be refined: what is an evangelical? Often the characterizations and conceptualizations of evangelicals in the media or in polling data are wrong or at the very least unsatisfying. It is unsatisfying because the definition of an evangelical is changing even within different denominations. Therefore, when evaluating the influence of evangelicals, polling should ask theologically based questions rather than ask for self-identification based on denomination. Evangelicalism is also changing with the emerging church movement, a cross-denominational movement focusing more on social aspects of the church. Therefore, we just ask, how is evangelicalism changing? And how will this affect policy? From this first set of questions, we explore the area of evangelicals in foreign policy. How have evangelicals influenced U.S. foreign policy? Where do evangelical influences fit into international relations (IR) theories? What is a holistic evangelical foreign policy? What

are the ramifications of a changing evangelical foreign policy for the 2012 Presidential election?

What is an Evangelical?

Answering this question is, in many ways, a response to Wald and Wilcox's exhortation to "rediscover the faith factor" in politics (Wald and Wilcox 2006, 523). Defining evangelicalism is a difficult task. Many simply settle for explaining how to operationalize evangelicals as opposed to defining what it is to be evangelical. Although we feel it is important to operationalize evangelicals, it is even more important to define evangelicalism.

A significant number of quantitative works dealing with evangelicals are based on self-identification. The problem, however, is that when there are a limited number of boxes to which one can self-identify and the propensity to oversimplify is evident. We do not doubt the results that have been produced; rather, we think that there is more to be gleaned. In the same way that Daniela Donno and Bruce Russett (2004) built upon and improved the work of M. Steven Fish (2002) on the subjects of Islam and female empowerment,¹ we believe the same to be true of Evangelical Christians in the United States.

Affiliation is often used to operationalize evangelicalism (Hackett and Lindsay 2008). This method of identifying evangelicals relies on classifying a denomination as evangelical and assuming that individuals belonging to these denominations adhere to these

¹ Fish argues that Islamic states are more authoritarian and likely to subordinate the female population than non-Islamic states. Donno and Russett build on the work by arguing that it is actually Arab states, not Islamic states, that are less likely to be democratic and subordinate women. Donno and Russett also control for conflict arguing that Arab states that have been in major conflicts are also more likely to be authoritarian.

classifications. This method of classification is concerning for several reasons. First, defining evangelicals according to affiliation often assumes that evangelicalism is strictly Protestant (Hackett and Lindsay 2008). Second, this classification assumes that all individuals within a denomination adhere to the same belief system which may not be the case. Therefore, we propose that an individual's belief system identifies him or her as evangelical and not denominational membership. Polling data, in the future, should be gleaned from answers to theologically based questions rather than self-identification as an evangelical or as part of a denomination which is classified as evangelical.

A further point is that evangelicalism is changing. New church models are emerging which is already having an effect on the political life of the United States in many key "purple" states in the Midwest. Perhaps some of which were evidenced by Barack Obama's victories in many "red" states carried by President Bush like Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, and Indiana. Therefore, it is important to have a robust definition of evangelicals.

Hunter (1983), in his sociological examination of evangelicalism, concluded that evangelicals are defined theologically according to their belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and the divinity of Christ. Although this begins to define evangelicals, it is not a robust definition. In attempts to better define evangelicals, more recently a distinction has been made between being 'born-again' and being an evangelical, as they are not mutually exclusive (Barna 2004). Therefore, for this paper, we offer the following definition of an evangelical: a person is considered an evangelical if he/she has made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ (born-again) that results in the belief that he/she will go to Heaven as well as believing in a responsibility to share his/her faith with others. It is this

responsibility to share one's faith that differentiates being classified as born-again versus evangelical.

How have Evangelicals Influenced U.S. foreign policy?

Upwards of 40 percent of Americans identify themselves as some form of “evangelical” (Duerr 2009). This number, in many ways, may be inflated but needless to say, “evangelicals” make up an important part of the American polity, even if it is only one-third to one-quarter of the population. The significance of this group is evident in that every president since at least Jimmy Carter has had some form of connection to evangelicalism. Carter was a professing evangelical, Ronald Reagan was enamored with evangelical futurist eschatology, George H.W. Bush knew of and was influenced by evangelicalism through his son, Bill Clinton was the governor of an overwhelmingly evangelical state, George W. Bush was another professing evangelical, and Barack Obama attended several churches with evangelical influences. All presidents since Richard Nixon met with and received advice from evangelical leaders like Billy Graham and James Dobson. Some influence of evangelicalism is certainly evident in the White House regardless of which party was in power.

Furthermore, when assessing some of the likely 2012 Republican presidential candidates, a number of prominent evangelicals rise to the top of the list including Sarah Palin, Mike Huckabee, Tim Pawlenty, Mike Pence, and Haley Barbour. Couple this with the certain advantage of winning the first primary, Iowa, which is an overwhelmingly evangelical state and the magnitude of influence is apparent. George W. Bush won in 2000 and former Baptist minister, Mike Huckabee, won in 2008. While Huckabee did not win

the Republican nomination in 2008, his victory in Iowa served as a springboard for his national campaign and put him into legitimate national contention for the nomination.

