A Second Coming? Religious Rhetoric in Times of Existential Threat

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Abstract

Why have American and British political figures made different rhetorical choices regarding the use of religious language around existential threats? This paper hypothesizes that because religious salience is higher in the United States than in the United Kingdom, American political figures are more likely to use religious rhetoric to frame discussions of existential threat than their British counterparts due to a) a need for legitimacy from the public and b) the alteration of the conception of national values to fit population shifts. Based upon this argument, a combination of polling data and content analysis are used to understand the differing trends of religious salience in the US and the UK. Content analysis is then used to study the use of religious framing devices around the construction of existential threats in the US and the UK during the early Cold War. Specific, exemplary moments are studied where the existential threats posed by the Soviet Union were constructed by political figures to the public, drawing from primary sources primarily speeches from political leadership directed at a national audience. The conclusions found hold important implications for better understanding the use of religious language as a rallying tool, especially in times of high threat. They also provide greater a greater understanding of the influence that a society's religiosity has in determining political choices, even in the "secular" West.

Keywords: Religion, Rhetoric, Threat

1. Introduction

Politicians often use religious references in speeches in order to connect with a particular audience, which can be seen in the conveying of political messages across the globe. As religion is used to convey legitimacy and identity by religious extremists, foreign states such as Russia, and even US presidential candidates, the power, utility, and function of this type of rhetoric becomes increasingly important to understand. Following September 11, 2001, the West and its allies were critical of international terrorists for using religion to promote their cause. And yet, it is equally important to see how religion influences Western causes and Western speech as well, in spite of its "secular nature."

This paper analyzes the relationship between religiosity and political rhetorical choices in the United States and the United Kingdom by answering the question: why have American and British political figures made different rhetorical choices regarding the use of religious language around existential threats? I argue that because religious salience is higher in the United States than in the United Kingdom, American political figures are more likely to use religious rhetoric to frame discussions of existential threat than their British counterparts due to a) a need for legitimacy from the public and b) the alteration of the conception of national values to fit population shifts. This paper uses a neo-positivist comparative case study with content analysis of exemplary speeches to answer this question. The research concludes that religious salience levels, in particular, the levels of public and political religiosity, influence the frequency of religious rhetoric and its use to frame threats, what is threatened, and what is considered legitimate policy and that, in the US, this type of rhetoric has been used throughout the post-World War II era.

In this project, political figures refer to representatives of government, with a focus in this case on the executive branch. Rhetorical choices refer to the linguistic choices regarding lexical, grammatical, and cultural aspects of language and how they are positioned within speech. This is closely related to the concept of speech-acts established by Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde[1] that is elaborated upon in the literature review. Choice, in this sense, does not refer to the individual thought processes of the political figures. That is, the study of rhetorical choice is one of context not one of motivation, of what choices were available and socially recommendable. Religious language consists of direct language invoking God, a specific religion's belief structure, concepts or themes from a holy book, passages from a holy book and indirect religious discussions of faith or spirituality in a broader, overtly religious subtext. When religious rhetoric is referred to throughout this analysis, it is typically Christian religious rhetoric, given the two cases. An existential threat in this context refers to a threat to a state's sovereignty or existence both physically and economically as well as in terms of national identity; it can also manifest as a threat to a state's conception of international and national norms, or of their notion of "how the world ought to operate." [2] The main term requiring operationalization in the thesis is the independent variable, religious salience. This refers to the degree to which religion factors as an important part of a population's life. This can be measured from data on church attendance, tenets of belief, the popularity of certain religious figures, and the types of legislative decisions taken during the time period.

1.1 Case Selection

The US and the UK were chosen as case studies in order to focus on a subset of countries less analyzed within the literature on threat language and literature on religion. Additionally, they work well for understanding my hypothesis because, particularly in the post-World War II era, the US and the UK faced similar sources of external threat, due to their shared diplomatic and defense ties. Moreover, in an identity sense, the two are some of the most culturally-similar partners—at least from their own perspectives of themselves—of the major Western powers facing significant existential threats. While the US was founded on the basis of religious believers searching for more freedom to practice, its wider shared colonial history with the UK through governance, a sense of Providence, and the dominance of mainline Protestantism demonstrate a centuries-old historical connection. Since both states retained some level of significant influence in international affairs, the US as a hegemonic power and the UK as a "residual great power,"[3] the importance of understanding language around threat is particularly important for these cases.

