

BLESSING WAR AND BLESSING PEACE: RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES IN THE US DURING MAJOR CONFLICT PERIODS, 1990–2005[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Political leaders often deploy religious symbols and language to legitimate their war policies while opponents use it to forestall or control war. We examine George W. Bush's religious discourse in the post-9/11 and Iraq War era and find that it was marked by binary thinking and the demonizing of a largely religious enemy. Our analysis of the statements of 15 US peace movement organizations after 9/11 further reveals that the US peace movement had three primary responses to Bush's religiously based discourse in support of war.

First, they directly challenged his binaries and his demonizing of a broadly defined, religious enemy. Second, they harnessed the President's religious discourse to turn it against him and his policies. Third, they

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constructed oppositional knowledge by providing corrective information about Islam.

By examining the movement's discourses over a 15-year period that spans five major conflict periods, our analysis also shows a close relationship between the peace movement's use of religious discourse and its identity-based talk. In addition, we found a close relationship between the movement's religious discourses and its promotion of more costly forms of politics, i.e., extrainstitutional, protest-based politics. Thus, we also argue that the US peace movement's religious discourses during major conflict periods are both strategic and driven by individual agency, are not only tactical but also expressive, and are intended to have both outward and inward effects.

The country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism: the drums were beating, the bands playing, the toy pistols popping ... while in the churches the pastors preached devotion to flag and country and invoked the God of Battles, beseeching His aid in our good cause in outpouring of fervid eloquence which moved every listener. (Mark Twain, *The War Prayer*, 1905)

Few political issues cut closer to the heart of religious sensibilities – and are, therefore, more ripe for religious discourse and activism – than a country's decision to wage war or make peace. This is not necessarily because many conflicts have religious dimensions, nor is it because some wars are waged over religious differences. Rather, it is because most religions value love, peace, charity, and justice, and most teach some version of the golden rule with its basic ethic of reciprocity (Wattles, 1996). The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) developed an influential understanding of religion as a “cultural system” of symbols that provide understandings, motivations, and meanings regarding many dimensions of human experience, from the special and the peculiar to the common and everyday. This meaning-making both shapes and is shaped by social relations. “Religious symbols form a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific (if, most often, implicit) metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other” (Geertz, 1973, p. 90). Religious people often care intensely about war and peace, and religious discourse is frequently featured in civic debates about waging wars. Religion is also important for social movements because of the legitimacy it provides through a process of ideational affiliation. That is, if believers are

convinced that their gods demand certain actions, they are more likely to support policies that are in line with those demands and actions. Political leaders frequently rely on this very process to mobilize support for far-reaching and costly policies.

For example, President George W. Bush gave a speech during a religious service at the National Cathedral a few days following the 9/11 attacks. Called the “National Day of Prayer and Remembrance,” the Cathedral swelled with a crowd that included his Cabinet, former presidents, large contingents from both the Senate and House, ministers, rabbis, Catholic cardinals, Muslim clerics, and many other top public and private officials. He framed his mission and that of a mourning country in what Bob Woodward called a “grand vision of God’s master plan” (Woodward, 2002, pp. 66–67). The president spoke forcefully and plainly: “Just three days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil” (Bush, September 14, 2001). As the service ended, the entire gathering in the National Cathedral stood and sang the righteous patriotic anthem “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

Religious discourse is a many-headed hydra. In the same way that President Bush relied on it, religion’s cultural dominance means that many in the United States will be discursively attuned to and cognitively open to oppositional messages that reference common religious beliefs. Thus, religious discourse provides opportunities for movements trying to fashion oppositional cultures of counter-hegemonic resistance (Billings, 1990). Moreover, religion provides a host of other assets for social movements, many of which are rich with meaning and resonance. These assets include divine legitimation for protest activities as well as moral imperatives associated with justice, peace, charity, and equality. Religion also provides sacred rituals that uphold political engagement, and values that foster self-sacrifice and sustained activism on behalf of others. As a social institution, religion offers to movements experienced and respected leadership, financial and material resources, familiar and authoritative discourses, and even safe political or civic spaces. Last but certainly not the least, religion provides movements with preexisting solidarity networks, communication systems, and those cross-cutting collective identities that are so important to mobilization (Smith, 1996, pp. 9–22). Some of these religious riches have been hard-won in the US tradition of ideological struggle, while others have gradually and almost imperceptibly accumulated over time given the prominent place religion holds in the country’s history.

OVERVIEW

We begin with an explanation of the theoretical framework. We follow that with a historically informed discussion of the influential role civil religion has played in the United States and the concomitant influence that history imparts to religious discourses. Although religion has played a prominent role throughout his campaigns and presidency, we focus the bulk of this paper on two conflict periods associated with President George W. Bush: the period immediately following 9/11 and the first two years of the Iraq War. We provide a brief overview of Bush's religiosity, followed by a detailed analysis of his religious discourse. Here we show that George W. Bush's religious discourse was marked by extensive use of binary thinking and the repeated construction and demonizing of a largely religious enemy. Having set the table in this way, we then turn to our analysis of the religious discourses of the US peace movement during the two conflict periods. Our qualitative analysis reveals that the US peace movement had three primary responses to Bush's religiously-based discourse. First, they directly challenged his reliance on binaries and his demonizing of a broadly defined enemy. Second, they harnessed the President's overt religiosity and his religious discourse and turned the power of these symbols against him and his policies. Third, many of the peace movement organizations (PMOs) constructed oppositional knowledge by focusing their statements on providing remedial education about Islam. Our quantitative analysis of peace movement discourses across five conflict periods further reveals a close relationship between the peace movement's use of religious discourse and its identity-based talk. In addition, we find a close relationship between the movement's religious discourse and its advocacy for extrainstitutional, protest-based politics.

We now turn to explaining our theoretical framework and then to setting the longer historical context for understanding religious discourse in the United States during major conflict periods.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RESPONDING TO HEGEMONY

Hegemony refers to cultural processes that aid in the reproduction of existing power relations (Gramsci, 1971; Williams, 1982; Carroll & Ratner, 1994).¹ Specifically, hegemony involves elites drawing upon a reservoir of cultural materials to frame issues (Snow & Benford, 1988). Social theorists

note that enduring beliefs, images, narratives, and collective identities are circulating among the public that, because of their frequent reference by powerholders, carry uncommon authority (Steinberg, 1999; Ku, 2001; Ferree, 2003). These are the "social myths, language, and symbols" that inform how people both understand the issues they care about and their opportunities for addressing them (Gaventa, 1980, pp. 15–16). Williams (2002) refers to these familiar and authoritative materials collectively as a symbolic repertoire; we use the term "dominant symbolic repertoire" to denote both its primacy and the fact that it is available for appropriation. The resonant quality of these materials stems from their being part of taken-for-granted ways of thinking, writing, talking, and acting.

In the United States, religious symbols, beliefs, and language are deeply embedded in the dominant symbolic repertoire. Through repeated use of these materials to frame their claims, political elites link their policies with the culture's cherished symbols. As a facet of hegemony, therefore, religious discourses provide political elites with an advantage over social movements in mobilizing public support for their claims.

Yet as Michel Foucault's studies of power reveals, there is another side to the discursive coin. "We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1980, p. 101). When discursively engaging hegemony, movement groups have three options: challenging hegemony, harnessing hegemony, or some combination of the two.

When oppositional movements exploit the cultural traction that the concepts in the dominant symbolic repertoire have in order to legitimate opposition to *status quo* arrangements, we call this harnessing hegemony. With regard to peace and war, PMOs harness hegemony by positively referencing nationalist identity and cultural values (such as religious beliefs), and then appropriating them into a discourse that promotes peace and opposes war. For example, a religious peace movement organization might say that "as a 'Christian country' the United States is morally bound to cut the military budget and to fund development projects at home and abroad." We argue that by intentionally employing taken-for-granted terminology and familiar expressions of identity used by elites (i.e., "as a Christian country"), challengers tap into a deep well of discursive power that they can harness to promote alternative viewpoints.

Nonetheless, harnessing hegemony is also dangerous. Over time it may disillusion core supporters whose identities and discourses are rooted in

more directly oppositional stances. Thus, PMOs may also engage in a more confrontational approach; one that rejects dominant understandings as mistaken or plainly wrong. We term this response challenging hegemony. For example, a peace group might claim that the all-volunteer armed forces relies disproportionately on recruits with lower social economic status, terming it a "poverty draft" and critiquing it as morally wrong.

