# Proselytism Games and Humanitarian Aid


## Michael D. McGinnis

Department of Political Science
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana 47405



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### Abstract

When proselytism and humanitarian assistance are combined, this connection is always controversial and sometimes covert. Although they may seem to be distinct activities, each partakes of a similar strategic logic: both are undertaken by faith-based organizations (FBOs) for their own purposes, both can generate external effects on governments and other political actors, and both elicit government efforts at manipulation that can, in some instances, escalate into diplomatic tensions or international conflict. To what extent can faith-based diplomatic incidents be said to originate in strategically sophisticated behavior on the part of FBOs? This paper begins to specify an extensive-form game model of strategic interactions among FBOs involved in proselytism and/or humanitarian aid, their state sponsors (typically the USA), and governments in areas in which these activities take place. Illustrative examples of different configurations of interest and strategic calculation in faith-based diplomatic incidents are discussed.



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# Proselytism Games and Humanitarian Aid

The ongoing efforts of Christian missionaries to spread their faith to all corners of the world occasionally generate diplomatic disputes between the United States and public officials from the countries in which these operations are taking place. Some tensions directly result from host government efforts to restrict the activities of American missionaries or other faith-based organizations (FBOs); others emerge more indirectly through missionary ties to programs of humanitarian aid or development assistance managed by international faith-based service organizations. In this paper I lay out a theoretical framework that portrays government-FBO relations as a game of strategic interaction.

The first section introduces four recent instances of "faith-based diplomatic incidents" that were triggered by the activities of Christian missionaries and/or aid workers. Section 2 locates this paper within a broader research agenda on strategic interactions between the agents of religious and political organizations, with particular reference to international conflict. The third section begins the contextualization of the examples discussed earlier by surveying the wide array of potential spillover effects into the political realm generated by the self-motivated activities of faith-based organizations, along with potential government responses to these external effects, both those considered by the United States and more explicitly discriminatory or coercive options that other governments might implement. In addition, faith-based organizations responses to political efforts to manipulate their incentives are also considered. A brief fourth section outlines alternative explanations to my emphasis on the strategic sophistication of national governments and international FBOs as rational actors. Finally, in Section 5 a game model is defined that might encompass all these forms of interaction. Since the particular game model developed there may be too complex to serve as a template for further research, the paper ends with some suggestions about which next steps seem likely to prove most fruitful in the further elaboration of this research program.

## 1. Examples of Faith-Based Diplomatic Incidents

Many examples of diplomatic incidents triggered by the intimate connections between humanitarian aid and proselytism could be used to motivate this analysis. Four of the most noteworthy cases from recent years are:

1. In August 2001 the Taliban (then in power in pre-9/11 Afghanistan) arrested and convicted two Texas women, Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer, along with some other aid workers, for illegally engaging in proselytizing activities (Caldwell 2001). These members of the independent Antioch Community Church in Waco had originally gone to Afghanistan under the auspices of the German aid organization Shelter Now, but they also distributed some Christian books and videos. The rescue of these women in November by Northern Alliance forces received high-profile coverage in the U.S. media, and these aid workers/missionaries were deemed worthy of a personal meeting with President Bush in the White House.[1]

2. In April 2003, as the U.S. military prepared to occupy Baghdad, Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse and other U.S.-based aid groups admitted that they hoped to contribute to the reconstruction process by converting locals to Christianity, which they felt would make Iraqis more amenable to democratic governance (Blumenthal 2003, Lampman 2003, O'Keefe 2003a). This hope was quickly disavowed by Bush administration officials, and the programs in question discontinued. Still, the damage was done, by reinforcing Muslim suspicions that a pro-Christian agenda inspires U.S. policy in the Middle East (Loconte 2003, O'Keefe 2003b, Rogers 2003, Waldman 2003).

3. After the December 2004 tsunami, Indonesian officials protested that some aid organizations were including Bibles in aid packages and intimated that some groups caring for orphans sought to convert their charges to Christianity (Casey 2005, Rohde 2005). World Help was the aid organization charged with engaging in this nefarious

[1] See http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/images/20011126-1.html.

plot, although they denied it was any different from previous programs and even compared themselves to the actions of Mother Teresa (Casey 2005, Cooperman 2005). In any event, this particular program was discontinued or even denied (Sipress 2005). In a nice piece of ironic justice, some Islamic aid organizations soon began distributing copies of the Qu'ran with their aid packages (Casey 2005).

4. In April 2006 Afghan officials charged with a capital offense Abdul Rahman, an Afghan citizen who returned to the country long after he had converted to Christianity. After subtle pressure from the U.S. government, Rahman was declared mentally unfit to stand trial and allowed to leave the country. This case is of particular interest in the current context because Rahman had converted "while working as a medical aid worker for an international Christian group helping Afghan refugees in the Pakistani city of Peshawar" (Cooney 2006).

Many more such cases are reported on a regular basis in *Christianity Today* and other news outlets that target evangelicals and other Christian groups, but these four events are unusual in the extent of coverage they received from mainstream media. They differ along significant dimensions, particularly the nature of their relationship to official U.S. policy at the time.