This paper analyzes the period where the US and the UK began diverging in terms of religion, while also under a material and ideological existential threat: the early Cold War (1946-1960). The research I have conducted on the post-9/11 period is excluded from this paper to provide more in-depth analysis of the two Cold War cases, which are more crucial for understanding the starting point of a divergence that is more defined in the modern era.

1.2 Literature Review

There is an acknowledged dearth of research on the nexus between religion, threat, and politics within which this work is situated. Philpott[4] notes the rise in the number of works on religious following Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* and the dawn of the 21st century. But, he finishes by stating there is a need for more work on the political influence of religion. Many works examining religion tend to focus on its power in charity work or in radicalization, through non-state rather than state actors.

Similarly, there seems to be a general consensus within the literature that existential threats are a concept lacking adequate theoretical analysis. The most popular resource, especially among constructivist scholars, for explaining existential threats is given in the Copenhagen school's securitization theory. For an issue to be securitized, it must be "presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure"[5]. In their analysis of securitization, Buzan, Waever, and Wilde[6] address two other aspects crucial to the understanding of existential threats: referent objects and speech-acts. These referent objects do not have to be material. For instance, Crick[7], while looking at the War on Drugs, offers a referent object of morals and values. The referent object is important because it allows for the use of "existential threat" as a fluid, rhetorical tool. More specifically, this understanding of existential threat makes research into values-based rhetorical framing devices more necessary.

Thus, the notion of security as a speech-act becomes critical. Bosco[8] explains this notion, stating that "relevant actors, typically political elites, frame certain phenomena as a grave threat to something else deemed worth protecting." In other words, a speech-act is a rhetorical choice regarding how an issue is presented to the public, often for some ultimate leeway regarding out-of-the ordinary policy, as in the original definition of securitization. While

the state's perception of an existential threat often leads to the process of securitization to achieve particular policy goals, the *tools* employed increase the perception of existential threat within the public. By analyzing these specific "tools" and why certain types are used in certain contexts, this research builds on the literature of speech-acts.

Examining the central literature on threat perception in general and the perception of existential threats in particular could lead an individual to believe that different rhetorical choices derive from having different cultures or worldviews being threatened.[9] [10] And yet, this analysis fails to account for the substantial overlap between the US and the UK in this regard and to address the specific use of religiously-themed language in times of existential threat. Another possible answer derived from literature on threat and threat perception would be a state's need to "rally" its population and increase its legitimacy in times of controversial policy decisions.[11] And yet, while this explains rhetorical choices from an individual or possibly organizational perspective, it cannot, by itself, fully account for the wider context of allowable rhetoric or differences in what is legitimizing rhetoric and what is not. This work, by contrast, looks at this issue of context more directly and how certain rhetorical choices have become tools for legitimacy. Through looking at the connections between religious salience, legitimacy and national values, and then rhetorical choices, this thesis attempts to provide a more complete understanding of rhetorical contexts.

2. Methodology

Based on the nature of the question, this study uses a small-*N* comparative case study, using content analysis to analyze the frequency and application of religious rhetoric to pick out the major thematic usages of religious framing devices and references, and in the UK case, what substitutes appear. To study the broader trends of religious salience in the US and the UK, a combination of polling data and historical accounts are employed.