Direct challenges to hegemony are not painless. They are rarely popular since they are – by definition – contrary to prevailing perceptions. When challenges to hegemony occur beyond the confines of movement adherents, common reactions range from incomprehension and disbelief to ridicule and anger. Challenging hegemony is like swimming upstream against a strong current. Consequently, we expect peace groups will often take hybridized approaches that contain elements of harnessing and elements of challenging hegemony. Moreover, we expect them to switch back and forth between the approaches, depending on the circumstances and audiences. As we analyze the religious discourses of the peace movement, we will regularly employ this interpretive schema. Before doing so, however, we first set the longer historical context for understanding religious discourses in the United States.

US CIVIL RELIGION

The Puritans believed that God had assigned a uniquely divine mission to the nation they were creating. Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop confidently proclaimed as early as 1630 that "The God of Israel is among us... We shall be as a city upon a hill" (Ahlstrom, 1975, p. 464). Notwithstanding this early ardor for joining God and state in the American experiment, the separation of church and state through the disestablishment clause of the Constitution is commonly hailed as the central and greatest political innovation of the United States (Fowler, Hertzke, & Olson, 1999, p. 11). Somewhat paradoxically, when combined with the constitutional guarantees of free speech and assembly, this separation has made religion an influential force in US history, profoundly shaping the national experience (Wills, 1990, p. 380; Heyer, 2003, p. 150). Religion has played two powerful roles: one largely a supportive, maintaining role for a government that grants it free exercise, and the other a visionary corrective to a state whose policies violate peace, justice, and equality. While religion has helped to maintain and serve the *status quo* throughout US history, it has also often been a prickly thorn in the side of a sleeping public conscience through

moral judgments, protests, and political mobilizations of the faithful. These dual roles are often conceived of as competing – or complimentary – manifestations of the country's "civil religion," defined below. In the analysis that follows of White House and peace movement discourses, both of these traditions will be amply represented.

Nearly 40 years ago, sociologist Robert Bellah argued that the United States is marked by a civil religion, "a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity" (2005, p. 46). While many of these beliefs and symbols are culturally associated with the Jewish and Christian tradition in particular and a transcendent dimension more generally, others are also intimately connected to the country's political history and the values of freedom, liberty, and democracy associated therein. Many scholars have used Max Weber's basic distinctions between the priestly and prophetic leadership types played by religion to identify not a single unified American civil religion, but two primary strains (Williams & Alexander, 1994; Fairbanks, 1981). The first is state-centered and priestly with its focus on the United States as a chosen nation with exceptional responsibilities to do God's will on earth; this is often associated with the doctrine of the United States' "manifest destiny." This doctrine has fueled US neoimperial interventions from Mexico to the Philippines to Chile and, arguably, to Iraq. The second includes a prophetic vision that not only cares about justice at home but also turns outward to globally promote cooperation, disarmament, internationalism, and equality (Wuthnow, 1988, pp. 244–257; Billings & Scott, 1994; Kent & Spickard, 1994).

Civil religion in the United States is remarkably strong, especially from a comparative perspective. Following his tour of the young United States in 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville reported that "There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America" (Lipset, 1996, p. 62). It is well known that the United States is predominantly a Protestant country. What is less often realized is that national opinion polls by Gallup and others indicate that Americans are not only the most churchgoing in Protestantism but the most fundamentalist in all of Christianity (Lipset, 1996, p. 61). Meanwhile, according to the most recent World Values Survey (2005), 81% of the US citizens surveyed report that they describe themselves as religious persons – independently of whether or not they go to church. In comparison, for selected European countries (Austria, East Germany, West Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands), the number was on average significantly lower (55%).²

THE RICHES OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

Given the strengths of the religious tradition in the United States, religious discourse itself may be the most valuable aspect of what religion offers to social movements (Billings, 1990, p. 4). This is because it is widely available and easily understood across the US population, including as a framework for thinking about the moral dimensions of public life (Williams, 2004). How else can one make sense of the contradictory public policies that Reverend Pat Robertson and Reverend Jesse Jackson manage to advocate while relying upon strikingly similar religious symbols and language? Civil religion is, at base, a public religious discourse; it is a complex of cultural practices and religiously infused traditions available to various groups to deploy on behalf of their own interests and agendas (Williams & Demerath, 1991). We think it best to conceive of this US civil religious discourse as the distinctly religious dimension of the dominant symbolic repertoire – the vast stock of durable images, ideas, and beliefs whose frequent use by authority figures (both secular and religious) over time infuses it with more resonant and more potent meanings (Coy et al., 2003; Maney et al., 2005, 2008; Coy et al., 2008a; Woehrle et al., forthcoming). Consequently, it is not just presidents or pastors who can make use of the images associated with civil religion, as demonstrated by this quotation from Pax Christi from the first weeks following 9/11:

We need to honor those impulses as a nation and in our faith. Our call to be the peace of Christ will take the same courage and creativity, strength and honesty to live out the best of US traditions – those which reflect Christ's discipline of love: affirming the human dignity in ourselves, our neighbor (especially the vulnerable), and our enemy alike. These "better angels of our nature," as Abraham Lincoln called them, are embodied in a vision that presents an alternative to war – neither excusing nor fueling acts of terror. (Pax Christi, September 25, 2001)

Here the peace group extolled the moral teachings not only of Jesus Christ but also of Abraham Lincoln, a venerable US figure, and fused their teachings tightly to a national identity that is said to eschew war.

When religious discourse is further wrapped in a package of nationalist symbols and myths of origin, not only is it widely available for appropriation, but also its resonance and its potency is multiplied. Just as the Battle Hymn of the Republic song in the National Cathedral gave President Bush religious legitimacy for war abroad and repression at home, oppositional groups may achieve similar effects from their use of other nationalist hymns. In the example below from a public letter to President Bush during the run-up to the Iraq War, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

harnessed elements from the dominant symbolic repertoire in the form of a beloved and often-sung national hymn. A plea to President Bush was wrapped in the deeply religious lyrics of a national song in order to cajole the President to enact policies that live up to the hymn's lofty promises and national symbols. What it means for a country to be a "great power" was redefined as the peace group created what we call "oppositional knowledge" (Coy & Woehrle, 1996; Coy et al., 2008b; Woehrle et al., forthcoming) around this issue:

Each stanza of our great national hymn, "America the Beautiful," turns from celebration of the bounty and strength which God has granted us to a prayer of thanksgiving and petition. In that hymn we pray: "America, America, God mend thy every flaw, confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law." That prayer is the burden of this letter.

The mark of a truly great power is that it exhausts every opportunity of negotiation and diplomacy, bears even the most excessive frustrations and challenges, rather than resort to its military might. For the great power, war is the very last resort, not the exercise of a preemptive option. We urge you, Mr. President, to show us the self-control, patience and long-suffering appropriate to a great power. Use the good instruments of international law, international institutions such as the United Nations, World Court and International Court of Justice to resolve our conflict with Iraq. (American Friends Service Committee, September 20, 2002)

METHODS

The data for this paper consists of press and media releases, printed statements, editorials, and public calls to action from 15 US PMOs, issued in the name of the organization as a whole (usually by the national office).³ Information on the 15 groups is included in the appendix. We intentionally included some of the oldest, largest, and most well-known peace movement groups as well as some newer groups. We also included a range of religious groups and secular groups, including a Muslim group, pacifist and policy groups, women's groups, labor groups, African-American groups, and online groups. We aimed for a sample that was broadly representative of the larger movement.

The data collected stretches from August 1990 to March 2005 and includes 510 documents issued during five conflict periods. These statements were typically released to the mainstream media and/or posted to the organization's Web site. They not only represent the public face and voice of the organization, but they are arguably the best record of an organization's

evolving official positions. Such statements provide a tangible representation of the organization's framing work and as such can be effectively used in data analysis. They also create a historical record of an organization's words and actions, demonstrating how these groups contribute to the discursive processes that create social knowledge and shape public policy. Just as important, the statements are not subject to the vagaries of an individual's memory, or of the face-saving and after-the-fact reconstructions that often accompany later interviewing (Polletta & Amenta, 2001).

Fifteen organizations and five conflict periods support comparative analysis and interpretations that reveal the dynamic nature of peace movement discursive practices (Table 1). The data stretches across three presidential administrations encompassing both Republican and Democratic leadership. The conflict periods differed in terms of available political opportunity and national emotional climate, offering rich comparative opportunities. The diversity and breadth of organizations represented, combined with the longitudinal nature of the data set, makes it an important contribution to the study of social movements, particularly during conflict periods. The size of the data set provides a unique collection of documents on the US peace movement, and allows for greater generalizability of the findings.