The Curry-Mercer case brought a human face to the then-emerging confrontation between the U.S. and the Taliban. The Iraqi case conveys the strong impression that at least some elements of the U.S. government might be pursuing a close working relationship with evangelical Christian groups.[2] Once it became publicized, however, it damaged U.S. efforts to win friends in the Islamic world. The tsunami case has a much more tenuous link to official U.S. policy, and yet the bad feelings it generated resonated with deeply held suspicions of the increased involvement of Christian missionaries in all parts of the Islamic world (Innovative Minds 2005). Finally, the Rahman case exposed the Afghan regime as caught between its American patron and the policy preferences of its own people. The Rahman case also demonstrates that long time delays may intervene between an act of humanitarian-related proselytism and the resulting diplomatic crisis. Although I have been unable to determine which aid organization Rahman had worked for near the end of the ill-starred Soviet intervention in

[2] On this relationship in general see Ahmed 2005, Blumenthal 2003, Green 2001, Mead 2006,

Afghanistan, many of these organizations combine service delivery with efforts to expose aid workers and recipients to Christian messages.

None of these events proved critical in determining ultimate policy outcomes. Still, they are symptomatic of an under-recognized source of potential tension in international relations. In this paper I step back from these controversies to examine a broader strategic logic that is likely to generate more such tensions in the future, especially given the currently high salience attached to inter-religious tension in today's world.

Globally, evangelical and Pentecostal variants of Christianity grow, often despite resistance from local governments and cultural elites. Ultimately, most faith-based diplomatic incidents originate in the unceasing efforts of some Christian groups to spread their message throughout the world.[3] Although their motives may be exclusively religious in nature, the consequences of their actions can have dramatic political effects, either immediately or after long delays. Other faith-based organizations, from a broader array of religious traditions, engage in far-flung operations to provide emergency humanitarian relief to people suffering from natural disasters or political violence. [4] Here, again, the primary impetus is religious, with more directly obvious consequences in the political realm. In a similar fashion, other faith-based organizations engage in programs to further an agenda of peace, social justice, and sustainable development.[5]

A complicated array of religious organizations and secular human rights groups combined to exert pressure on the U.S. Congress to pass the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) in 1998 (Hertzke 2004). This act established two entities (an independent commission and an office in the State Department) charged with reporting on violations of religious freedom committed by all governments in the world (except, of course, the USA itself!). Each year's State Department report generates understandably negative reactions, [6] especially from "countries of

[3] The dramatic growth and transformation of Christianity into a truly global religion is documented in Freston 2001, Gifford 1993, 1998, 2004, Jenkins 2003, 2004, 2006, Pierce 2003, Robert 1994, 2000, 2002, Sookhdeo 2005, Witte 2000, Witte and Bourdeaux 1999.

[4] For analyses of FBOs in international humanitarian relief and development assistance, see Alkire 2001, Anderson 1999, Belshaw et al. 2001, Berer 2003, Dicklitch and Rice 2004, Hansen and Twaddle 2002, Hearn 2002, Kniss and Campbell 1997, Lindenberg and Bryant 2001, Manji and O'Coill 2002, Marshall 2001, 2005, McCleary 2004, Nichols 1988, Thomas 2004.

[5] For analyses of faith-based organizations involved in peacemaking and peacebuilding activities, see Appleby 2000, Cox and Philpott 2003, Helmick and Petersen 2001, Johnston 2203, Johnston and Sampson 1994, Pierson 2001, Schirch 2005, Smock 2002, Tutu 1999, USIP 2001.

[6] For initial analyses of controversies associated with IRFA and other reports concerning religious freedom in Russia, China, India, and Islamic countries see Berman 1998 and Witte and Bourdeaux 1999, Potter 2003, Cozad

particular concern" singled out for their failings in this area of human rights protection. Each report runs to hundreds of pages, giving plenty of opportunity for hurt feelings. On the other hand, given the many sources of potential tension between the U.S. and other governments, accusations included in these particular reports rarely made the headlines of mainstream media. Nonetheless, human rights activists can take some comfort in the fact that violations are being regularly documented in this way.[7] Earlier proposals had included the stipulation that violations would automatically trigger the imposition of economic sanctions, but that proved too controversial. Still, the publicity generated by these official reports promises to maintain the public profile of these issues, which are in any event regularly publicized by media outlets within the evangelical Christian community.

## 2. Does Strategy Matter?

In this paper I step back from these examples to examine the overall logic of the strategic interactions between the agents of religious and political organizations. This paper lays out an initial framework, one that I plan to later flesh out in explicit formal models of religious-political games. Here I intend to demonstrate that each of these cases manifests, in distinct ways, the same underlying strategic logic operating through common patterns of preferences and outcome expectations (provided my basic presumption of strategic interaction is valid).

This paper is part of my ongoing effort to encompass major patterns of religious-political interactions within a single, coherent analytical framework (McGinnis 2004, 2005, 2006a,b). Fundamental to these models is my presumption that faith-based organizations, for their own reasons, engage in activities that generate positive or negative external effects on specific political organizations or on society more generally. Political agents respond by seeking to manipulate the incentives of FBO agents so as to enhance positive effects and discourage continued generation of negative externalities. As will be shown below, however, their efforts to

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2005, and Fore 2002, respectively. For more general analyses of these issues, see Danchin 2002-03, Gunn 2000, Hertzke 2004, Richardson 2004, Smolin 2000-01.