Generally speaking, threat perception in the Walt[12] sense has been tested in a structural neorealist framework with neo-positivist methodology. This can range from large-*N* data collection on conflict initiation to small-*N* case studies analyzing cases of threat perception and subsequent state response in specific countries during specific conflicts. However, because the perception of existential threats is dominated by Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde's[13] securitization theory, which focuses on speech-acts, studies based in this theoretical groundwork tend to use discourse analysis instead.[14] [15] Studies of the nexus between religion and security, while not always using discourse analysis, tend to share a preference for non-positivist methodologies seen in works under securitization theory.[16] [17]

In contrast to the approaches generally used with securitization theory and works covering religion and security, this research falls within the neo-positivist approach. This is because the thesis clearly outlines a relationship between the independent variable of religious salience and the dependent variable of rhetorical choices that can be tested within the existing world, from an objective perspective. From the work done in this paper, others will be able to replicate and validate my findings. The intention of this study is to demonstrate the existence of this relationship in these two cases, in order for predictive extrapolations to be drawn.

Focusing on a small number of cases allows a researcher to explore the nuances of these cases in more depth. In this research, the early Cold War US and UK serve as case studies. This improves the ability to account for the different components within each case, while also making the hypothesis testing easier, since the two countries are similar in both their religious histories and history of "Providence," their culture and Western liberal ideology, and their foreign policy goals in the post-World War II era.

Instead of using discourse analysis, content analysis is used due to the difference in dependent variable. That is, because rather than examining why certain phenomena become predominantly viewed as threats through examining discourses, I am specifically examining the actual implementation of framing devices through political figures' rhetorical choices. While also a textual analysis, content analysis focuses more on the use of certain devices within certain texts than how the combination of different texts leads to dominant lines of discourse[18]. This is makes it more appropriate to studying the use of religious framing around existential threat and understanding why these rhetorical choices did and did not materialize.

For this study, over 70 speeches from executive and legislative figures across the US and the UK were examined, looking for how a) state values were framed, b) policy stances were legitimized, c) the Soviet Union was othered, and d) how religious references were made to examine the strength of the connections hypothesized in the thesis. These speeches were gathered from online databases and records of legislative sessions and of presidential and prime ministerial speeches. To exemplify the broader trends observed throughout the research completed, this paper examines Inaugural Addresses, State of the Union Addresses, Farewell Addresses, and Leader's Speeches made within the timeframe since these a) are designed to reflect the broader standing of the state and its trajectories and b) are aimed to speak directly to the citizens of the state.

3. Data Analysis

In order to see 1) why religious language is seen as more of a legitimizing tool in the US and 2) why the referent object of state values has altered as a result of trends in societal levels of religiosity, religious salience is tested, then the effects of its legitimizing power and its influence on state values are explored by looking at rhetorical choices.

3.1 Religious Salience

In the early Cold War era, polling data, especially in the UK, was relatively limited and focused upon a few standard measures of religious salience. The ways in which data is measured in the US and the UK also does not perfectly align in terms of timeframe or variables. Nonetheless, these numbers are crucial in understanding the wider societal landscape during the time. Frequently, scholars measure religious salience quantitatively through church membership and church attendance. In the US, membership in a religious organization, is seen steadily increasing from 1940 to 1960, from 40% to 60%, with peaks in religious membership not being achieved until closer to the end of the century.[19] In the UK by contrast, Church of England membership fell by around 10% during the first half of the 20th cenutry.[20] Church of England Easter attendance in the UK peaked during the Edwardian era at above 6%, and while it experienced a modest rise in the 1950s, it never reached its former heights.[21] In the US, weekly church attendance peaked in the 1950s at 49%.[22]

   While attendance and membership are important, religious beliefs also provide a critical understanding of religiosity. Though Britain still had a religious majority in the early Cold War, the most commonly-held religious beliefs still were weaker relative to those in the US.

Table 1. Religious beliefs in the US and the UK during the early Cold War (1946-1960)

	United States	United Kingdom
Belief in God	96-99%[23]	67% men, 80% women[24]
Belief in life after death	68%[25]	49%[26]