We suggest that social movement strategists, i.e., those who monitor and respond discursively in resonant ways to structural and cultural changes, are something like farmers. All successful farmers know they not only have to monitor the weather but that they must also regularly test their soils. As both the weather and the soil changes, so too must their tilling, planting,

Table 1. Data Profile.

Conflict Period	No. of Peace Movement Organizations	No. of Peace Movement Documents	No. of Presidential Documents
Gulf War	5	94	
Iraq Bombing 1998	7	20	
Kosovo/a 1999	6	22	
9/11 and Afghanistan War	9	58	95
Iraq War (first 2 years)	15 (Data for 5 orgs. across all conflict periods)	316	
Total		510	

and fertilizing or they risk poor or unsustainable harvests. Similar principles also apply to social movement activists as they track cultural trends and monitor shifting structural conditions. One of the reasons why this dynamic relationship between structure, culture, and agency has been too seldom demonstrated empirically is because of the difficulty of collecting longitudinal data on the same social movement actors over many years and across multiple periods of contention. Our data set on the statements from five PMOs (American Friends Service Committee [AFSC], Fellowship of Reconciliation [FOR], Peace Action, Pax Christi, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom [WILPF]) across five different conflict periods (Gulf War, Iraq 98, Kosovo/a, 9/11, Iraq War) over 15 years (1990–2005) overcomes this historic difficulty. Whenever we present longitudinal analysis (across multiple time periods), we base those findings only on the data drawn from the five organizations for which we have statements for all five conflict periods.

In our data analysis, we weave deductive and inductive thinking together and combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Computer-assisted analysis eased the challenge of accurately analyzing large amounts of textual data. We used the data-mining and analytical modeling program N-Vivo to inductively code the documents for ideas. Files from N-Vivo can be exported to SPSS (directly) and to Stata (via Excel). These statistical packages were used to analyze data weighted to control for variations in the amount of text produced by different organizations as well as across conflict periods.

The coding process involved a series of developmental analytical stages. Codes emerged inductively from the data and others were added from existing ideas in the literature. All three researchers participated in the coding process. To develop our initial coding strategy and to ensure shared understandings and uniformity, randomly chosen documents were coded by all three researchers and compared. Based on the refined coding strategy, the data set was then split into three parts, and each document was coded by a primary coder who then sent it to be coded by a secondary coder. The secondary coder suggested revisions. The resulting dialogue between the researchers established the final coding.

In order to analyze the dialogical dimensions of peace movement discourses, we also collected and coded all statements from President Bush in the immediate post 9/11 period (September 11 through December 31, 2001) available from the online White House archives (www.whitehouse.gov/), excluding joint press conferences with other world leaders. We gathered and used 75 presidential statements in this analysis. This data

included formal speeches to Congress and other groups and institutions, press conferences, and radio addresses. The coding strategy we employed for this data was similar to the one we used for the 15 PMOs. The code lists were somewhat different than that used for the peace movement statements since the coding categories for each set of data were developed inductively.⁴

We turn next to a profile of Bush's religiosity and his discourse, focusing on his constructions of a religious enemy, followed by analysis of the peace movement's religious statements in response.

BUSH'S RELIGIOSITY

When Texas Governor George W. Bush began his presidential push, he called influential religious leaders from the region to the governor's mansion. They performed a ritualized "laying on of hands" on the soon-to-be candidate that served to religiously validate for evangelical Christians his "calling" to the presidency. Not long after, in December 1999, Republican candidates in a presidential primary debate were asked which political philosopher had the most impact on their political beliefs. Bush stunned many by promptly and boldly replying, "Christ, because he changed my heart." The candidate's spiritual autobiography, *A Charge to Keep*, which also appeared in 1999, recounts a series of conversion experiences and religious "testimonies" cast in traditional terms and apparently meant to define and promote his born-again religiosity. Bush constructs a narrative in which he has other figures suggesting to him that he is called to be today's Moses, chosen by God to courageously lead the United States in its presumed mission to spread freedom, democracy, and moral values (Bush, 1999, pp. 8–13, 136–139). Bush's national prominence increased significantly as he highlighted his conversion experiences and increased his devotion to the evangelical Christian agenda (Gurtov, 2006, p. 36).

Some have claimed that no modern White House occupant has ever cast his presidency in such deeply spiritual terms as George W. Bush (Urban, 2006). Empirical evidence supports this, with the possible exception of Ronald Reagan. Analysis of State of the Union addresses from Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 to George W. Bush in 2005 shows that Bush engaged in more "God talk" than any other president, with Reagan running a close second. Significantly, Reagan and Bush were also much more likely to posture as prophets. That is, they linked their discourses about God and freedom and liberty with suggestions that they had personal knowledge of God's desires or intentions in these matters (Coe & Domke, 2006,

pp. 309–330), as in the example below, which we've taken from a Bob Woodward interview with Bush:

I say that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is God's gift to everybody in the world. I believe that. As a matter of fact, I was the person that wrote that line, or said it ... And it became part of the jargon. And I believe that. And I believe we have a duty to free people. I would hope we wouldn't have to do it militarily, but we have a duty. (Woodward, 2004, pp. 88–89)

This sort of discourse from the president of a military superpower is rather sobering. When the commander-in-chief of the US military conflates his mind with the mind of God, debate is stifled, alternatives go unexamined, and missions considered to be God's may become one with the national mission, all as defined by the president himself.

Even more challenging for oppositional social movements, however, may be that for many US Christians, so little of this was problematic. Reverend Pat Robertson resigned as president of the Christian Coalition in December, 2001 after Bush ramped up his religious rhetoric in response to 9/11. As influential Christian conservative Gary Bauer put it, "I think Robertson stepped down because the position has already been filled. There was already a great deal of identification with the president before 9–11 in the world of the Christian right, and the nature of this war is such that it has heightened the sense that a man of God is in the White House (Milbank, 2001, p. 2)." A former Christian Coalition head, Ralph Reed, commented on the new role of the evangelical movement in national politics by saying that it had succeeded in electing Bush. "You're no longer throwing rocks at the building; you're in the building (Milbank, 2001, p. 2)." Actually, they have come a long way from throwing rocks at the White House, or even just getting in the door. The fusing of Christian fundamentalism with White House policies under George W. Bush was coupled with the centralizing of authority and increased levels of secrecy within the Executive Branch of government. The constriction of policy-making dialogues that resulted created grave dangers for the future of democracy in the United States (Hedges, 2006, p. 254).

BUSH'S BINARIES

In keeping with some traditions of religious fundamentalism, George W. Bush's presidency was marked by an absence of doubt, an unwavering certitude even with regard to complex and complicated foreign policy issues (Woodward, 2004, pp. 139–140). Bush consistently employed a dichotomy

between the forces of good (the United States) and the forces of evil (terrorists, Islamic fundamentalists, and all those who “hate America”). One of the more famous examples of this dichotomous thinking infused with religious power occurred during his address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001:

Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists (Applause) . . . Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them (Applause). Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice – assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America. (Bush, September 20, 2001)

David Domke's (2004) comparative analysis of Bush's discourse both before and after 9/11 revealed that the President's usage of the good/evil binary nearly tripled in the period immediately following the attacks and up to his “mission accomplished” speech when he prematurely claimed from an aircraft carrier that major combat operations in Iraq were over. In our own research, we analyzed 75 statements from President Bush in the immediate post 9/11 period (September 11 through December 31, 2001). Forty-six (61.3%) of those presidential statements included binary thinking of the “good versus evil” variety. Clearly, this rhetorical device (and way of interpreting the world) was repeated frequently by the President of the United States in many different ways and in scores of different contexts.

Within discursive politics, binaries advance the agendas of powerholders in three ways. First, they discount certain ways of thinking and being. In so doing, they create a powerful interpretive hierarchy where one way of viewing the world soundly trumps the other one. Second, insofar as they are often rooted in fundamentalism, they carry a moral and even religious power that can influence popular opinion. For example, empirical research shows that during the run-up to the Iraq War, the potential influence of presidential moralizing was magnified, thanks to a subservient mainstream print media whose editorial pages largely excluded criticisms of the invasion on moral grounds (Nikolaev & Porpora, 2007).⁵ Third, binaries are easily understood, all the more so if they have a religious hue. They take little ink and, therefore, promptly become a favored device in both the mass media and in the popular mind. For example, David Domke also compared the presence of the good–evil binary in newspaper editorials in 20 major newspapers published in the two days following each presidential address. They increased by nearly sixfold relative to newspaper editorials appearing in the two days following each presidential address in the pre-9/11 period

(Domke, 2004, pp. 33–42). This substantial “echo effect” granted to moralizing presidential discourses by the mainstream media contributes to political closures and shapes political discourse.