Evangelicalism, as it is typically defined in the literature, is fairly new having really grown from a number of denominations since the 1970s. Most explicitly, the growth of non-denominational bible churches is a key indicator of this trend. Making up the core of the modern evangelical church and is large, more moderate, and members are better educated than most would expect (Mead 2006). Evangelicalism is in one sense fairly new as it is defined in polling and self-assessments. However, the roots of evangelicalism stem back to the Puritans.

In this section we conceptualize how evangelicals have influenced U.S. foreign policy and argue that five main sources are responsible for this influence. It is these five influences that have helped to mold the votes, thoughts, and donations of evangelicals in the political realm. In essence, we are examining those whose influence brought about changes, and those who guide evangelicals on who to vote for and what policies they should support.

The Niebuhr Influence

Before going any further with a discussion of evangelical influence in foreign policy, it is important to study the works of Reinhold Niebuhr, a man who very much influenced Christian thought with regards to foreign policy. Although one cannot explicitly call Niebuhr an evangelical (because he rose to prominence in an era before the widespread use of the term), he was a Protestant theologian who would likely fall into the evangelical category as we defined it earlier: an evangelical is a person who has made a

personal commitment to Jesus Christ (born-again) that results in the belief that he/she will go to Heaven as well as believing in a responsibility to share his/her faith with others.

Niebuhr is perhaps best known for his 1932 book, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, but his later book published in 1940, *Christianity and Power Politics*, discussed foreign policy ramifications for the United States. *Moral Man and Immoral Society* does, however, also speak to some foreign policy issues which are worth noting. In Chapter 4, for example, Niebuhr describes the “selfishness of nations” eluding to the self-interest of states and arguing that cooperation and treaty making are entered into because of self-interest (Niebuhr 1932, 84). Alliances are a form of self-interest. In this way, one must be wary of states and their interests. Relations with some states and not others serve to segregate and to assert a selfish interest on the part of states. The League of Nations, after all, did not achieve enough “communal spirit” to “discipline recalcitrant nations” (Niebuhr 1932, 110). There is then a healthy skepticism of aligning too closely with other states and to entrenching one’s state in international organizations if there is not a willingness to see good and evil.

Niebuhr expands his thoughts in *Christianity and Power Politics*. Niebuhr’s most influential argument sought to debunk the idea of outright pacifism in American Protestantism. This is especially important for evangelicals today when considering support for the War on Terrorism. A Christian form of realism implied some form of interventionism abroad in order to love one’s neighbors and not let them be subjected to invasion, occupation, and oppression by hostile states especially those that limited basic human rights and democracy. The logic is simple but the ramifications are profound. Niebuhr asserts this argument in contrast to non-interventionists of the time who were

citing non-violent verses from scripture. These people, Niebuhr argues, would not confront the expansion of Nazi Germany which incorrectly addresses the biblical view on confrontation. Niebuhr asserts, “There is not the slightest support in Scripture for this doctrine of non-violence” (Niebuhr 1940, 10). This is an important point when applied elsewhere. It speaks to a more activist foreign policy in matters concerning injustice and violence against the weak. This is the type of argument that can be applied to Iraq (although Niebuhr might well disagree) since Bush often argued that Saddam Hussein subjugated and exterminated his own people.

Confronting Hitler’s Germany, according to Niebuhr, was important because in doing so free people were able to keep their basic liberties. The problem, however, is that in a democracy people become squeamish about conflict and lose sight of the wider picture and the need to rid the world of recalcitrant enemies and regimes. Niebuhr argues, “His [Hitler’s] victories thus far are partly due to the fact that the culture of the democracies was vapid. Its political instincts had become vitiated by an idealism which sought to extricate morals from politics to the degree of forgetting that all life remains a contest of power” (Niebuhr 1940, 174). Evil states and evil leaders need to be confronted when the time is right. Without a stand against tyranny, Niebuhr’s line of argumentations asserts that the teachings of the Bible are lessened because Christians are not standing against evil.

Power, then, is central to geopolitics. For the Christian, non-violence and non-intervention is not an option when obvious evil exists in the world. Niebuhr’s work is a call to action, a repudiation of idealism and fantasies that human nature is in any way shape or form inherently good.

The thoughts and works of Niebuhr played out in myriad ways. Many Christians saw Communism as the new Fascism and sought to undermine it wherever possible. A number of Baptist denominations supported the war in Vietnam so as to counter the growth of atheistic communism (Jelen and Wilcox 2002, 305). This antagonism toward communism in the Soviet Union was a major reason why evangelicals overwhelmingly supported the Presidency of Ronald Reagan.