[7] For examination of the debate within the human rights community concerning the relative importance of religious human rights, see Durham 2001, Grim 2005, Grim and Finke 2006, Gunn 2000, Hackett 2003, Hertzke 2004, Lauren 2003, Lerner 1998, Marthoz and Saunders 2005, Nurser 2005, Richardson 2004.

manipulate FBO agent incentives are hampered by fundamental aspects of FBOs as organizations and the nature of their strategic interactions with political organizations.[8]

I draw upon an extensive body of research applying rational choice theory to the study of religious belief, behavior, and organization.[9] Much of this research focuses on competitive interactions among different religious organizations. Stark and Finke (2000) provide a useful compilation of hypotheses from this literature, all derived from a common logical structure. Briefly, the expectation is that all available niches (as defined by different constellations of consumer tastes for religious products) will be occupied by appropriate religious organizations,[10] as long as there are no externally imposed restrictions on the formation and promulgation of new faiths. Researchers in this tradition of the rational choice analysis of religious markets have examined the consequences of a competitive marketplace in religion, as well as other macro-level patterns in relations between political and religious systems at the national level. My contribution lies in extension of this tradition of research to patterns of micro-level strategic interactions between diverse religious organizations and political entities. [11]

I discuss more of the analytical preliminaries in my previous papers, especially McGinnis (2006b). Here it suffices to say that an organization is religious or faith-based when its leaders (or more technically those acting as agents of their constituent principals) have been socialized into the expectation that they should pursue specifically religious goals that can not be directly reduced to political power, economic wealth, or social status in this world. Whether or not they as individuals derive utility from these non-tangible goals, they realize that their followers expect certain behavior from them, and their actions must comport, to some degree, with these expectations if they want remain in that role.[12] The specific content of this second dimension of utility need not be defined for its effects to be demonstrated.

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[8] For an insightful analysis of the inherent difficulties political leaders face when manipulating the incentives of religious leaders, see Volume Two, Book V, Chapter 1, Article 3 of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*.

[9] For reviews of the rational choice literature as it applies to the study of religion, see Iannaccone 1998; Beckford 2000; Demereth et al. 1998; Legee 2003. Stark and Finke 2000 and Gill 2005 are especially useful syntheses of this literature.

[10] See Figure 5.2 in Chaves (2004: 147) for a fascinating graphic portrayal of the range of worship elements characterizing major Christian denominations in the U.S. context.

[11] For macro-level analyses, see especially Gill 2005, Grim and Finke 2006, Jalen and Wilcox 2002, and Stark and Finke 2000. Ekelund et al. (1996) focus on the medieval Catholic Church as an organization, but its unique status as a transnational governance institution makes their analysis difficult to generalize to other patterns of inter-organizational relations. For other approaches to the organization of religious organizations, see footnote 15 below.

[12] In this formulation I attempt to integrate the standard mode of rational choice with the "logic of appropriateness" as laid out by March and Ohlsen (1984, 1989). In addition, this second dimension of utility is inspired by the delta

Religion has its own dynamic logic, in the sense that faith-based organizations grow and decline, split and intermingle according to their own underlying logics. The operations of faith-based organizations need not have any direct impact on politics or on society as a whole. However, certain kinds of their efforts tend to have political effects that rarely proceed unnoticed by the powers that be.

Two sets of motivations are particularly influential within most religious movements, albeit with different emphases and salience for different movements at different times and locations. In the first place, many religious faiths seek to grow, to convince others to join with them. Second, individuals inspired by religious faith are often especially attuned to the needs of the most disadvantaged members of their society, even those living halfway across the world. This second motivation inspires an endless stream of activities directed at providing assistance to the poor as well as, in some circumstances, political activism directed towards improving their rights or helping end the violence or other conditions that cause these victims so much pain and suffering. In many circumstances, these two motivations complement each other, since people who are down on their luck are often good candidates for conversion. However, proselytizing activities are broader in scope, and are not limited only to the recipients of faith-based social outreach or political mobilization campaigns.

Prominent among positive externalities are benefits that disadvantaged groups receive from the assistance offered them by disinterested religious actors. Charities and other programs run by faith organizations provide a certain level of public services, for their own reasons and without any encouragement or compensation by political agents. Recipients of faith-based assistance benefit from the existence of these programs. Society as a whole may also be said to benefit, in the sense that more people can be confident that help will be available for them should they need it at some future date. Providing such assurance is one of the public goods that government officials are expected to provide. For the most part, then, faith-based service outreach conveys positive externalities both to actual and potential recipients and to public officials. If state officials are not inclined to help certain disadvantaged groups, however, they may remain indifferent or even hostile to FBO programs of assistance. Typically, however, the reaction is positive. On the donor side, tax breaks are routinely provided to charitable activities,

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parameter used by Crawford and Ostrom (1995) to express the intrinsic costs and benefits associated with complying with or violating valued norms or rules.

as a means to encourage their activities. In addition, public officials (at the local, state/provincial, or national levels) may involve themselves in direct partnerships with faith-based service organizations, in hopes of taking advantage of their complementary strengths.

When faith-based organizations move beyond the delivery of immediate assistance to engage the poor and disadvantaged in political activism on their own behalf, however, reaction from public officials is likely to be less positive. On the other hand, some political entrepreneurs may see these activists as potential allies in their own efforts to achieve power or to implement reforms.