   The development of evangelicalism played a significant role in the religious trajectories of the US and the UK during the early Cold War era. Statistically-speaking, evangelicalism was on the rise to encompass a large portion of American Protestants, though the same could not be said for the UK. And yet, the presence of evangelicalism was still noticeable within the country. Many of the Caribbean immigrants during this time were Pentecostal, and a wave of charismatic Evangelicalism did expand throughout the country.[27] Billy Graham's 1954 London and 1955 Scotland crusades brought in crowds of 1.9 million and 1.4 million respectively. However, only a dismal 2% of each crowd actually came forward, and following crusades failed to draw similar numbers.[28] By contrast, Graham continued drawing in audiences in the US through his crusades, publications, and media presence.[29] Financially as well, Graham's hold was stronger in the US. For instance, the 12-week London crusade cost approximately £170,000, which mainly came from donations to Graham's US-based organization or his US business connections; Britain only raised £1,236 in the UK.[30] Though Evangelism was a present force in the UK, it failed to maintain the staying power achieved within the US.

   Another way in which religion was able to maintain its strong presence in daily American life was through the political system of the time. Many scholars can point to 1954 as the definitive moment in the development of American civil religion, when "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance and "In God we trust" was adopted as the national motto.[31] However, political decisions during this time also worked to promote religious liberalism. Engel v. Vitale (1962) prohibited states from sponsoring prayers in public schools, a decision that would result in further decisions defending the separation of church and state within the education system.[32] And yet, Bruce[33] asserts that these decisions actually pulled Americans socially toward religion, becoming a rallying tool for evangelicals. By contrast, these decisions never occurred in the UK, and yet prayer in British schools faded into obscurity.[34] The decisions that were made in the UK around the same time period on divorce, abortion, and homosexuality echoed in their progressive nature, arguably more liberal than those made in the US. These decisions were largely supported publically, and thus less backlash permeated British society. Even in the face of objection, the government structures of the two states allowed for more special interest lobbying by religious groups in the US than in the UK, meaning that religiosity could maintain a more active political role in American life. Simultaneously, no attempts at establishing

a "British civil religion" ever materialized, leaving religion a largely private matter, while it was heavily integrated into both US public and private life.

Overall, the early Cold War era marks the first moments of significant distinguishability in the religious salience levels of the US and the UK. While the US and the UK, on the surface, experienced a measure of revival and decline in the 1950s and 1960s, revival was more pronounced in the US, while decline was more pronounced in the UK. Indeed, religion in the US regularized itself within mainstream American society, practice, and belief, and conservative, evangelical sects began to grow in dominance. By contrast, evangelism failed to stick in the UK, and the failure of the Church of England or the state to encourage religion predated the UK's slide into secularity.

3.2 Rhetorical Choices In The US

The United States during the early Cold War shows the most consistent and overt uses of religious framing devices in its understanding of threat. This makes it fairly easy to delineate from the content of these speeches how certain religious themes and narratives were used to legitimize the US and its policies and to forge religiosity into the national values threatened existentially during the Cold War. Throughout the early Cold War, religion was used as a means of expressing grief, strength, and peaceful purpose. It was also used synonymously with both America and the "free" world more generally, as a means of constructing identity and othering the Soviet Union.

Throughout Harry S. Truman's presidency, religious rhetoric frequently appears to characterize the US. One example of this is seen in the closing of his 1947 state of the union, where he concludes with "may the Lord strengthen us in our faith. May He give us wisdom to lead the peoples of the world in His ways of peace."[35] Three connections can be made from this closing: God, in Truman's rhetoric, provides strength, God guides American action, and God provides of peace. By equating God with these values and this sense of purpose, religiosity begins to characterize Americanism and justify American action that is in supposed support of God's vision. He echoes these understandings of religion throughout the rest of his major presidential speeches in the early Cold War, identifying God as the force that "gives us confidence as we face the challenge of years ahead"[36] and speaking of the "great tasks which He now sets before us."[37] While this religiously-fueled rhetoric was pervasive, the discussion of the Communist threat was less apparent in the years of Truman's presidency, which is why it is imperative to examine President Dwight Eisenhower.