The Eschatology Influence

The incredible popularity of the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins and the predictive books of Joel Rosenberg have captured the imaginations of many evangelicals in the United States and around the world. LaHaye and Jenkins' fifteen book series sold in excess of 60 million copies and Rosenberg hosts widely popular conferences all over the world. Their thoughts, opinions, and writings influence millions of Christians, many of which can be defined as evangelical.

Overwhelmingly, evangelicals in the United States follow the futurist interpretation of the Book of Revelation and prophetic chapters and verses in the Old and New Testaments.² It is also worth noting, however, that there are three other major views of Revelation: preterist, historicist, and idealist/spiritualist (Ladd 1972).

Many prominent futurists including Tim LaHaye, Jerry Jenkins, Joel Rosenberg, John Hagee, Hal Lindsey, and David Jeremiah, have all written national bestselling books. Their influence in evangelical circles remains strong. Moreover, all of them whether in fictional and/or nonfictional accounts, argue that current geopolitical events are pushing the

² Books like Daniel and Ezekiel are especially important in the Old Testament. Sections of Matthew, 1 Thessalonians, and obviously Revelation are also important in the New Testament. It should be noted, however, that some 27 percent of scripture is prophetic according to some futurists, like Tim LaHaye.

world closer to the End Times. Essentially, there will be two battles in the End Times. The Battle of Gog in which Russia along with Iran and a coalition of other, mainly Muslim states will suddenly attack Israel as described in Ezekiel 38. Not all authors agree on exactly which states will be in the coalition but all argue that God will miraculously save Israel. After this Battle, however, an Antichrist will come to power as head of a one-world government (either the EU or UN) and the stage will be set for the Battle of Armageddon.

Despite the reluctance of most non-Christians to take these books seriously, many of them are written with a great deal of sophistication examining some of the internal relationships between Muslim states. Joel Rosenberg, for example, wrote a book called *Epicenter* which examined the complex relationships between Muslim states and argues that neither Iraq nor Egypt will be part of a larger Muslim coalition against Israel (Rosenberg 2006). His ability to cross-reference biblical prophecy with events in the Muslim world allowed him to elucidate this important nuance and basically predict the coming of the Iraq War in his second fictional book, *The Last Days*. Moreover, Rosenberg also predicted high level assassinations and the rise of a dictator in Russia as well as Iran building a nuclear weapon in his third fictional book, *The Ezekiel Option*. There are also several similarities between his first fictional book, *The Last Jihad*, and the actual events of 9/11. (Although the book was published after 9/11, it was written before the tragic day.) All of these predictions have caused some to speculate that he is a modern day Nostradamus.

John Hagee's *Jerusalem Countdown* goes into great detail on Iranian nuclear capabilities and describes the present age where the United States and Israel are on a collision course with a nuclear Iran (Hagee 2006, vii). Essentially the forces of militant

Islam will ‘clash’ in a “Huntington-esque” style with the West and Christianity. Hagee then describes the aforementioned scenario in Ezekiel 38 and 39 where Russia invades Israel with allies in Iran (Persia), Ethiopia, and Libya (Hagee 2006, 104-108). Hagee goes into great detail as to why and how Russia and Iran are becoming closer allies.

David Jeremiah in his book, *What in the World is Going on?* discusses the increased authoritarianism in Russia, nuclear weapons in Iran, and the rise of a more politically unified European Union and relates this to the prophecies listed in Ezekiel 38 and 39 (Jeremiah 2008, 162-177). The argument is complex and aligns with other major prophecy scholars such as John Walvoord and some of the work by Joel Rosenberg. Jeremiah argues that Russia and Iran are increasingly in roles that are antagonistic to the United States and Israel, which gives greater credence to the futurist eschatological predictions.

Hal Lindsey’s book *Late Great Planet Earth*, written in 1970, in many ways, was the major catalyst that reinvigorated widespread interest in eschatology. The problem, however, is that the Soviet Union was the main enemy in the book. Moreover, the way it was perceived becomes problematic in that twisted logic sometimes emerges from these books even though this was not the likely intention. Tom Sine recalls several situations whereby some Christians will not support feeding programs for the poor overseas because it will cause things to get better and Jesus will not return until things are much worse (Sine 1995, 46). Eschatological predictions have created problems that run counter to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.

It is difficult to gauge exactly how many evangelicals believe the futurist version of eschatology as espoused by these authors. Nonetheless, the sheer volume of book sales

suggests that each is widely read. Given that many evangelicals continue to support, more so than most other groups, a strong and well funded military, there is at least some causal evidence of the importance of eschatology to evangelical foreign policy preferences.