Negative externalities are most clearly expressed in the aggressive proselytism of believers eager to share their understanding of the spiritual world with non-believers or with believers of rival traditions. As usual, negative externalities generate especially sensitive political controversies. The very nature of conversion is to remove an individual (or even an entire community) from one social context or belief system and insert them into another. Those left behind will feel aggrieved, as exemplified in the intensely negative reaction of family members when one of their own joins a fringe cult. If, in addition, the group from which the convert was removed is well-connected to political or religious authorities, then agents of their respective organizations are likely to take active measures to discourage this form of proselytism.

Proselytism-driven politics can take many different forms, depending on the configuration of relations among proselytizers, their targeted group, other religious organizations, and political authorities in both home and target countries. A comparable range of diverse responses is elicited by those faith-based organizations engaged in the delivery of humanitarian relief or development aid as well as those mobilizing on the behalf of marginalized or victimized peoples. Ironically, none of these activities may have been initially inspired by any explicitly political agenda. The key point is to realize that efforts directed solely at goals defined within a faith tradition may have external effects on political processes and actors that result in policy partnerships, partisan struggles, or international confrontations.

Although patterns of policy partnership, partisanship, and proselytism are analytically separable, in practice one form can morph into another. The experience of international humanitarian aid organizations (HAOs), many of which are related to particular religious traditions, is instructive. Although humanitarians may see themselves as apolitical, they are dealing with a situation in which some political forces benefit from violence or continued unrest.

Humanitarians have lately become acutely aware of this dilemma, as concerns mount that their efforts to help refugees and other victims of war or civil unrest can, in many circumstances, contribute towards the continued operation of the conflict system.[13]

## 3. Broader Contexts for Faith-Based Diplomatic Incidents

As noted above, the starting point of my analysis is the realization that actions of a diverse array of faith-based organizations can generate externalities that affect segments of the political world, either for ill or for good. In response, public officials have an opportunity to try to encourage religious leaders and organizations to increase those activities seen to generate positive externalities and to discourage actions that generate negative ones. Of course, their evaluation of these externalities need not correspond in any systematic fashion to the effects originally intended by leaders or members of the relevant faith-based organizations.

Religion has been said to have had many effects on political processes. Table 1 organizes many of these effects into six rows. The first two rows deal with the indirect effects of primarily apolitical aspects of religious belief, behavior, and participation on individual believer-participants and on their faith community as a whole. Rows 3 and 4 deal with the direct political effects of actions inspired by a mix of religious and political concerns. Specifically included here are activities that result in short-term externalities (such as faith-based contributions to welfare policy) or longer-term and more subtle effects on public morality as a whole (as in civil religion). The final two rows concern instances of the direct participation of faith-inspired individuals or faith-based organizations either as prophetic critics of the status quo or as more "ordinary" special interest groups seeking to use the political apparatus to achieve their own goals.

The second and third columns of Table 1 list common reactions to each of these characteristic forms of behavior. Each type of behavior can have positive consequences for some political actors as well having a negative impact on the interests of other political actors. These external effects, for good or ill, are precisely what inspires political leaders to try to channel the

[13] For controversies within the humanitarian aid community about appropriate priorities and programs, see Anderson 1999, Fowler 1999, Lindenberg and Bryant 2001.

behavior of faith-based organizations, with each political leader trying to encourage behavior that has positive benefits and discourage behavior with more negative effects.

As shown in the final column of Table 1, a remarkably wide range of policy responses are available to political leaders seeking to manipulate the incentives of religious leaders and the members of faith-based organizations. For the purposes of this analysis, it is useful to split this political response into two components. In the first place, the U.S. government may encourage or discourage certain organizations from engaging in particular practices. U.S. public officials are limited in how blatantly they can manipulate religious organizations, because of the widespread perception of a wall of separation between church and state. However, many organizational ties cross this "wall," with respect to both domestic policy (Ammerman 2005, Chaves 2004, Wuthnow 2004), and international humanitarian and development aid (Nichols 1988, Kniss and Campbell 1997, McCleary 2004). U.S. officials are also restricted by norms against any infringement of religious freedom, which sharply restricts the range of policy options available for their use. Still, officials can determine what types of proselytizing activities are not appropriate for federally funded programs of international humanitarian aid or development assistance.

Secondly, public officials from those countries where the programs are implemented can themselves act to encourage or discourage these same programs. Many of these governments face considerably fewer constraints on the application of policy options, including coercive ones, to religious organizations. Indeed, some governments enjoy quite close relations with the representatives of particular religious traditions, and may naturally be expected to protect that relationship by limiting the actions of rival religious groups. Since the U.S. and other governments may have very differing interests in play, there are likely to be situations in which their policies act at cross-purposes, thus setting up the potential for diplomatic confrontations.

I realize that some readers may deem such an explicit statement of overt political manipulation of religion as inappropriate or even disturbing, but I argue that such manipulation is commonplace, and that policy analysts must come to appreciate the extent to which religious organizations have already been incorporated within governance structures operative in many places throughout the world. Table 1 was originally prepared for use in my undergraduate course

on Religion, Politics, and Public Policy,[14] and as such it includes more points than can be reasonably discussed in the confines of this convention paper. Briefly, tax breaks for charitable contributions and other financial incentives are typically relevant only for the behaviors that result in the delivery of social services (a matter of some controversy as illustrated by the Charitable Choice provisions of the 1996 welfare reform bill and Pres. Bush's subsequent Faith-Based and Community Initiative.) Analysis has focused instead on the practical implications, if any, of channeling additional public monies through congregations, faith-based charities and related organizations. When it comes to international humanitarian aid or development assistance, officials of governments on the receiving end may be especially eager to craft means to incentivize external donors to offer funds to their own local allies rather than to groups that are less supportive of the government in power.