Once again, it is important to note that while this analysis looks primarily at Eisenhower's rhetoric, the content analysis conducted here is not trying to investigate Eisenhower's individual thoughts. Rather, the aim is to understand the development and existence of certain contexts making specific rhetorical choices appropriate. Eisenhower's religious rhetorical choices existed prior to his presidency and continued throughout his time in office. In essence, through his 1953 inaugural address and his 1960 farewell address, Eisenhower bookended his presidency in prayer. He immediately began his first inaugural address by offering a private prayer asking for God to "give us the power to discern clearly right from wrong, and allow all our words and actions to be governed thereby, and by the laws of this land"[38] Through this statement, Eisenhower equates divine law with the laws of the United States, while also citing God as the driving moral reason behind American action. The rest of his prayer and his inaugural address continue to support these two roots of choice: legitimizing American decisions and actions through religious calling and equating Americanism with religious (i.e. Christian) values.

Eisenhower goes beyond just framing America to encapsulate the entirety of the international sphere: "We bring all our wit and all our will to meet the question: How far have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness toward the light? Are we nearing the light--a day of freedom and of peace for all mankind? Or are the shadows of another night closing in upon us?"[39] By posing this question as the central point of his inaugural address, he expands the religious imagery to encompass a global struggle between light and dark. He continues to emphasize faith as a way forward in this tumultuous time, claiming "we who are free must proclaim anew our faith. This faith is the abiding creed of our fathers," and furthering that "this faith rules our whole way of life."[40] By talking beyond just Americans to include all who are "free," he extends the connection between American political values and American religious values to the rest of the West, irrespective of their religiosity. This is further cemented when he calls "a lack of stanch faith" the "capital offense against freedom."[41] This is understandable given the global standing of the Communist threat, and yet by equating American values with those of the "free world," the referent object is able to maintain a distinctive religious flavor.

Beyond equating the moral position of the United States with the light in the dark, he also uses it to explicate the "strength and security…upon which rests the hope of free men everywhere."[42] In this sense, the faith seen in the US represents a form of Providence and divine purpose, while also embodying the strength and resolution that the US feels it must take on in its world role. This understanding of religion as a source of strength is also seen at the other

end of Eisenhower's presidency during his farewell address. He implores Americans to "be strong in our faith that all nations, under God, will reach the goal of peace with justice."[43] Interestingly, he combines the virtues of strength and peace to account for the role of religion in guiding Americans. As a semblance of both, religion thus legitimates the wider foreign policy landscape pursued by the US. Assisting this is the continued othering of Communism, declared "a hostile ideology, global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method."[44] A lack of religious faith is not only condemned as being equivalent to "ruthless" practice, but by delegitimizing decisions made in atheism, this othering also acts to support the legitimacy of acts made under the guidance of God. Moreover, the direct comparison drawn on religious lines further demonstrates the effect of religion on the understanding of American values under threat.

Just as Eisenhower started his presidency with a prayer, he finished it with one as well, praying for a future where "all who yearn for freedom may experience its spiritual blessings" and where "all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love."[45] Once again, the American (and wider Western) value of freedom is treated synonymously with religious faith, in that it yields "spiritual blessings." There is also a substantive emphasis on the prospect and future of peace, language which, by tying into a spiritual understanding of peace, adds legitimacy to the US role in the eyes of the American public.

Throughout his presidency, Eisenhower continued to use religious rhetoric as a way to legitimize himself, the country's position, and specific policies, while also using it to explain what was threatened by the Soviet Union. In all of his state of the union addresses, as well as in his second inaugural address, Eisenhower uses an overt religious framing device at the beginning and/or the end of his speech. Some of these framing devices center on the understanding of religion as strength. In 1954, he states it is our duty "to freedom itself to remain strong in all those ways—spiritual, economic, military— that will give us maximum safety."[46] Spiritual resolve is prioritized above more material measures of strength as the true bringer of safety.

Religious faith as peace also prevails in the rhetorical framing within Eisenhower's addresses. In 1958, for instance, he conflates the two by asserting the future belongs to the "Godfearing, peace-loving people of all the world."[47] He similarly does so in 1956 by conflating the peaceful nature of the US with the "spiritual vigor" of national life.[48] In 1954, he ends his State of the Union by defining the American goal as peace that requires religious guidance to be achieved, stating "so long as action and aspiration humbly and earnestly seek favor in the sight of the Almighty, there is no end to America's forward road; there is no obstacle on it she will not surmount in her march toward a lasting peace in a free and prosperous world."[49] By using religious language to support the American end-goal of peace, Eisenhower creates a path of legitimacy for subsequent actions.