Truthfully, it is difficult to pin evangelical eschatological beliefs on U.S. foreign policy, but the vast majority of evangelicals do fall into the futurist category. It is not, however, as definitive as it is made to seem, many prominent evangelicals are either spiritualists or preterists. (Almost none are historicists at the present time but this was a popular view in Europe amongst Protestant reformers.) Once again, we think that more theologically based polling questions would help. Boyer (2003) makes perhaps the most poignant link between eschatology and foreign policy beliefs: “For many believers in biblical prophecy, the Bush administration’s go-it-alone foreign policy, hands-off attitude toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and proposed war on Iraq are not simply actions in the national interest or an extension of the war on terrorism, but part of an unfolding divine plan” (cited in Baumgartner et al 2008, 172). There may be some truth to this statement. The problem, however, is that while the vast majority of evangelicals are futurists and the vast majority of evangelicals voted for Bush in 2000 and 2004, the links between eschatology and support for these policies are still tenuous. A related problem with these types of studies is that they also one show one side of evangelical foreign policy.

The Social Justice Effect

Walter Russell Mead argues that evangelicals have influenced U.S. foreign policy in two very important ways. First, evangelicals have increased their support for foreign aid and the protection and advancement of human rights. Second, evangelicals have a strong

and unwavering support for the state of Israel (Mead 2006, 37). While the second point, great support for Israel may run counter to peace efforts involving both Israelis and Palestinians, it is also worth mentioned that many evangelicals support foreign aid and providing basic needs for Palestinians as well.

Another aspect of social justice is the freedom to make basic choices. President Bush did much for religious freedom around the world. This is something often ignored by secular people. He went to China and advocated freedom for all people, not just Christians, and not just evangelicals. This call extended to Buddhists, Muslims, and all Christians in China. Many of Bush's messages to the Middle East talked about freedom, liberty, human rights, and the rule of law for all people. This type of policy promotion led to greater involvement by evangelicals in foreign policy. It also led, as Allen Hertzke outlines, to a surprising the role for U.S. evangelicals alongside many eclectic, seemingly opposed groups such as feminists and Buddhists (Hertzke 2004). For example, the rights of women in many developing world states have become increasingly important for evangelicals and basic freedoms for religious practice have also been asserted.

A related point about social justice is an output of successful evangelism around the world. The issue as Philip Jenkins asserts is that perhaps more so than any other religion in the world, Christianity is growing (Jenkins 2002). In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the growth of Christianity has been staggering. The United States, however, will probably still have the largest Christian population of any kind in the world, 330 million people (Jenkins 2002, 90). This Christian population, while only a fraction is evangelical, will have major links with people from these three areas of the world. In many ways, this will lead to more

shared policy networks and actions which might well become very important in the twenty-first century.

Overall, evangelicals “constantly reinforce the message of Christian responsibility in the world” (Mead 2006, 34). This admonition is to be active in the world and not to avoid a basic responsibility to do what is right. In this way, there is a tremendous social justice influence; it is just a social justice that is not often in tune with more liberal notions of the term.

The Moral Majority and Christian Coalition Influence

While the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition were mainly concerned with domestic issues, any time people vote certain candidates into office over others, all areas of policy will be affected including foreign policy. There are limits to the influence of the Christian Coalition and the Moral Majority on foreign policy, but many Republican policies were a result of election by these groups. For example, as Ted Jelen and Clyde Wilcox document, evangelical churches have often passed out voter’s guides to constituents that were put together by the Christian Coalition. These guides told voters to support Republican candidates (Jelen and Wilcox 2002, 289-90). While most of these guides were based on domestic issues that were important to evangelicals, a member of Congress is responsible for voting on all issues, both domestic and foreign.

There are situations where evangelical leaders have emerged as important players in matters of foreign policy. Gary Bauer, for example, opposed China getting Most Favored Nation (MFN) status with regards to trade (Martin 1999, 66). During the Reagan administration, many evangelicals helped influence politics in Latin America and Africa in

opposition to Communism (Martin 1999, 71). This, unfortunately, meant associating with a number of dictators many of whom conducted many brutal actions. Nonetheless, there are times when the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition became important players in foreign policy. Pat Robertson was known as a leader in the movement and was active in foreign policy discussions in Latin America and Africa. This also meant that Robertson himself sometimes aligned with dictators who professed evangelical beliefs. This became difficult for Robertson when some of their atrocities were brought up, but he saw it as important to back evangelicals around the world.

An important point to bear in mind is that evangelical Christianity is also broader than a leader or typically conservative organizations like the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition. (As part of our study on how evangelicalism is changing, many young evangelicals have become much less tethered to the Republican Party because of what they have seen in some of these organizations.) Some of their more inappropriate comments have been spotlighted by the media, but evangelicalism is much broader than a few people and, to be fair, one must also note the wonderful work that people like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell have done throughout the world in providing people with food, water, and shelter, a point is almost never mentioned in the mainstream media. This has influenced U.S. foreign policy and done so in important ways.

The Bush Influence

Despite his famous admonition during the Presidential debates in 2000 for a “more humble foreign policy,” President Bush became intensely involved in foreign policy throughout his Presidency. Almost all of it was, in some way, controversial. The most

noteworthy aspect of his foreign policy was his call for a War on Terror after the 9/11 attacks. His subsequent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq became central to this War on Terror.