Symbolic policy instruments prove more relevant to efforts to selectively reinforce some aspects of a religious tradition so as to strengthen civil religion. Controversies over the proper role of religious beliefs and values in public education fall under this category. Legal and regulatory policy instruments can be used to encourage or discourage proselytism, through such seemingly innocuous means as requiring all religious organizations to register all the way to more draconian measures such as assigning differential legal rights to members of different religious faiths. Finally, more explicitly political measures are used to reward coalition members for their support at election time, although in most instances such rewards fall short of actually turning power over to religious leaders. Still, theocracy is not unknown even in today's world. As noted below the figure, establishing a theocracy and other policy instruments enclosed in square brackets [] are not likely to prove feasible in the specific context of the United States, and yet each has been utilized by one government or another.

A further complication is that the leaders of the faith-based organizations themselves can respond to these incentives in many different ways, and should be expected to react in ways that further their own interests or the interests of their organizations, as they interpret these interests. For our purposes, three forms of FBO responses are especially important to consider.

First, response may come in the form of revisions of the organization itself or even the establishment of separate organizational entities better positioned to take fuller advantage of

[14] Syllabus at http://php.indiana.edu/~mcginnis/y249syl.doc. An earlier version of this table was used in a course focused on rational choice models of religion, see http://php.indiana.edu/~mcginnis/relig/syl_shrt.doc.

financial incentives. This incentive may well be a critical foundation of the common distinction made between faith-centered organizations (such as congregations and other entities focused almost entirely on forms of worship) and faith-based service organizations engaged in the delivery of practical services. Transaction cost considerations are also relevant here, since it may make sense for members of different congregations to combine their efforts in practical service delivery, even in the absence of external rewards to doing so.[15]

In addition to forming new organizations in order to more effectively respond to government incentives to deliver aid programs, faith-based organizations can also pursue programs of mobilization or duplicity.

The point of the mobilization option is to encourage the intervention of other political groups or actors, ones who do not share the same interest as the ones doing the manipulating in the first place. News media may be used to awaken political leaders or their constituent groups to the unfortunate conditions under which they are forced to operate. Faith-based and secular humanitarian aid organizations may publicize the human rights abuses perpetrated by officials who divert aid supplies or who even rely on external aid to provide for the basic needs of their own citizens whom they want to force out of especially attractive regions of their own country. Here the relative ability of faith-based organizations to mobilize support becomes a critical variable. Their capacity to do so can often be quite impressive, as in the campaigns for the protection of international religious human rights detailed in Hertzke (2004). In other cases, especially for minority religions with no connections to political patrons, efforts to mobilize external support may fail miserably. The case of the IFRA mobilization is misleading in its scope, for there are many more instances where the parties involved in a particular instance try to convince American officials to espouse their cause and to press the other governments involved to release or rescue individual missionaries or to loosen restrictions against their activities in that country. It is this more targeted form of mobilization that has the potential of moving particular disputes further along the escalatory path.

The final option, duplicity in the sense of creative law-breaking on the part of the faith-based organization whose behavior a government is trying to restrict, is less well-known. An FBO engaged in humanitarian assistance, for example, might try to bypass government

[15] Contributors to Demerath et al. 1998 offer several alternative interpretations of organizational aspects of faith-based organizations. Other useful perspectives include Allen 1995, Cowan 2004, Ekelund et al. 1996, Lipford 1992, Mao and Zech 2002, K. Miller 2002, Smith and Sasin 2001, Sullins 2004.

restrictions by channeling aid through the rebel groups fighting the government, or to focus on supplying refugees camped in neighboring countries, and thus outside the control of their own government. FBOs facing unwanted restrictions on proselytism may find covert means of spreading the gospel, by presenting themselves as business leaders or aid workers. This strategy is known in the missionary literature as tentmaking or creative access to unevangelized peoples living in restricted access countries.[16]

It may be impossible to accurately gauge the extent of hidden proselytism, but my suspicion is that it is this strategic response that serves as the most likely source for potentially explosive diplomatic incidents. In any event, the reality of its occurrence helps locate specific crises in a broader context. Christian activists may have a point about the frequency of anti-Christian persecution around the world (Shea 1997, Boyd-MacMillan 2006), and yet their own actions generate plenty of reasons for public officials to be wary of hidden proselytism. Even subtle forms of proselytism, such as the way in which Abdul Rahman was converted in Peshwar so many years ago, can have long-delayed and yet dramatic effects on global politics.

## 4. Alternative Explanations

This generic sequence of initially isolated religious activity generating external effects that invite responses by political officials or entrepreneurs, which in turn induce strategic responses on the part of some religious leaders or entrepreneurs[17], generates diverse patterns of strategic interaction across the religion-politics divide.