FROM BINARIES TO ENEMIES

Our analysis found that one of the binary-based discursive approaches taken by President Bush was to construct enemies within the context of his religious discourse. Constructing a loathsome enemy who represents the worst of humanity is a common accompaniment to armed hostilities (Keen, 1985). The us versus them thinking inherent in enemy images produces a kind of group think that focuses public attention and constricts other formulations (Merskin, 2004). As a hegemonic device, well-defined enemy images divert awareness from potentially problematic domestic policies (such as civil liberties repression) outwards toward a shared enemy instead – all the more so if the enemy constructions can be given a religious or, at least, a moralized overlay. Of the 60 paragraphs we coded for religion in statements by President Bush during the 9/11 period, nearly a quarter of them (23%) are focused on the President's constructions of a religious enemy. Collectively, he paints a stark and forbidding portrait of terrorists, the Taliban, Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and generic Islamic extremists. The Bush quotes below are a partial listing of the enemy images he constructed within the context of his religious discourse in the post-9/11 period.

According to the President, the “Islamic extremists” who he defines as the country's enemy:

- have tried to hijack a great religion,
- hate Christians and Jews,
- love only one thing – they love power,
- celebrate death,
- despise creative societies and individual choice,
- have no home in any faith,
- have a special hatred for America,
- are heirs to fascism,
- want to force every life into grim and joyless conformity,
- encourage murder and suicide,
- are isolated by their own hatred and extremism,
- destroy religious symbols of other religions,
- are drug dealers,

- are murderers,
- are barbaric in their meting out of justice,
- dare to ask God's blessings as they set out to kill innocents,
- have no place in any culture,
- resent and resist freedom,
- are the likes of which we have never seen before,
- are incredibly ruthless,
- gloat over killing fellow Muslims,
- can't stand what America stands for,
- hate women,
- disrupt humanitarian supplies,
- have no conscience,
- don't educate children,
- forbid children to fly kites, or sing songs, or build snowmen,
- imprison women in their homes,
- dictate how to think and how to worship,
- deny women basic healthcare and education,
- steal food from starving people,
- beat girls for wearing white shoes,
- are evil and determined,
- commit mass murder against innocents,
- destroy great monuments of human culture.

And finally, the President claims they

- are so evil that those of us in America can't possibly comprehend why they do what they do.

President Bush clearly evinced a propensity to address important and complex policy choices through the extensive use of simple binaries that are embedded within religious discourse. When this is combined with his repetitive and stark constructions of a religious enemy, we would expect the US peace movement to respond in its own discourses. We turn to our analysis of those responses below.

THE PEACE MOVEMENT'S RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

The peace movement's religious discourses, have at least two origins. First, for at least some of the organizations, it emanates from deeply held values

associated with religious identities. That is why the AFSC would often preface their statements with the phrase "as Quakers," while the FOR would say "as faith-based pacifists," while Pax Christi would say "as Catholics" or "as followers of the nonviolent Jesus." Peace groups publicly construct their identities like this not only to introduce and explain their more radical policy positions but to "credential" and legitimate them (Coy & Woehrlé, 1996). Second, PMOs are strategic as they talk back to powerholders in a dialogical fashion (Steinberg, 1999). Here they appropriate and attempt to undermine the religious dimensions of the dominant discourse that legitimates power and lends religious credibility to Presidential policies. Both of these approaches are well represented across our data set.

As our longitudinal analysis across the five conflict periods shows (see Fig. 1), the peace movement responded to the religious discourse of George W. Bush with their own extensive religious rhetoric. Our "identity politics-religion code" is defined as "spiritual beliefs and/or religion as a means of organizing people to resist, including appeals to a person's

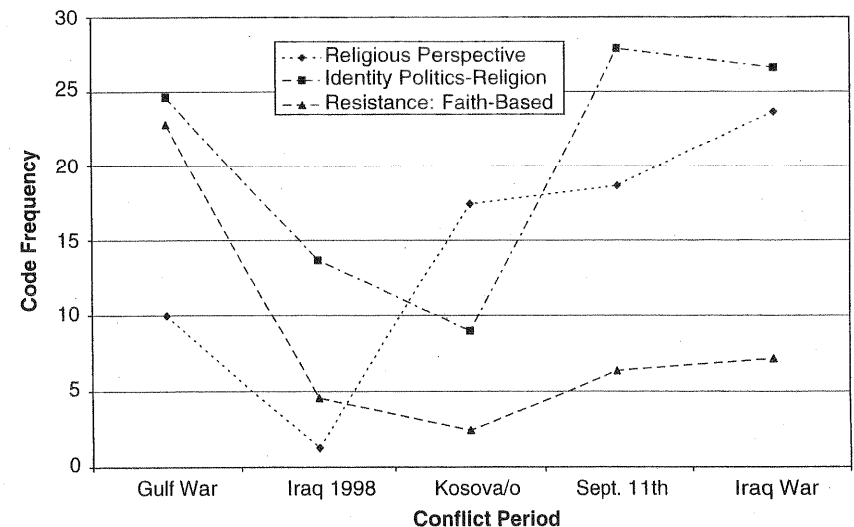


Fig. 1. Code Frequencies in PMO Statements by Conflict Period. Notes: Analysis based on weighted data controlling for differences in the volume of text between organizations as well as across conflict periods. Only data from the five PMOs issuing statements in all five conflict periods included (American Friends Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi, Peace Action, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom).

religious identity.” The movement’s use of religious discourses based on identity-politics was highest during the two periods associated with George W. Bush’s presidency (9/11 and the Iraq War), and was rivaled only by his father’s presidency (Gulf War). In addition, our “religious perspectives” code is defined as “articulation of a religious tradition and/or what its teachings say.” As Fig. 1 also shows, the movement’s use of a more generalized religious perspective discourse was highest during the Iraq War period, and comparatively high during the 9/11 period as well.

There were three primary ways in which the peace movement responded to Bush’s religious discourse and his enemy constructions during 9/11 and the Iraq War: (1) by challenging what was seen as divisive demonizing; (2) by harnessing the President’s self-presentation as a man of faith; and lastly, (3) by doing remedial education on Islam. We will treat these three approaches in turn.

DEBUNKING THE DEMONIZING

A few days after the beginning of the Iraq War, Mary Ellen McNish, the general secretary of the AFSC critiqued an invasion that it opposed on religious grounds. She put the Iraq War in the context of contemporary US political history by noting that the primary proponents of the war within the George W. Bush administration were hardline neoconservatives who had been deeply disappointed by the first Bush administration’s failure to depose Saddam Hussein during the earlier Gulf War.⁶ Their subsequent blueprint for US global military dominance, dubbed “The Project for a New American Century,” favored unilateralism over cooperation and partly tied the United States’ greatness to the degree to which others held it in awe and fear.⁷ These neoconservatives and President Bush utilized the moral shock of the 9/11 attacks to justify a newly aggressive, preemptive set of foreign policies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. The president’s much used terminology of an “axis of evil” is discursively emblematic of these developments.⁸ The AFSC chief harnessed the axis of evil discourse by dipping into the historic well of Quaker humanitarian service to redefine the nature of evil and the country’s true enemies. Here poverty, militarism, and environmental decay are labeled the true axis of evil about which all good-thinking Americans ought to be concerned.

When Americans cried ‘Why?’ in the face of 3,000 dead at the World Trade Center, they were offered a list of scapegoats, an Axis of Evil. They [the Bush administration

neo-conservatives] offered America their vision of what true safety required. They knew what they believed, and they spoke with great confidence. In opposition to this vision, Quakers and the other peace churches had another vision to offer. We saw the same facts, but the eyes of our historic witness made us see those facts very differently. Our experience tells us, and you may have heard me say this before, that the true axis of evil is pandemic poverty, environmental degradation, and a world awash in weapons. (American Friends Service Committee, March 27, 2003)

Shortly after 9/11, when President Bush’s rhetoric was most intense, some groups named and then directly challenged the President’s lack of distinctions and his ready reliance on binaries, as Pax Christi does here.

Right now across the Islamic world, innocent people are living in terror, wondering what President Bush may do to them. The President says, “We shall make no distinctions between the terrorist and countries that harbor them.” Shall a whole country be condemned for the actions of its leaders? (Pax Christi, September 26, 2001)

During the Iraq War, the FOR also took a challenging approach to the demonizing issue. In a statement titled “Torture in Iraq: No Monopoly on Capacity for Evil,” the interfaith group addressed the root causes of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US troops at Abu Ghraib. The FOR laid responsibility for the abuse at the feet of the President due to what the organization called his “cavalier” attitude and because of his “ongoing demonization of the Arab and Muslim world.” The FOR used the abuse to argue that facile distinctions between the enemy and US citizenry are fundamentally false and morally bankrupt.