President Bush, whether in the news media or late night talk shows, was depicted as someone who was not that smart, had simplistic conceptions of foreign policy, was motivated by personal animosity for Saddam, and misled the American people. Much of this was a result of controversial decisions regarding the Iraq War. Bush's argument that Saddam Hussein was an evil leader who possessed nuclear capabilities, however, struck a chord with many especially in the evangelical community. After all, the 2004 Presidential election, whether people acknowledge it now or not, was a referendum on the Iraq War. President Bush had the ability to communicate with evangelicals and conceptualized that leaders like Saddam should be removed on the grounds that he brutalized his own population and repressed human liberties. Bush made a compelling argument. It did, however, fall short for two basic reasons: his arguments were not robust and changed after weapons of mass destruction were not found, and he did not make a proper distinction as to why regime change was more important in Iraq than any other state with a horrendous leader (of which there are many).

Despite these shortcomings in policy, Bush was much more complex, rigorous, and academic than many people gave him credit for. Bush was able to connect with and influence evangelicals in a significant way. For example, his 2002 State of the Union speech in which Bush described an "axis of evil" struck a chord with evangelical Christians given the alignment of this policy with biblical notions of good and evil (Hook 2009, 164). Bush's Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, talked about six outposts of tyranny including:

Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Belarus, Burma, and Zimbabwe. What was most important was that these states restricted human liberty, one of which was freedom of religion. Many of these states also persecute Christians in horrendous ways. This is an area of policy that means a lot to evangelicals but is not nearly as important to most other people. It is also a reason why evangelicals support some more hawkish stances when the problem is appropriately defined. President Bush, in this way, made a tremendous influence of U.S. foreign policy.

Where do Evangelicals fit amongst various theories in IR?

As evidenced in the above section, evangelical views of foreign policy in their entirety do not seem to fit neatly into a concise viewpoint. Many evangelicals who supported George W. Bush and his policies were generally regarded as neoconservative. We challenge this assumption. While there was a significant tie between Bush and neo-conservatism we argue that his actual foreign policy preferences align with other evangelicals somewhere between realism and liberalism. A justification of this argument involves an in depth examination of neo-conservatism, realism, and liberalism.

Neoconservatism

The Bush administration was known for the implementation of a newer theory in IR theory, neoconservatism. This new theory blended core elements of realism and liberalism to assert a more proactive foreign policy that sought to uphold the place of the United States in the world, to confront the “bad guys,” and overrule the restrictions of the United Nations in constraining the U.S. from taking care of the bad states.

Such an adventurous foreign policy was not easy to palate for many evangelicals. So Paul Wolfowitz and other neoconservatives essentially had to align the values of neoconservatism with the culture of places like Midland, Texas (Widmaier 2007, 782). It is this appeasement that allowed neoconservatism to flourish under Bush. So this made for an uneasy coexistence with neoconservatism. After all, one might expect that the vast majority of evangelical leaders would see Islam as a religion that needed to be crushed in order to make a better world. Some tenets align. To promote democracy in different parts of the world, however, is not an important part of biblical teaching. Only the dignity and freedom of the individual are important.

As an evangelical and the President of the United States, George W. Bush encapsulated a lot of evangelical beliefs in his foreign policy. His Presidency, at least in terms of foreign policy, will be remembered for advocating the Bush Doctrine whilst reneging on the Powell Doctrine (which is essentially the same as the Weinberger Doctrine); do not engage an enemy without overwhelming force.

There are four basic components of the Bush Doctrine: unilateralism, attacking countries that harbor terrorists, preemptive strikes, and democratic regime change. All components of the Bush Doctrine come from the basic national interest, a very realist assertion. All components of the Bush Doctrine are also neoconservative. As Kristol and Kagan (1996) argue, neo-conservatism has three major components: increase the military defense budget, increase citizen involvement in foreign policy, and increase moral clarity in the world. In more recent years, this has translated into two important factors: the realist notion of force and the liberal notion of democracy promotion.

The problem with neoconservatism, however, is that it ignores the eschatological and social justice influences on foreign policy. Moreover, neoconservatism dovetails with the influence of Niebuhr and on some evangelical issues like the freedom of religion only because neo-conservatism so strongly advocates democratization. This means that evangelical voters could easily avoid neoconservatism by focusing on aid projects and promoting religious liberties without full efforts at democratization. Some remnants of neoconservatism will remain important but they are part of a realist arsenal as well as can be jettisoned from evangelical views of foreign policy.

Realism

Realism has long been part of foreign policy strategy in the United States. The realist mantra seeing the world as inherently evil coincides nicely with a biblical viewpoint of the world. Structural realism, however, tones down the importance of human nature and cites the anarchic structure of the world system as the main reason for conflict (Waltz 1979). Nevertheless, realist notions of thinking about the world have been important from Reagan's "evil empire" to Bush's "axis of evil," the terminology has been an important part of selling more aggressive elements of the national interest to the public.