This same sequence of events could be applied to other potential sources of diplomatic tension, and indeed similar sequences of disputes and escalations are common in all areas of foreign policy. In this paper I locate potential "faith-based diplomatic disputes" within this broader context of international politics and interest group (or advocacy coalition)

[16] Tentmaking refers to the practice of the early Christian leader Paul in supporting himself by making and selling tents in the early stages of his ministry to peoples in different parts of the Roman Empire. Today's tentmakers may be engaged in a wide range of activities, including tourism or education. See Barnett 2005a,b, Pierce 2001, Pocock 2005. Bergner 2006 is an influential article that brings an insightful perspective to today's missionaries.

[17] For application to innovators in religious faith, behavior, or organization I use the term *religious entrepreneur*. This term seems more appropriate to me than "religious actors" motivated "to uphold, extend, or defend" a religious community (Appleby 2000, 9) or "religious brands" jostling for increased market share (Grim 2005).

mobilizations.[18] My research question focuses on the extent to which the tools of game theory can be used to untangle the outcomes likely to be observed in different sets of circumstances.

My initial suspicion is that strategic calculations are involved at every step along the way. By strategic calculations I mean that actors deciding upon a course of action explicitly take into account the likely responses of other actors, and the ways in which their own choices are likely to shape the responses of other actors and thereby determine the ultimate outcome. Game models are specifically designed to elucidate the conditions under which different outcomes emerge from such a process of strategic interdependence, in which outcomes that are differentially valued by participants are determined by the joint combination of their actions (Schelling 1960).

In this paper I start the process of setting up an explicit game model of this process of strategic interaction. Before doing so, it is useful to specify the most plausible alternative hypotheses, to suggest other and perhaps simpler explanations for these same outcomes.

Let me posit two variant alternatives, focused respectively on the behavior of the faith-based organizations and governments involved. Although application of strategic calculation to the behavior of national governments engaged in a diplomatic "chess-match" may seem natural, it is not so common to attribute a comparable level of strategic sophistication to faith-based organizations. It may instead turn out that leaders of the FBOs involved are taking actions under the inspiration of their mission, as they understand it, without paying much if any conscious attention to the likely political consequences of their actions. In some cases this may be a sufficient explanation of the behavior of FBO agents, but not always. I remain convinced that many successful leaders of faith-based organizations are quite adept at the Machiavellian arts of strategic maneuver. In the gathering together of such a disparate collection of forces to pass the IRFA, particular leaders demonstrated a great facility with exactly these kinds of skills (Hertzke 2004). My presumption is that evidence of a comparable level of strategic sophistication are likely to be forthcoming in other aspects of government-FBO relations.

The second alternative explanation shifts attention to the governments involved, and to their overwhelming internal complexity as well as the grand scope of issues they must confront on a regular basis. Large organizations may be able to choose effectively on those matters of most direct strategic importance to their own survival, while in other areas they may continue

[18] For overviews of these related research literatures, see Mueller 1997, 2003; Shepsle and Bonchek 1997; Sabatier 1999, Scharpf 1997.

instead to follow previously established procedures or habitual practices. For those issues of primary importance, it may indeed prove reasonable to treat national governments as if their policies (in that one policy area) are selected by a unitary rational actor (see McGinnis and Williams (2001). But can religious policy honestly be said to reach that level of importance? If not, then rational models of strategic interaction should be expected to be of limited value.

Consider the examples with which this paper began. On rare occasions, specific incidents of the arrest or murder of individual missionary/aid workers or the expulsion of FBOs receives extensive coverage in mainstream media outlets. At this point, the importance of strategic interaction between national governments becomes apparent. Most of the time particular crises are swept under the rug, as noted in the repeated use, in the concluding section of nearly every country entry in each year's State Department report, that "The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its policy to promote human rights."

This alternative explanation presumes that the overall strategic context of the diplomatic relations between the respective national governments is the determinative factor in the resolution of disputes. Each of the four examples listed at the beginning of this paper illustrates a different configuration of interests exhibited by the United States and the other government involved, which I describe as the Target Government (TG). Technically, the targets of proselytism and the beneficiaries of humanitarianism are people being ruled by that government, but the government officials involved have good reason to feel that they too are targets, even if only indirectly.

Efforts to spread Christianity as part of the Iraqi reconstruction program might have seemed like a good idea to some neoconservative advisors, but when the operations were revealed it proved to be a terrible embarrassment. For many Iraqis and Muslims elsewhere, this incident reinforced stereotypical fears of Islam under siege, and it helped undermine the credibility of any regime later established under U.S. auspices.

When it comes to the uproar concerning planned abduction of Indonesian Muslims orphaned by the tsunami, there was no way to put a positive spin on it. For local officials, this incident again reinforced suspicions of Western aid agencies and helped mobilize opposition to any effort to undermine Islam as a basis for social order.

The Rahman case was a disaster for all involved. An Afghan regime so dependent on U.S. support could hardly allow this legal case to carry through to its logical conclusion, namely,

the execution of an Afghan citizen guilty only of having converted to Christianity. No U.S. government could allow such a tragedy on their watch, not by a regime rightly seen as subservient to U.S. control. And yet by reinforcing perceptions of its external dependence, this incident seriously threatened the domestic legitimacy of the Karzai regime, which was none too secure in the first place. Both governments wanted the case to just go away, so it is not surprising that some way was found to evade a mutually destructive outcome.