The violence of the last few weeks [at Abu Ghraib by the US and in Fallujah by insurgents] throws light on an essential truth: The “enemy” holds no monopoly on evil and “our side” no monopoly on good. All humankind has the capacity to perpetrate evil and violence upon its fellows. All violence, whether depicted graphically in photographs and videos, or taking place anonymously, out of the camera’s range, is an affront to the God-given humanity of all. Americans now face the humbling task of asking themselves and their government how it could possibly have been in any nation’s interests to provoke such violence by invading and occupying a nation that never attacked us. (Fellowship of Reconciliation, May 14, 2004)

The US peace movement engaged the President’s demonizing language by challenging it directly from a variety of approaches. The Islamic group, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), took their challenge into the Washington, DC marketplace by hosting an interfaith memorial at the Capitol Reflecting Pool to mark the second anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. They framed this action as a direct “challenge [to] those who seek to divide America along religious or ethnic lines” (Council on American-Islamic Relations, August 28, 2003). In the passage below, the Black Radical

Congress (BRC) rejects the president's divisive approach not only on religious grounds, but also quite overtly on racial identity grounds. Note, too, how religious faiths of all persuasions are presumed to lead each believer to oppose the Iraq War.

The Black Radical Congress opposes the war against the Iraqi people and call on all black, brown, red, yellow, and white people (in short, the majority of the peoples of the world) to oppose this war. The attempts to use religion to divide the non Islamic peoples of the USA from the peoples of the Islamic faith must be opposed. Peoples of all religious faith and all spiritual orientation must call on their innermost powers to oppose the war. (Black Radical Congress, March 20, 2003)

HARNESSING A RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT'S DISCOURSE

When powerholders utilize elements of the dominant symbolic repertoire, including religious language and images, they open themselves to counter-challenges that harness the same language and images. In the example below, the FOR accused the President not only of exploiting religion, but also of engaging in an "extremist rhetoric" that was akin to none other than Osama bin Laden's. Here the peace group turns the rhetorical tables on the President by labeling him with the same language and enemy images that he painstakingly constructed in his own religious discourse.

The religious language used by the President (evil, God, US as the agent of God to give freedom to the world, and faith-based initiatives) attempts to claim righteousness for policies that disregard the public opinion of the world and the substantial moral objections of many Americans. This obvious manipulation of religion for political ends comes at a time when the overwhelming majority of US religious leaders have spoken out against the Administration's war in Iraq and have questioned the morality of such an aggressive policy. It is a direct parallel of the extremist rhetoric of Osama bin Laden, and is leading us in a very similar direction. (Fellowship of Reconciliation, January 30, 2003)

There is no question that George W. Bush's courting of the evangelical Christian vote through his overt expressions of religiosity – first on the campaign trail and later during his first term in the White House – reaped significant electoral dividends. What is too often overlooked, however, is the other half of this equation. As the president used religious discourse to his advantage and to promote his policy agendas, it made him and his policies vulnerable precisely on those same religious grounds. As the AFSC put it at the beginning of the Iraq War, "It is surprising that a man who says he is guided by faith has ignored the council [sic] of major religious leaders in this

country and internationally, who condemn this action as an unjust war" (American Friends Service Committee, March 21, 2003).

About two weeks following the invasion of Iraq, a coalition of religious groups including Pax Christi and the FOR organized a demonstration at the White House that featured the arrest of 68 prominent religious leaders. Pax Christi's press release on the arrests is rich with examples of the "harnessing hegemony" dynamic as the religious PMOs turned the moral demands of Christianity squarely back on the Bush administration. For example, although President Bush had frequently emphasized the "born-again" nature of his Christianity, he is actually a member of the United Methodist Church. Thus, Pax Christi strategically highlighted the words of United Methodist Bishop C. Joseph Sprague at a press conference just prior to the action, where the Bishop explained why he felt compelled to commit nonviolent civil disobedience at the White House. Pax Christi's statement also included Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton's moral condemnation of Bush's war policies in explaining why he too was arrested, along with a group of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates.

"The United Methodist bishops have sent four letters to the president and vice president, whom many of you know are both Methodists, seeking a meeting to discuss this war," stated Sprague. He went on to say that they only received "one terse reply" from the Bush administration and no meeting [Catholic] Bishop Gumbleton of Detroit, who traveled to Iraq in January, was among those arrested in Wednesday's action. "As people of faith and conscience, we proclaim that it is a grave sin to support this war," said Gumbleton. "We cannot stand silent while the Bush administration murders innocent men, women and children." (Pax Christi, March 27, 2003)

When President Bush scheduled an audience with Pope John Paul II during his 2004 reelection campaign, Pax Christi took him to task for ignoring the counsel about the war even while the President exploited his connections to those same religious leaders. Pax Christi released a statement in advance of Bush's Vatican visit highlighting the ways that Catholic religious figures worldwide were using the President's appearance with the Pope to ramp up their moral critiques of Bush's war. Pax Christi quoted far-flung Bishops and Cardinals who were each criticizing the invasion and occupation of Iraq from a religious perspective. They also called the President out for his selective use of religious teaching to further his own electoral needs.

President Bush should have used today's meeting [with the Pope] to offer explanations why the opinions of the world's religious leaders are ignored by himself and others in his administration ... Instead, what we see is blatant political opportunism, orchestrated to confuse US Catholics into thinking that President Bush is in tune with the principles of their faith. (Pax Christi, June 4, 2004)

Religious discourse is so deeply a part of the US culture that it is democratically available (Williams, 2002, p. 251), at least in the sense that one need not be a believer to use religious discourse and its powerful symbols. While we think there are credibility concerns – in that some are more able to use religious discourse more effectively than others – the point still holds generally true, as it also does when quoting historic religious figures. In fact, we found that secular groups also used religious discourse, especially by quoting historic leaders like Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. When PMOs challenge the state as it goes to war, the political deck is heavily stacked against them, thanks to the legitimated political closure that follows the decision to wage war. Rallying around the flag in the moment trumps attempts to discuss the long-range consequences of war. In such a game, activists find they are dealt a rather hapless hand, with few cards to play of consequence. But religious discourse – and the moral authority and the political legitimation that accompanies it – can help to level the playing table. And when the discourse is harnessed to especially hallowed and resonant figures like Reverend King, even quite radical critiques can be proffered.

For example, in a statement focused on the domestic needs going unmet due to the costs of the Gulf War, the secular group Peace Action used King's words to raise the issue of the spiritual health of the national soul: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death" (Peace Action, 1991). When President Bush laid a wreath at King's tomb on the national holiday devoted to him, the FOR called it a "cynical gesture" since his preemptive war to bring "liberation" to Iraq is contrary to what Rev. King taught. The FOR quoted King to the effect that history was cluttered with the wreckage of those who came killing in the name of liberation and peace. This is a clear example of our argument that when powerholders use elements of the dominant symbolic repertoire, it provides opportunities for challenging groups to hold powerholders accountable to the same standards that they used in their own discourses.

Similarly, in the passage below, the secular War Resister's League (WRL) reports on the arrest of 46 of its members at the US mission to the UN during the Afghanistan war, following a four-day series of presentations and training reflecting on the life of the religious leader:

Dr. King's dream of a just society has yet to be realized. As King said, "The greatest purveyor of violence is my own country" This is still true, and our collective conscience calls us to confront not only the violence committed on behalf of Americans, but also the institutions committing those acts. (War Resisters League, January 22, 2002)

Most Americans are resistant to the notion that the United States is the greatest purveyor of violence; it doesn't square with prevailing versions of national identity. Thus, this is never an easy argument to make. Making this point only four months after 9/11, the WRL risked easy rejection and self-righteous ridicule. Yet by standing behind the frock of the widely respected Reverend King, the WRL presumably prevented reflexive rejection of their argument.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION ON ISLAM

The third primary way that PMOs responded to the administration's rhetoric and to events in Iraq and the United States was to create what we refer to as "oppositional knowledge" (Coy & Woehrle, 1996; Woehrle et al., forthcoming). They did this by disseminating alternative information about religion in general and about Islam in particular. In addition, many groups emphasized constructive commonalities between religions, as CAIR did below:

Over the last few weeks, Americans of all faiths have been horrified by images of violence in the Middle East. The Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal does not represent America or Christianity. The Israeli missile that killed innocent Palestinian children in Gaza does not represent Judaism. And the beheading of an innocent American man, Nicholas Berg, does not represent Islam. Islam, Christianity and Judaism share the basic values necessary to create a world in which tolerance and peace prevail. We have an opportunity to build bridges between our faiths and to challenge those who attempt to divide humanity along religious and ethnic lines. (Council on American-Islamic Relations, May 26, 2004)

Already faced with the scapegoating of American Muslims five days after 9/11, CAIR offered the country oppositional knowledge by reminding the country of the significant contributions made by Muslims to the United States.