The Bush administration may have been known for neoconservatism; however, this assertion is only really relevant to his first term. In his second term, Bush replaced Collin Powell with Condoleeza Rice. The so-called "Rice Doctrine" was interesting because it essentially served as an amendment to the Bush Doctrine in Bush's second term by retreating to more realist notions of foreign policy. No further wars were initiated. The United States only supplied moral support to allies such as Ethiopia in its war against

Islamic militants in Somalia and to Israel in its wars against Hezbollah in South Lebanon in 2006 and against militants in Gaza in 2008. Both were related to the War on Terror, but Rice avoided entanglements in these conflicts and pursued a strategy of buckpassing to U.S. allies, a very realist notion of conducting foreign policy.

Condoleezza Rice effectively moved the Bush administration to more realist moorings by arguing that the Bush administration was defined by an “American Realism for a New World” (Rice 2008). Democracy promotion was still part of this strategy but the emphasis was more on democratic development rather than democratic regime change (Rice 2008, 10).

Structural realism is interesting to evangelicals but not wholly satisfying given the omission of biblical sin. Nonetheless, the outcomes of structural realism are in congruence with a biblical viewpoint that conflict is an innate part of humanity. More so than other groups, white evangelicals protestant favor more defense spending and are more willing to use military force than mainline protestants, Catholics or people with no affiliation (Wilcox 1996, 50). This means that preparing for conflict is important and given realist notions of the inevitability of war, structural realism has some real credence as a policy option.

The recent growth of neoclassical realism is an important step for the realist paradigm. However, an investigation of domestic political actors has limited application to evangelical foreign policy with regards to realism. Neoclassical realism examines perceived mistrust between states as a possible reason for conflict. This might well be correct but the unfolding of biblical prophecy is not seen as the result of mistrust and therefore has limited application. Other applications of neoclassical realism such as

overbalancing, underbalancing, bandwagoning and buckpassing are all useful, but can only be sporadically applied at best to influences on evangelical thought such as eschatology.

Evangelical support for the war in Iraq was perhaps the defining moment of the Bush administration and will remain an important part of his legacy, regardless of how the decision to go to war is seen in the future. This action caused several prominent realists to reconsider their work. Stephen Walt, for example, wrote a book on the subject *Taming American Power*. Moreover, Walt teamed up with John Mearsheimer to talk about something that most structural realists ignore, domestic politics. In their book, *The Israel Lobby*, Mearsheimer and Walt explore the components of support for Israel which led to policies like support for the war in Iraq (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006).

What is interesting about the Israel Lobby is discussion of a coalition of people that support Israel and influence U.S. foreign policy. Mearsheimer and Walt cite Christian Zionists as an important part of this lobby (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006, 132-9). Evangelicals believe in a robust foreign policy that supports and upholds Israel against other players. It also gives the U.S. a strong foothold in the Middle East, an important consideration for the conduct of a realist foreign policy.

Liberalism

Americans, by and large, are optimistic (Mearsheimer 2001, 23). They do not like to think of themselves as realists or people who are prone to war. The same is equally true of evangelicals in the United States. This is not always obvious when one examines evangelicals because, biblically, people should be inherently evil. The book of Genesis, for

example, notes that man is inherently sinful on at least three occasions between chapters 6 and 8.

Anne-Marie Slaughter (2005) describes in detail the increasingly complex nature of neoliberal institutionalism. Rather than trying to create a global *government*, Slaughter argues that liberals are asserting global *governance*. Slaughter lays out an impressive case for increased internationalism using the examples of regulators, judges, and legislators. Through increased interaction and sharing of information, policies that work in one part of the world are being tried in other parts of the world. One example, Slaughter outlines, is an example where a group of legislators from around the world came together to share information on how to abolish the death penalty in their respective countries (Slaughter 2005, 112-3). Slaughter argues that this is “an example of a spontaneous legislative network” (Slaughter 2005, 113). Indeed, she is right, ideas are increasingly being spread across the world in the hopes of advocating for a shared policy platform, regardless of nationality.

In a similar way evangelicals are linked to other evangelicals around the world. Their mode is not the UN or any other international bloc; rather, evangelicals are often linked to mission networks, other church bodies, transnational evangelical NGOs, conferences, and learning at evangelical universities. All of these arenas provide prescient examples of how evangelicals are conversing over matters that are important to them. Evangelical support and solidarity of the persecuted church abroad is a major part of evangelical advocacy networks. Evangelicals have mobilized support for human rights in China, Sudan, and North Korea, among others for a sense of solidarity with fellow evangelicals around the world (Hertzke 2004, 35).