Perversely, the Curry-Mercer case served the interests of both sides in the diplomatic incident. The Taliban benefited by demonstrating to their supporters the seriousness with which they interpreted their own laws, and the Bush Administration enjoyed a public relations windfall.

In summary, these cases illustrate situations in which both the U.S. and the target government benefited from the diplomatic incident, or neither did so, or in which the U.S. suffered costs while the targeted government (or at least some elements thereof) benefited.

For examples in which the targeted government suffers some costs while the U.S. government obtains some benefit, especially in terms of domestic support, we must turn to the annual reports on international religious freedom that the U.S. Department of State is legally required to compile. These massive reports document U.S. concerns with particular instances in which Christians (and members of other religious groups) suffer violations of their human rights to worship as they choose. In some cases minor forms of sanctions are applied in response. For example, once Eritrea was identified as a "Country of Particular Concern" in 2005, the U.S. imposed sanctions on the sale of police equipment, except what might be used by that government in the war against terrorism (US Dept. of State, Eritrea Country Report 2006). In other instances, as in Sudan, similarly toothless sanctions were added to those already in place for other reasons. Overall, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the primary purpose of these reports and their detailed descriptions of U.S. responses is to try to demonstrate to those U.S. citizens most concerned by these issues that their government takes these issues seriously. This documentation effect is particularly notable for the carefully nuanced descriptions of controversial incidents that have occurred in Western European countries or other US allies.

Overall, then, diplomatic incidents related to the missionary and/or humanitarian activities of faith-based organizations can occur within a wide array of diplomatic relationships. They can serve as an unwelcome *diversion* from the primary purpose of alliance or good relations, either among equals or where the U.S. dominates the relationship (Afghanistan). Other

cases can prove to be an *irritant* to generally good relations, where neither side really wants a full confrontation (India, Russia). Faith-based diplomatic incidents can also serve as an *excuse* for escalating poor relations (Iran, Sudan) or as a potentially dangerous *provocation* between strong rivals or potential enemies (China). Any one case has the potential to escalate, should that prove useful to one side or the other.

In summary, alternative explanations could be built on the following assertions:

1. FBOs operate with little or no concern for the political consequences of their actions; their leaders are instead primarily concerned about achieving the mission goals set forth by that organization.
2. In the area of religious freedom issues, government choices are subsumed under broader strategic options deemed more important; thus we should not expect policy decisions in this one policy area to make sense on their own, but only as a by-product of choices made for other reasons regarding other more salient issues.

My assertion, to the contrary, is that strategic effects abound in interactions between national governments and the officials of FBOs engaged in transboundary operations. To develop this argument, it is first necessary to specify the component parts of a game model of government-FBO relations: the actors, the main choices available to them, and their preferences among feasible outcomes. Beginning to do so is the task of the next section.

After the model is specified and its implications under different sets of conditions determined, the next step required is to identify those situations under which non-obvious forms of strategic effects are most likely to be manifested. If some observed outcomes make sense as stable equilibria in the game model, and yet are difficult to explain using one or both parts of the alternative model outlined above, then we would have strong evidence of strategic sophistication in government-FBO games.

## 5. A Game Model of Proselytism and Humanitarianism

Figure 1 defines the game model used in the remainder of this paper. Three actors are involved, a faith-based organization (FBO), the U.S. government (USA) which is presumed to act, in some instances at least, as the ultimate protector of the FBO under threat from the actions of some other government, which is here called the target government (TG), since it constitutes the ruling regime in charge of the area where the FBO's potentially controversial activities are conduced.[19] The game begins when externalities are generated by a faith-based organization. Since these externalities have their origins in activities inherent in the operation of that FBO, there is no need to consider the option of it not generating externalities.[20]

We presume that, before any government intervention, FBO activities will have some combination of proselytizing and service effects. These externalities pose a choice for both governments. In Figure 1 the USA is presumed to act first. Its decision to fund or not fund a specific FBO will be affected by the relative mix of proselytism and service delivery in their planned programs. Since the primary purpose of US aid is to support practical improvements in development or in the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid, any associated dabbling in proselytism poses potential costs. After all, a funding relationship necessarily implies a significant level of commitment and support for that FBO.

Even without government funds, if FBO operatives are US citizens, a certain degree of enmeshment is inevitable. However, the focus of the present analysis lies on cases in which humanitarianism might be combined with some forms of proselytism, under conditions of an explicit contractual relationship for service delivery. Just because the US government decides to award a contract only for the delivery of public services is no guarantee that the FBO will avoid all taints of proselytism in the implementation of a government sponsored program. In addition, there may be cases in which proselytization is welcomed by the U.S. government, or at least by certain elements of a particular administration.

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[19] None of these organizations can be accurately described as a unitary rational actor, but for purposes of analysis each can be treated as such, at least as a first approximation. A few of the most pertinent complications entailed by their deviations from this idealized assumption are discussed below, with further complications deferred to subsequent research. For further discussion of my interpretation of the uses and limitations of this unitary rational actor assumption in related models, see McGinnis 1991, 2000b.

[20] At this point the FBO's role in the game is similar to that of Nature in incomplete information games, but later the FBO does makes strategic decisions of its own.