It was a Muslim who was the architect for the Sears Tower. Islam is the fastest growing religion in America and in the world. We are doctors, lawyers, engineers, mechanics, teachers, and store owners. We are your neighbors. (Council on American-Islamic Relations, September 16, 2001)

It was not just the Islamic group in our study that attempted to stem the tide of religious intolerance that intensified after 9/11 by creating oppositional knowledge about Islam. The AFSC, BRC, New York Labor Against the War (NYCLAW), FOR, and Pax Christi also offered the

country many lessons about Islam, as demonstrated by the example below from the FOR:

The religion of Islam, which claims more than one billion global adherents including eight to nine million within the USA alone, cannot be characterized as being "extreme" or "violent". Individuals who engage in acts of war against civilians violate the most sacred tenets of Islam. Muslims of all nationalities who reside in the United States vigorously condemned the events of September 11 and are actively involved in all aspects of humanitarian relief and recovery following this tragedy. (Fellowship of Reconciliation, September 19, 2001)

The taking of civilian hostages became widespread in Iraq in the summer of 2004, including some high-profile US hostages. In this shifting political context, the CAIR used its standing in the religious community to organize US Imams to issue a declaration – released at a Capitol Hill press conference – which condemned hostage-taking as a violation of Islamic beliefs and called for the release of all hostages in Iraq, no matter their faith or nationality. CAIR also launched an online petition drive called "Not in the Name of Islam" that was designed to disassociate Islam from the violent acts of some Muslims. CAIR hoped that Muslims would sign the ad and work to correct misperceptions of Islam and the Islamic stance on religiously motivated terror. Over 50,000 Muslims signed the petition within the first two weeks. As this excerpt shows, the strongly worded petition is a splendid example of a PMO creating oppositional knowledge, in this case about the nature of the Islamic faith.

We, the undersigned Muslims, wish to state clearly that those who commit acts of terror, murder and cruelty in the name of Islam are not only destroying innocent lives, but are also betraying the values of the faith they claim to represent. No injustice done to Muslims can ever justify the massacre of innocent people, and no act of terror will ever serve the cause of Islam. We repudiate and dissociate ourselves from any Muslim group or individual who commits such brutal and un-Islamic acts. We refuse to allow our faith to be held hostage by the criminal actions of a tiny minority acting outside the teachings of both the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. (Council on American-Islamic Relations, August 31, 2004)

The final way that the PMOs built bridges across faith traditions, provided remedial education on Islam, and challenged the President's dichotomous discourse was by organizing solidarity actions with the Islamic community. The religious groups in particular (AFSC, FOR, Pax Christi) made extensive use of this approach, urging people to study Islam, to visit Mosques, and to reach out in many different ways to American Arabs and to Muslims. We present only one example below – Pax Christi's call for acts of spiritual solidarity during the month of Ramadan. Note the subtle ways

that the PMO tries to lead its readers into creating oppositional knowledge by advising them on how to dive deeply into the spiritual riches of Islam. Here is a view of Islam that is radically different from the dominant one in the United States.

During the upcoming season of Ramadan, we want to show a gesture of respect and appreciation for Muslim brothers and sisters and to learn from them. We welcome an opportunity to be in solidarity with Muslims who rely on the month of Ramadan to help inculcate values of simplicity, service, sharing, compassion and mercy. We recognize the need for these virtues in our own lives. We invite you to join us in this effort of solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters, as a shared prayer and action for peace that depends on conversion from ways of injustice and reliance on war ... The intent of this call is to urge people to grow closer to our Muslim brothers and sisters through whatever gesture of solidarity they can make beginning October 26 and continuing through the following four weeks. (Pax Christi, October 11, 2003)

Offering a corrective to dominant understandings of Islam was only one way that some movement organizations developed their religiously infused oppositional politics in response to the religiously infused hegemonic discourse. Since war and peace concerns are oftentimes paramount for religious believers, we also wanted to understand the relationships between the religious discourses of the US peace movement during wartime and the construction of organizational identities. In addition, we investigated associations between religious discourse and the political tactics the peace movement promoted. We turn to this quantitative analysis in what follows.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND TACTICAL REPERTOIRES

McVeigh and Smith's (1999) US-focused survey research found that compared to the nonreligious, Christians were at least two times more likely to have engaged in institutional politics like lobbying rather than taking no political action. In addition, frequent church attendance was found to significantly increase the likelihood that individuals would engage in protest compared to institutional forms of politics. More specifically with regard to social movement organizations, some studies have found empirical evidence that religious and faith-based PMOs tend to support and engage in "unruly," noninstitutional forms of political engagement – including nonviolent forms of protest and civil disobedience (Epstein, 1990; Pagnucco, 1996; Nepstad, 2004). Finally, religion is frequently a highly salient factor in the development and refinement of a peace movement organization's

identity (Coy & Woehrlé, 1996; Smith, 1996, p. 380). Our analysis of the discourses of the US peace movement from 1990 to 2005 supports these findings.

Table 2 shows those codes that most frequently appeared within the same passage, i.e., paragraph, with our two primary religion-related codes: "religious perspectives," and "identity politics-religion." As explained earlier, religious perspectives are defined as "articulation of a religious tradition and/or what its teachings say." The identity politics-religion code is defined as "spiritual beliefs and/or religion as a means of organizing people to resist, including appeals to a person's religious identity." The first finding to take note of is the high concurrence of the "organizational identity" code with these two religion codes. This suggests that religious discourse is critical to organizational identity construction.

The code most associated with our "identity politics-religion" code across the five conflict periods (i.e., the code that most often appears in the paragraphs coded as identity politics-religion) was the "faith-based

Table 2. Frequency of Code Concurrence in Same Passage.

Coupling Codes	No. of Base-Code Passages	% of Base-Code Passages	No. of Base-Code Documents	% of Base-Code Documents
Base code – Religious perspectives				
Identity politics-religion	30	16.7	18	17.8
Organizational identity	22	12.2	20	19.8
Violence condemned: costs	17	9.4	15	14.9
Nonviolence supported	16	8.9	15	14.9
Civil liberties	16	8.9	11	10.9
Resistance: faith-based	11	6.1	8	7.9
Base code – Identity politics-religion				
Resistance: faith-based	65	26.1	38	32.5
Nonviolence supported	48	19.3	36	30.8
Organizational identity	37	14.9	33	28.2
Religious perspectives	30	12.0	18	15.4

Notes: Base codes are religious perspectives and identity politics-religion. For each of the base codes, 83 code couplings were examined. Results presented in the table are limited to code couplings whose number of passages or number of documents is two standard deviations above the mean for all code couplings examined. It includes documents from all five conflict periods. Only the five PMOs for which there is data for all five conflict periods are included (American Friends Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi, Peace Action, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom).

resistance" code. The latter code has to do with PMO calls for resistance to war activities, specifically resistance work that includes a religious faith component. The concurrence within the same paragraph between these codes was quite substantial, over 26%. The code that appears second most often with identity politics-religion across the five conflict periods is "nonviolence supported," which is defined as explicitly advocating for nonviolent action and conscientious objection. The concurrence within the same paragraph here was also substantial (over 19%). Equally important, if we look at concurrence within the same document, it is over 30% in both cases. The "nonviolence supported" code is also closely associated (from a comparative perspective relative to possible code-couplings) with the more generalized "religious perspective" code across the five conflict periods. The "faith-based resistance" and the "nonviolence supported" codes each relate to mobilization, more particularly with encouraging engagement in potentially costly, extrainstitutional politics to challenge hegemony, such as the civil disobedience at the White House profiled earlier in the paper. Consequently, these findings suggest an important role for religiously-based identity politics in mobilization efforts by the US peace movement.