There is a booming network of evangelical groups that are almost naturally tied together given the importance of church, evangelical schools, in the lives of many people (Hertzke 2004, 34). With evangelical support of the Bush, his administration led to major policy initiatives on Sudan and against sex trafficking (Hertzke 2004, 35).

Moreover, evangelical foreign policy has some tenets of neoliberal institutionalism. Political issues like feeding the poor, providing aid and support for the meek and disenfranchised, and advocating for persecuted Christians abroad through organizations like *Voice of the Martyrs*, is important to evangelicals and done through neoliberal style networks.

Despite the focus on evangelical support for the War on Terrorism with its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, an important qualifier is that evangelicals are focused on myriad other issues in the world. The most recent earthquake in Haiti prompted a response from many evangelical churches. James Robison's prominent ministry, *Life Today*, is focused on almost solely feeding and providing water to villages across Africa. Moreover, during the Bush administration, U.S. aid to Africa grew by 67 percent with significant new funding to help fight HIV and AIDS (Mead 2006, 38).

Another tenet of liberalism is democracy promotion. George W. Bush, like Clinton, Bush Sr., and Reagan before him, adopted the idea of Democratic peace theory which became an important plank in U.S. foreign policy. Under democratic systems, war is a lot less likely based on the notion that democracies do not fight other democracies. Moreover, freedom of religion is a key component of democratic states.

Advocacy for promoting rights is important. A major reason for increased evangelical advocacy in foreign policy issues runs contrary to Tertullian's famous

statement—“the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (Hertzke 2004, 84). The problem, however, is that in places like North Korea and the Middle East, there is no real evidence of this. As both Allen Hertzke and Philip Jenkins note, the percentage of Christians has dropped dramatically in the Middle East especially throughout the twentieth century. Persecution is working and evangelical acquiescence in the West has done nothing to prevent this.

In sum, evangelicals may not love neoliberal institutions like the United Nations; however, evangelicals have created many NGOs and support other organizations that provide relief. One reason for skepticism of the UN is simply the fact that their vision often conflicts with evangelical beliefs over something like abortion. Instead evangelicals are increasingly active in international networks that support more liberal notions of foreign policy.

Towards a More Rounded Understanding of Evangelical Foreign Policy

Neither realism nor liberalism is entirely satisfying for an evangelical foreign policy. Neoconservatism, a blend of realism and liberalism, produced some problematic outcomes; disregard for the United Nations and unclear reasoning for going into Iraq as well as a failure to account for sub-nationalist identities when the guarantor of Iraqi identity, Saddam Hussein, was taken out of power.

Despite the problems with the current theories, there are a number of important components that can be gleaned. If the United States is the guarantor of human rights and the rule of law around the world, then upholding U.S. primacy with reasonable military funding is an important option.

When examining the influence of evangelicals in foreign policy, the bloc is probably closest to realism as a descriptive form of evangelical foreign policy given the propensity for strong reactions to Islamic terrorism and the persecution of Christians globally. Evangelicals should seek to spread liberties across the world. However, having said that, there are many laypersons from within evangelical churches that are simply providing different forms of aid across the world. This does not fit into realism. Nor does the fact that many choices do not fit neatly into the common conception of the national interest like unabashed support for Israel or helping people groups who have no way of doing anything in return.

Theories of IR do not adequately describe what the average evangelical in the United States sees with regards to foreign policy. Realism and liberalism are both very useful, but fall short. Neoconservatism, in some ways a combination of realism and liberalism; combining the importance of force with the promotion of democracy, is unsatisfying also. Other theories that combine elements of liberal and realism such as the English-school, headed by Martin Wight and Hedley Bull, do not encapsulate the religiosity of evangelicalism.

What does emerge from this study is an evangelical polity that is activist. The bloc is supportive of military interventions where they can be justified on human rights grounds, most notably for freedom of religion. Evangelical foreign policy is also activist because of the biblical command to feed the hungry, help the suffering, and provide aid to the poor.

This is evident perhaps more so than in any other blocs because evangelicals are also ready to provide significant foreign aid, but only when they understand where the money is going. That is why most evangelicals reject giving through the UN or other

secular organizations. Giving money through their local church, favorite television ministry, or missionary group, almost ensures that the money is going to organizations that are trusted.

What seems to be the most accurate conclusion of evangelical foreign policy then is that is activist. Not necessarily just in military affairs, but in promoting the rights of people to choose their religion. Especially in the 10/40 window; the area of the world stretching from the west coast of Africa to Japan between 10 and 40 degrees latitude. (Basically, the 10/40 window encompasses the areas of the world in which the vast majority of non-Christians live.) A major piece of news for evangelicals is the annual “most persecuted list” which names and shames the ten worst states for their persecution of Christians. This, in many ways, is why some major evangelical leaders have made very bold statements about Islam and a major reason why evangelicals take more hawkish stances in polling data.