The final key framing device used within Eisenhower's State of the Union addresses is the combining of religion with American livelihood, American foundations, and a call of Providence. He does this by othering the Soviet Union, as seen in 1958 when he speaks out against "the concept of the regimented atheistic state."[50] He also emphasizes the "God-given"[51] rights "endowed by his Creator"[52] derived from the founding fathers in 1959 and 1957 respectively, in a trend that exists widely across the 1950s rhetoric. In 1957, he even explicitly states "the Almighty" as the guiding compass of US decisions.[53] Eisenhower tends to follow his direct religious references to God, the Divine, and the Almighty with a call to action for the US, a duty to ensure and expand "freedom" across the world and to bring "light." This heavily providential language is part of what is under threat in the US and part of legitimating certain solutions.

3.3 Rhetorical Choices In The UK

In contrast to those in the United States during this same time period, political figures in the United Kingdom were substantially less likely to make direct or even indirect religious references when framing the Cold War. While othering certainly did occur, as did recognition of Christian civilization or the godless/devilish nature of a society, this was not nearly as pervasive as in the US. Indeed, it was even subdued in consideration of the levels of religious salience seen among the public during this time. Like the US, values of freedom, democracy, purpose, and peace were used as state values and as tools to legitimize courses of action. However, rhetorically, these values stopped there— without linkages to religious roots or roots in providence. Additionally, other values, particularly patience and unity, were embraced in UK rhetoric in a way separating them from the US.

In all of Prime Minister Clement Attlee's annual speeches, there are no references to a Christian interpretation of religion. Any religious rhetoric that is used treats democratic socialism as a type of faith. In a sense, the type of rhetorical devices used by American figures in religious contexts are being employed by Attlee, but are being used to bolster a socialist rather than Christian way of life. In the closing of his first Leader's Speech as Prime Minister, Attlee (1946) states, "I stand here with this experience of government to reaffirm my faith in democratic Socialism. We will never sacrifice the liberties won by our forefathers."[54]

Attlee's association of "faith" with Socialism continues not only within this closing, but throughout the rest of his Leader's speeches. Attlee praises his party saying that "we are not ashamed to proclaim ourselves a party of idealists inspired by a living faith in freedom, democracy, and social justice." In 1947, he champions "Socialist faith—the faith that has carried us to power after years of striving, the faith that can remove mountains, the faith in the common people, the faith that we can build a world of peace, a world of justice, a world of freedom, a world of happiness for all. In that faith, we shall conquer".[55] In 1948, he calls this "Socialist faith" "a way of life".[56] These sentiments are continuously echoed and embedded into all of his subsequent speeches. In 1951, his last Leader's speech, he expressed his party's "fervent spirit for the reign of righteousness on earth.[57] He even tied this back to religiously-typed words, saying "we are a great crusading body".[58] For Attlee, British values—through the people electing his party—transform into Socialist values, which rhetorically equate to the US values of freedom and peace. But in the US, these values connect to a different understanding of national identity, a religious one. By praising these values with religiously-coded words, Attlee can better convey their supposed ubiquity and moral command. In a sense, religious references do act to justify these values, but they do not connect to actual religion as in the US case. The theoretical linkage of religiosity to legitimacy remains intact, but without connective tissue to religion, the UK diverges from the US.