The PMOs' general discourse (religious and secular) around nonviolent action and costly forms of resistance was wide-ranging. Across the conflict periods, the tactical repertoire promoted by the peace movement to directly challenge hegemony included: calls for and reports on demonstrations, pickets, pray-ins, various kinds of civil disobedience, breaking the embargo on Iraq by shipping humanitarian and medical supplies there, engaging in citizen diplomacy by traveling to Iraq, fasting and donating money saved to humanitarian needs, disruptions of events where high-level Bush administration figures would be appearing, boycotts, work stoppages, labor union refusals to transport war-related materials, women shaving off their hair in front of the Liberty Bell, vigils, war-tax resistance, conscientious objection, providing sanctuary for objectors and military resisters, die-ins, burning of tax forms, sit-ins and obstructions at military recruitment centers and congressional offices, delivering the names of those killed in war to the White House and to Dover Air Force Base, holding nonviolent action trainings, and more.

As the above list implies, engaging in nonviolent action may entail high risks for the affective, political, social, and financial dimensions of an activist's life. For example, social stigmatization and political ridicule can combine with lost wages for practitioners of nonviolent civil disobedience in ways that seriously dampen mobilization efforts. Identity construction,

validation, and appeals to a sense of belonging can help overcome these obstacles to mobilization. Strategically highlighting religious commitments and moral values to boost positive identification with being a nonviolent resister to the hegemony of violence was a common tactic for the faith-based groups, and was even used by some secular groups.

The religious PMOs for whom we have data for all five conflict periods (i.e., AFSC, FOR, Pax Christi)⁹ often tied their nonviolent action mobilization efforts directly to their religious identities, to those of their members, and even to the wider US public. In other words, they appealed to religious identities and sensibilities while trying to mobilize extrainstitutional forms of resistance to war and militarism. Pax Christi did this more often than any other group, and frequently fashioned its identity appeals to match the target audience and forms of contention requested. They were strategic about when they would use sectarian appeals, sometimes highlighting themselves as "Catholics," as "Catholic Christians," or as "followers of the nonviolent Jesus." However, when appealing to a larger audience, they often described themselves as "people of faith," or even more generically simply as "citizens," or as "people of good will."

Finally, it is useful to note that violence is tied to the hegemonic dimensions of US society. Violence is featured, if not lionized, in a majority of media formats from children's cartoons to video games to Hollywood movies to nightly TV news programs. With regard to international affairs in particular, it is commonly presumed that the United States has a wide-ranging right to use its violent might. When presidents wrap in religious garments their calls for war, a militarized economy, and civil liberties repression at home, the hegemony of violence is strengthened. In short, violence is culturally routinized and normalized and, therefore, difficult to directly challenge effectively. Equally important is the fact that violence is also normalized through its coupling with religious discourses that legitimate it. In the context of what is generally presumed to be a "Christian country," where Christian broadcasting on television and radio is ubiquitous and where the foreign policy utterances by Christian leaders like Reverend Pat Robertson and others are commonplace, it may become even more important for oppositional voices to respond to these religiously-based calls to arms. Peace activists must contest and redefine the meaning of religious identities much in the same way they contest nationalist identities (Coy & Woehrlé, 1996). Those who want to mobilize others must utilize cultural materials, themes, and collective identities – including religious identities – that have enough potency and resonance to stand against the powerful position of violence in the US culture. In this regard, and as our

final example, below Pax Christi attempted to harness none other than the symbol of Jesus Christ on the first day following September 11:

As people of faith and disciples of the nonviolent Jesus, we must be willing, even now in this darkest moment, to commit ourselves and urge our sisters and brothers, to resist the impulse to vengeance. We must resist the urge to demonize and dehumanize any ethnic group as "enemy." We must find the courage to break the spiral of violence that so many in our nation, we fear, will be quick to embrace.

We therefore call for restraint on the part of our nation's civilian and military leaders. The appropriate response to this despicable act is not a despicable act of violence in kind. Vengeance is not justice. The only kind of justice that will honor the memory of all those who lost their lives is a justice based on international law, not reckless retribution.

To follow the nonviolent Jesus in the midst of unimaginable violence is the call and the challenge to which we remain committed. (Pax Christi, September 12, 2001)

CONCLUSION

Religious discourse is a site of contentious politics. As the passage from Mark Twain's "War Prayer" that opens this paper suggests, and as our analysis of the Bush statements further demonstrates, religion is often put to work on behalf of the nation and of the state's war policies. Too rarely have scholars demonstrated the obstacles that religion in the service of hegemony presents for social movement mobilization. The political closure always associated with decisions to go to war makes added demands on PMOs. During war, it is difficult for oppositional groups to get a hearing, much less to have their alternative perspectives taken seriously and given credence.

Our findings clearly demonstrate that peace movement groups both harnessed and challenged hegemony through their own discourses, religious and otherwise. Our analysis of Bush's presidency showed his overt religiosity, his reliance on binary thinking, and his propensity to demonize a religious enemy. This research also demonstrates that when powerholders utilize elements of the dominant symbolic repertoire – including religious language and images – they open themselves to counter-challenges that harness the same language and images. The importance of this finding to theory-building in social movements scholarship is increased by its companion dimension, i.e., we show that even secular PMOs harnessed religious elements from the dominant symbolic repertoire. Harnessing the dominant religious discourse casts a strong moral spotlight upon powerholders. By exposing gaps between religious rhetoric and the actual policies

of powerholders, cracks in their wall of legitimacy are created and widened. The rich and malleable qualities of religious discourse were strategically used to confront the hegemony of violence in US foreign policy, to appeal to members and bystanders, and to provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and legitimacy marked by transcendent dimensions. In this way, our research demonstrates not only the strategic but also the expressive dimensions in social movement organizing.

PMOs also directly challenged Bush's reliance on binaries and the demonizing of a broadly defined enemy. Challenging binaries and creating shades of gray through education are major counter-hegemonic projects. This is particularly significant insofar as the moral certainty and religiously informed devotion to his and to the country's "calling" that so marked President Bush was a potentially perilous combination for the country, and even the world. Such a combination residing in the hands of the leader of the world's sole "superpower" may easily change an already problematic US exceptionalism into an even more problematic US adventurism in foreign affairs (Gurtov, 2006, p. 36.). We have also shown that PMOs harnessed the President's overt religiosity and his religious discourse and tried to turn the power of these symbols against the President and his policies.

In addition, we found that many of the PMOs constructed oppositional knowledge by focusing their statements on providing remedial education about Islam. For some groups, like the FOR, this was a dominant dimension of their statements following 9/11 and into the Iraq War period. We show that creating and disseminating oppositional knowledge is a vital aspect of the peace movement's counter-hegemonic project. This was done as a bulwark against both the real and the potential scapegoating of Muslims in the United States and elsewhere. We have identified and analyzed four forms of oppositional knowledge created by the US peace movement in work related to that presented here (Coy et al., 2008; Woehrle et al., forthcoming). The findings here suggest that more research should be done on why, when, and how different social movements create various forms of oppositional knowledge focused around religion. Equally important are our findings that US peace movement groups quoted familiar and authoritative religious leaders like the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and spotlighted the civil disobedience of Methodist and Catholic Bishops and Nobel Peace Prize winners to bolster movement positions and to increase the likelihood that the more radical of their critiques might enjoy some resonance among the general public.

We must also remember, however, that while even secular groups deployed religious discourses strategically, for the faith-based groups it was

often rooted in deeply held beliefs and principles that defined some of the organizations and their members. Our findings of the association of identity talk with religious discourses in the peace movement statements support this interpretation. Moreover, religious values and discourse were associated with support for engaging in extrainstitutional politics like nonviolent action, offering not only inspiration and motivation but also the potential of individually validated rationales. In other words, effective mobilization often entails linking identity to action, as in, "to be an authentic Christian during war, one must take risks while acting for peace." These findings suggest that religion may nurture sustained, disruptive challenges to dominant discourses. Religious PMOs appeared to put the agency of the individual activist in the political foreground, fostering an activism that might be uncommonly genuine and authentic in its meaning-making, and therefore have longer staying power as a challenge to hegemony than purely secular appeals to action.

Finally, we believe our research further suggests that peace movement discourse may, over time, influence civil religion itself. This influence will likely take the shape of transforming civil religion in ways that constrain powerholders rather than facilitating their agendas. In this way, the dominant priestly strain of US civil religion may be undermined while its dissenting prophetic strain would be strengthened.

NOTES

1. In the explanation of our theoretical framework that follows, we rely upon and draw directly from some of our other publications (including Coy, Maney, & Woehrle, 2003; Coy, Woehrle, & Maney, 2008a, 2008b; Maney, Woehrle, & Coy, 2005, 2008; Woehrle, Coy, & Maney, 2009).