At the outset of this paper, we discussed the complex, seemingly contradictory issues that are supported by evangelicals. Notions of power in foreign policy are important because the world is sinful and, in some senses, anarchical. This is where structural realism is important because considerations of power are important but so is the influence of Niebuhr, to rid the world of evil where it threatens others. Obviously who is evil and when to intervene are important factors, and structural realism tends to advocate a minimalist approach. Neoliberal institutions are important as well as long as they are evangelical. These networks are increasingly important and some recognition of this would be useful if the UN is to gain wider support from all people, including evangelicals.

Ramifications for 2012

Evangelicalism, in many ways, is changing. Older evangelicals are dying and new evangelicals are taking their place; many with different moorings and much less attachment to the Republican Party. This, potentially, could have profound ramifications on the 2012 Presidential election. Many younger evangelicals who supported Obama in 2008 will be confronted with a choice: stay the course or shift back to the more conservative moorings of their parents and grandparents.

As 2012 approaches, both President Obama and the Republican Presidential nominee will do well to heed and understand the nature of change inside evangelicalism. For Obama, the evangelical vote is more open to the Democratic Party than in many decades and his election in 2008 bears witness to this. However, he must remember that some of his foreign policy choices will greatly affect his plans for reelection. States that persecute Christians cannot be given a free pass when it comes to human rights; carrots are fine but sticks must exist as well. “Hitting the reset button” with Russia did much to assuage the growing animosity between the U.S. and Russia but this country is still the main enemy identified as Rosh in Ezekiel 38. Obama has to be careful because if the Putin/Medvedev regime becomes fully dictatorial and repressive, this could also be seen as Obama failing to heed to advice of Niebuhr and confront evil. Moreover, peaceful overtures with Russia ignore the basic eschatological beliefs of many futurist evangelicals.

Continued aid to Africa, following the model of George W. Bush is a good step for Obama as is significant aid and help to Haiti. One might expect that evangelical groups will spend a great deal of time in Haiti between now and 2012 as articulated in our section on social justice influences. Haiti is close to the United States, has been on the news for an

extended period of time, and evangelicals are increasingly mobilized to help as evidenced by Katrina relief on the Gulf Coast.

For the Republican Presidential nominee, old style aggressive, hawkish foreign policy statements may prove costly. For President Bush, the Iraq War is inevitably tied to his legacy. Standing up for human rights, especially freedom of religion, and facing down a recalcitrant dictator are good things, but a clearer reasoning of policy will be important for getting support from better educated and more globally minded young evangelicals. Concerns about nuclear weapons must be fully substantiated.

For the Republican nominee, providing aid and making the case for religious freedom around the world may be most important foreign policy virtues to espouse. This ties in with both the eschatological and social justice influences. If the nominee taps into the concern for afflicted Christians across the world and plans to put greater pressure on states that abuse human rights, this could potentially trump Obama's intelligent foreign policy overtures to the Muslim world, nuclear disarmament, and proclamations of creating a more peaceful world.

The truth of the matter is that in 2012, the economy and domestic politics might well decide the election anyway. Foreign policy might simply be a non-factor for the first time since 2000. Nonetheless, there are always exogenous foreign policy shocks that effect elections in one way or another. A terrorist attack (or even an attempted attack as evidenced by the Christmas Day 2009 attempt on Detroit) on a major U.S. city would steer the debate back towards foreign policy. How Obama and the Republican nominee react to this possibility will be important also.

Discussion

One important thing that this paper does is showcase the uncertainty amongst evangelicals with regards to foreign policy. This paper explains why evangelicals can, on the one hand, support the War on Terror, the invasion of Iraq and increased military build-up. On the other hand, this paper also shows why evangelicals are so quick to give generously to aid projects, care so much about religious persecution around the world, and want to see human rights upheld and protected. Finding a balance between structural realism and neoliberal institutionalism is useful because biblically, foreign policy lines up between these two theories. Given that it is quite unlikely that neoconservatism will reemerge, creating a more robust strategy might be useful for evangelicals because it will allow them to articulate a foreign policy that is biblical and are tied to neither the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party. Their votes will be open to which ever candidate best accommodates the important views of evangelicals.

Another important point to consider is that evangelical involvement in foreign policy will be extremely relevant to numerous other evangelical states in Latin America, Asia and Africa (Jenkins 2002). While being careful not to exclude, solidarity amongst states with significant evangelical populations will be a useful area of interdependence.

A final interesting facet of evangelical preferences for foreign policy is that not all choices are in the national interest. As Mearsheimer and Walt (2006) argue support for Israel may not be in the national interest; rather, a more balanced approach to the Middle East may be best. Evangelicals, however, are intrinsically tied to Israel and commanded to protect the land. Moreover, many of the aid projects and support for persecuted Christians abroad does not do much for the national interest. In fact, it probably leads to greater

antagonism on the part of foreign governments. In the modern world, however, notions of the national interest are decreasing in substantive ways. Finding room for the changing nature of evangelical views on foreign policy may well be an important key in the 2012 Presidential election.

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