Unfortunately, none of Winston Churchill's Leader's speeches are available within the databases and online archives that were searched for this paper. However, an understanding of Churchill's rhetoric can be garnered from his "Never Despair" speech before the House of Commons in 1955. Two religious references were made explicitly. In one instance, Churchill othered the Soviet Union saying that "the whole world is divided intellectually and to a large extent geographically between the creeds of Communist discipline and individual freedom."[59] However, his reference to "creed" is more abstract and easier to interpret as ideological, in the sense that "creed" could be applied to the Labour values espoused by Attlee. Admittedly, Churchill also references the "Christian duty" of "rescue, salvage, and ambulance work" in the speech, though this reference is not tied to any framing of threat and stands as the only religious connection made to British values or livelihoods within Churchill's speech, made during this time of religious revival and heightened Communist threat.[60] Instead, Churchill tends to focus on rhetoric promoting resilience and freedom seen best in the closing of his speech, where he says "the day may dawn when fair play, love for one's fellow-men, respect for justice and freedom, will enable tormented generations to march forth serene and triumphant from the hideous epoch in which we have to dwell. Meanwhile, never flinch, never weary, never despair."[61]

Religious rhetoric was somewhat used as well by Prime Minister Anthony Eden in 1955, who noted:

> it is likely that any Government which today has far-reaching ambitions in an imperialist sense will say to itself 'better go slowly,' or, in the words of the Persian proverb: 'Patience is from God and haste is from the devil.' And if the world has learned only that in this year of grace 1955, it deserves a friendly mark in history.[62]

In advocating a patient approach, Eden refers to a religiously-themed saying in order to support his outlook, complementing it with the "year of grace." But, in contrast to a standard American speech in this time frame, this is the only mention of God, faith, or grace in both 1955 and 1956. And the mention is not explicitly designed to counter the Soviet Union not is it designed to characterize British life. Eden, like Attlee, fails to significantly other the Soviet Union to begin with. While he mentions the country in 1955, he does not demonize them. In 1956, he makes one negative comment toward the Soviet Union, but uses othering as a tool to justify his stance on colonialism, contrasting British colonies "with countries taken over by Communism, the Baltic States, for instance. There the silence of dead night descends".[63]

In an international context, the same patterns continue to be seen. Eden focuses on "peace in the modern world" as a pinnacle value, and uses it to justify further defensive buildups[64]. It is simultaneously framed as what is at-risk in the world, the "peace" of Western life. Domestically, Eden changes the narrative to highlight particular values defining the British way of life. With the arms race in full swing, he spends most of his time praising "innovation," "inspiration," and "imagination" and the "willingness to sacrifice…in the wider interests of the nation's good".[65] Together these drive British purpose and British duty; devotion to duty defines British character.

Macmillan continues in the trend of subdued or entirely lacking references to religion. In 1957, in his closing framing, he references religion in order to emphasize the value of pursuing and upholding "principles" and "duties."[66] He states, "every man comes into this world alone. He goes out of it alone. Although the life of man on earth is spent in a community, to which each man owes obligations, fundamentally he is a single, individual soul, alone before his Maker".[67] This represents a wider trend in the UK in which when religious references are made, they are tied to passive religious forces, rather than the active hand of God in day-to-day life. This probably derives from the less active role of religion in individual's lives and in the philosophy of religion's role (i.e. in the UK by this point, Providence had been relatively abandoned).

Not only was a more passive understanding of religion referenced by Macmillan, but one particular mention seems to perfectly describe the relationship between religion and British life. When discussing political choice by the British people, Macmillan said:

> They have to decide, moreover, partly on hard practical grounds - what will best suit their material fortune and prosperity - and partly, if I may be allowed the word, on spiritual grounds, on what best suits the ideals and ambitions that they have for themselves - aye, their children and their fellow countrymen - their country.[68]

In essence, Macmillan cautiously and indirectly approaches the spiritual nature of the British public. Though Britain was not as religiously salient as the US during this time period, there was still a minor boost in religiosity. This supports the finding that this boost did not lead to the mixing of religion with politics as in the US. Instead, the exclusion of religion in Britain from politics decreased the space in which religiously-themed comments could be made. That is, religion has less legitimizing power and had not been publicly codified into civil national identity.