2. Ronald Inglehart's World Values Survey data is available online at: www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

3. We have collected a large set of data. Although we utilize specific parts of that data set in different research articles, overall the data was collected, coded, and analyzed in highly similar ways for our various research papers and for our book. It therefore seems reasonable to write the methods sections of our different papers in similar ways. Consequently, some of the language in this methods section has also appeared in the methods section of our other publications that are based on parts of the same larger data set (Coy et al., 2003, 2008a, 2008b; Maney et al., 2005, 2008; Woehrle et al., 2009).

4. A listing of the codes used for the PMO documents and for the Bush documents, with definitions, is available from the authors upon request.

5. Nikolaev and Porpora (2007) examined 292 editorials and op-eds published during the two months preceding the Congressional authorization vote to use force

against Iraq in four leading mainstream newspapers (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Wall Street Journal*) and two leading news magazines (*Newsweek* and *Time*).

6. For an insider's view of the significant influence of the neoconservatives on G. W. Bush's policies, see former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill's account of Bush's candidacy and the early years of his presidency (Suskind, 2004, pp. 80–82).

7. This helps explain why the invasion of Iraq was dubbed by these same neoconservatives with the widely publicized code name, "Shock and Awe."

8. One revealing account of how the "axis of evil" terminology emerged within the Bush White House in the post 9/11 period attributes it to Michael Gerson, the Bush speechwriter primarily responsible for the President's State of the Union address four months after the attacks. Gerson, a theology graduate from religiously conservative Wheaton College, was a self-described evangelical Christian whom Bob Woodward reports found a way to fuse "biblical high-mindedness and the folksy" in many speeches he drafted for Bush throughout the months following the attacks (Woodward, 2004, pp. 86–87).

9. The Muslim group, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), was added to our data for the last two conflict periods: 9/11 and the Afghanistan War; and the Iraq War. Interestingly, CAIR made no mention of nonviolence whatsoever during either of the two periods, and there was only one instance of "resistance-costly" in both periods combined. This is likely due to two factors. First, among all the organizations in our data set, CAIR is the least oriented toward "peace" as a descriptor of its fundamental organizational identity, being somewhat more of a civil-rights-oriented organization. Second, CAIR's use of religious discourse was overwhelmingly (10 of the 12 passages in six documents) associated with teaching the media and public about Islam generally, and protecting Islam by correcting misperceptions about it more specifically (e.g., seven of the ten religious discourse-related passages had to do with disassociating Islam from terrorism). Since Islam is not part of the dominant symbolic repertoire and is widely disparaged by power-holders, CAIR had to be on the discursive defensive rather than the discursive offensive like Christian groups. Their statements are an instance of articulated assimilation, highlighting the facets of Islam compatible with religious elements of power-holder discourse.

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APPENDIX. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES

Note: Parts of these descriptions are taken directly from the organizations' self-descriptions on their respective Web sites.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) – Religious. Established in 1917 to address humanitarian concerns worldwide and to promote actions on peace and war. Affiliated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Data included for all periods.

Black Radical Congress (BRC) – Secular. Founded in Chicago in June 1998 with the objective of bringing together varied sections of the Black radical tradition to work for peace and justice. Data included for 9/11 and Iraq War periods.

Black Voices for Peace (BVFP) – Secular. Founded in 2001 as a national network of people of African heritage and others working for peace with justice at home and abroad. Data included for Iraq War period.

CODEPINK – Secular. Founded in 2002 as a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the war in Iraq, stop new wars, and redirect resources into healthcare, education, and other life-affirming activities. Data included for Iraq War period.

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) – Religious. Founded in 1994, it is now the mission of the largest Islamic civil liberties group in the United States, CAIR, to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. Data included for Iraq Bombing 1998, 9/11, and Iraq War periods.

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) – Religious. FOR-USA was founded in 1915 by religious pacifists in response to the outbreak of World War I. FOR is the largest and oldest interfaith peace and justice organization in the United States and is committed to exploring the power of love, truth, and nonviolent action for resolving human conflict. Data included for all periods.

MoveOn.org (Moveon) – Secular. Founded in 1998, MoveOn.org has two functional arms. One focuses on education and advocacy while the other mobilizes people online to fight important battles in Congress and help elect candidates who reflect progressive values. Data included for Iraq War period.

New York Labor Against the War (NYCLAW) – Secular. Founded at “Ground Zero” as the first antiwar labor body established in the United States after 9/11. NYCLAW is committed to opposing war, multiracial leadership, broad alliances, and democratic processes. Data included for 9/11 and Iraq War periods.

Pax Christi – Religious. Pax Chritis USA was founded in 1972 to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. It has four primary foci: primacy of conscience, economic and social justice, and respect for creation. Data included for all periods.

Peace Action – Secular. Originating in peace organizations founded during the Cold War (including SANE in the 1950s and the FREEZE campaign in the 1980s), the organization that would be Peace Action was formed in 1987, and then renamed again in 1993. Campaigns to end the nuclear threat, create a more peaceful economy, and apply nonviolent resolutions to international conflicts. Data included for all periods.

TrueMajority – Secular. Founded by Ben Cohen, cofounder of Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream. True Majority was started to compound the power of all

those who believe in social justice, giving children a decent start in life, protecting the environment, and having the United States work in cooperation with the world community. TrueMajority monitors politics in Washington and sends mobilization alerts through email networks. Data included for Iraq War period.

United States Labor Against the War (USLAW) – Secular. Founded in 2003 as a national network of 69 unions and other labor organizations opposed to the Iraq War, USLAW wants a just foreign policy for working people, an end to US imperialism, and the redirecting of resources from the military to human needs. Data included for Iraq War period.

Women’s Action for New Directions (WAND) – Secular. Founded in 1982 as Women’s Action for Nuclear Disarmament, the group was renamed Women’s Action for New Directions after the Cold War ended. It advocates for alternatives to violence and for shifting to a civilian-based economy that will meet human, economic, and environmental needs. The group also promotes the prevention of violence against women as well as increases in women’s political leadership. Data included for 9/11 and Iraq War periods.

War Resister’s League (WRL) – Secular. Founded in 1923 by secular pacifists who opposed WWI. Believing that war is a crime against humanity, the League works for a society that is democratic and free of economic, racial, and sexual oppression. The methods WRL uses range from education to demonstrations to lobbying to nonviolent direct action. Data included for Iraq Bombings 1998, Kosovo/a 1999, 9/11, and Iraq War periods.

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) – Secular. Founded in 1915 by women from warring countries to address the root causes of World War I and to redefine the notion of security. The group rejects war-making and military domination as the path to security and advocates the equality of all people in a world free of sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia, as well as the guarantee of fundamental human rights including the right to sustainable development. Data included for all periods.

Statements by Peace Movement Organizations Quoted in the Text

American Friends Service Committee, 2002, September 20. “Letter to George Bush.”

American Friends Service Committee, 2003, March 21. “AFSC Sees Hope in International Peace Movement Revitalized by Iraq War.”

- American Friends Service Committee, 2003, March 27. "No One Is Our Enemy."
- Black Radical Congress, 2003, March 20. "BRC Calls for Total Opposition to the War and for Renewed Resistance."
- Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2001, September 16. "Muslim Condemnations of the September 11 Attacks."
- Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2003, August 28. "Muslims to Hold 9/11 Vigil at US Capitol."
- Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2004, May 26. "US Muslims Publish Ad Denouncing Terror, Bigotry: Effort part of CAIR 'Not in the Name of Islam' Campaign."
- Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2004, August 31. "CAIR's 'Not in the Name of Islam' Petition."
- Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2001, September 19. "Talking Points: September 11, 2001 Terror Attacks."
- Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2003, January 30. "Talking Points: The State of the Union Address."
- Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2004, May 14. "Torture in Iraq: No Monopoly on Capacity for Evil."
- Pax Christi, 2001, September 12. "Pax Christi USA Statement on the Devastation of September 11th."
- Pax Christi, 2001, September 25. "Dialogue Starters: 'Talking Points' Toward an Alternative Vision as We Respond to Acts of Terror."
- Pax Christi, 2001, September 26. "Darkness Cannot Drive Out Darkness: A Pax Christi USA Call to Break the Cycle of Violence."
- Pax Christi, 2003, March 27. "Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, Religious Leaders Arrested in D.C. Action: Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Aimed at Stopping the War in Iraq."
- Pax Christi, 2003, October 11. "Ramadan 2003 Statement."
- Pax Christi, 2004, June 4. "Pope's Criticism of President Bush Should Not be Obscured by Medal Photo-Op."
- Peace Action, 1991, nd. "The Cost of the Persian Gulf War: Unmet Needs At Home."
- War Resisters League, 2002, January 22. "46 Arrested at US Mission to the U.N. Urging Changes in US Foreign Policy."