With previous Leader's Speeches, there has been relatively little othering, which could explain why religion was not used as a part of British values in a Copenhagen School context. However, Macmillan did other the USSR, without doing so in a manner that invoked British values as religious values. Past Leader's speeches had zero to one mention of Communism; in 1957, Macmillan's speech mentioned it 17 times and Soviet(s) 6 times. He refers to the struggle as one "between good and evil," though without any other religious invocations it is difficult to necessarily code "evil" as "evil" in a biblical sense.[69] He positions Communism as "a challenge to freedom…both at home and abroad," mentioning propaganda and intimidation tactics.[70] In 1958, he condemns Communist propaganda that "preaches freedom and practices slavery".[71] Through this dichotomy, freedom acts as the referent object.

He further paints Communism as a dividing force, giving the UK an obligation to "help our friends all over the world who are in danger".[72] Macmillan adds a value of being "realistic," which he uses to attack his political opponents, though he also embraces this value through his economic criticisms of Communism and his discussion of policy details regarding responses to the USSR.[73] In this way, Macmillan embraces established British values to legitimize his policy choices; they are realistic, they promote unity.

The strong linkages apparent between religious salience and the legitimizing potential of religion and between religious salience and national values are broken in the UK case, even in the 1950s. The links between legitimizing tools and national values and threat rhetoric are all intact. But instead of legitimacy linking back to a sense of religious purpose, it links back to purpose defined by other British or Western values, such as unity, patience, or realistic outlooks or nothing whatsoever.

4. Conclusion

In many understandings, the US and the UK are similar cases. Both used values such as freedom or peace as the referent object under threat from the Soviet Union and as a national value worth defending, though each country also emphasized other values related to their history and political positioning during the time (i.e. strength as opposed to unity). The US and the UK also both used legitimizing tools to advance policy and used national values to improve domestic solidarity. But because religious salience was lower in the UK, the linkages between religiosity and legitimacy or national values were mostly severed in the British case.

Three primary differentiations exist between the US and the UK: public and private religiosity vs. just private religiosity, an active God vs. a passive God, and direct religious references vs. indirect religious references. With higher religious salience in both public and private life in the US, religious references are more acceptable and hold more utility. Because God has an active role in the US understanding of religion, the type of rhetorical choices—such as the links to Providence—differ from those in the UK where even when God is invoked, He is invoked as a passive force. Finally, in the US both direct and indirect references to faith, spirituality, and religion commonly occur; in the UK, the indirect references occur more often than direct references, which are almost entirely abandoned by political figures even in the 1950s. While the lower levels of religious salience relative to the US explain this well, these specific conclusions about the type of rhetoric used and the aspects of salience which appeared to have a more prominent relationship matter in the wider context of religion, rhetoric, and threat.

As with the US case, there is overlap between legitimizing tools and national values in the UK. This is due in large part to how referent objects function under the Copenhagen school. That is, a referent object under threat helps to "securitize" a particular issue or country, which gives legitimacy to more extreme policy actions. In cases of existential

threat, material risk is not the only factor; national identity and way of life are concerns as well, which was the case during the Cold War. Thus, the broken link between religiosity and the referent object in the UK reflects a break between religion and national identity. While a religious national identity can also be legitimizing, religion can be legitimizing in its own right without being tied to national identity in a definable manner. Nevertheless, religion is not used in many overlapping cases nor in more isolated cases of legitimizing in the UK.

The data analysis supports the initial hypothesis by showing how the higher religious salience levels in the US link with legitimacy and state values in a way that generated religious rhetorical choices in more direct and more frequent ways compared to the UK. However, religious rhetoric appeared less often in the UK than may be expected with the frequency of religious membership and the majority beliefs in basic religious tenets. This likely come downs to the extremely low levels of public religious salience, that is, the fact that religion was not a part of public, political life in the UK.

In the additional research conducted on the post-9/11 era, a time of further religious divergence, American and British values remain centered around peace, freedom, strength, and unity. International norms and laws also appear in this timeframe to legitimate action and characterize values in the UK. The use of religious rhetoric continues in discussions of threat, and while not as overt as during the early Cold War, connections to Providence, the direct guidance of God, and American nature are forged where they are not done so in the UK to legitimate action and to define national identity. Overall, this continuity raises further questions toward the understanding of the US as a secular nation and highlights the ability of religion to characterize threats in a way that influences thoughts toward policy.

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