This uncertainty poses a problem for the TG, which cannot be sure of the extent of the US commitment to all aspects of the program enacted by any single FBO. This uncertainty is denoted by the dashed line connecting the two nodes at which TG makes its first choice in the game. Technically, these two nodes are included in the same information set, since TG cannot tell which node is actually being manifested in any one play of this game. It can, however, typically determine whether a program is supported by US government funds, so TG's other decision node remains separate from this information set.

In general, any government's response to specific activities of faith-based organizations can take one of three generic forms: (a) support/encourage/reward, (b) allow/ignore, or (c) resist/discourage/punish/repress. Here we assume that the TG feels potentially threatened by FBO activities, in which case the first option is hardly plausible. Thus, in Figure 1 TG is shown to choose between allowing these activities to continue, thereby accepting the negative externalities generated by FBO programs, or employ some means to discourage the actions responsible for these negative effects (see the options summarized in Table 1).

If TG imposes restrictions, the FBO must choose whether to accept these restrictions as a cost of doing business, so to speak, or to evade or undermine these restrictions. Here is where the mobilization and duplicitous proselytism options come into play. If no actions are taken by FBO agents in violation of local laws or sensitivities, then the game ends at that point, with an FBO dutifully obeying all local laws.

We are especially concerned here with cases in which FBO violations of local laws or cultural sensitivities come to the notice of public authorities in the target country. If officials choose not to respond in any overt fashion, then, as shown in Figure 1, they have effectively acquiesced to what amounts to violations of their own sovereignty.

The action starts, so to speak, when public authorities arrest or do other harm to an individual FBO operative or fail to protect them from violent acts committed by its own citizens or by expelling the FBO from the country entirely. At this point the USA re-enters the game. How will US leaders respond to these attacks on the security of its citizens and/or on the operation of programs it has chosen to fund?[21]

[21] Technically, it may be necessary to interpose another choice node before the US responds to a particular act of TG repression, to designate whether or not mainstream news media organizations choose to pay attention to this event. As noted above, there is an active array of Christian media sources which routinely cover all instances of persecution against individual Christians or their organizations, but very few instances receive sufficient public

It seems reasonable to presume that this US decision will be affected by the extent of its support as demonstrated in its previous decision to fund that program. At base, there is a minimal initial predisposition to protect American citizens abroad, but that inclination can be overcome in instances in which the individuals in question were involved in illegal activities or, especially, in actions that reflect poorly on US interests in the region. Should the US choose to espouse the cause of the persecuted individual or threatened organizations, a full-blown faith-based diplomatic incident shall have commenced.

*Applying Backwards Induction to Faith-Based Diplomatic Incidents*

This completes the game of this generic model of US and TG responses to FBO-generated externalities. At this point we must impose specific assumptions concerning the preference orderings of each actor for these outcomes. For the purposes of this paper it is not necessary to associate all outcomes with particular numerical representations of utility; instead a few general presumptions suffice for this preliminary analysis.

FBOs most prefer outcomes in which they can carry on their activities with minimal interference from either government. The target government, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with obtaining resources that it can use for its own purposes. Thus, if the original activity had positive externalities (as is typically the case for humanitarian relief), TG is likely to most prefer the outcome in which aid suppliers are co-opted into allowing significant levels of aid diversion or supporting large numbers of citizens displaced by repressive government policies. On the other hand, if the original activity generates negative externalities, as effective proselytism nearly always does, TG most prefers the outcome in which these activities are effectively suppressed. In both cases non-interference is better than having to suffer the costs of acquiescing to violations of its own sovereignty. Typically a direct confrontation with the US or the international community as a whole is even more unwelcome than violations of its fragile sovereignty. However, those states whose leaders feel endangered may welcome an opportunity for a diplomatic confrontation, as long as they can be assured that the US will refrain from using military force to impose its own most preferred outcome.

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attention to require an explicit US response. Incorporation of this media "choice" into this game model remains a question for subsequent investigation.

The US typically prefers confrontation over allowing the TG to succeed in its suppression campaign. Yet the intensity of this preference is very much affected by the overall state of US-TG relations, as well as the balance of military power between them. As denoted by dashed line arrows in Figure 2, the US is most likely to oppose the TG's action if it involves a direct threat to a US citizen or interruption in the delivery of aid deemed important to US interests. Conversely, if the FBO seems to have gone a bit overboard by engaging in underhanded missionary operations, the US is likely to appreciate TG's concerns and work towards a compromise solution that would not be welcomed by the FBO in question.

We can now derive conditions for equilibrium, through the standard procedure of backwards induction.[22] Since this solution process starts at the end of the game, we must begin by assuming whether or not the USA's implicit threat to respond to the TG's provocation is credible. If so, then the equilibrium path is shown by the dashed arrows in the top and bottom branches of the game tree in Figure 2; if not, then the path shown in the middle branch applies instead.

The problem for TG, whose choice immediately precedes that of the US, is that it does not know which branch of tree is in play. If it is on either of the outer branches, the TG must expect that the US would choose to support the FBOs, in which case the TG, at the immediately preceding choice node, is effectively choosing between confrontation and acquiescing to violations of its own sovereignty. Since, as assumed above, TG typically prefers the latter, TG will choose to acquiesce to FBO violations of its own rules if this decision point is reached. Moving back up the game tree, FBO is presented with a choice between violations of unwelcome TG rules or its own co-optation by that government. Since FBOs prefer the former, the FBO will choose to engage in evasive or escalatory strategies. This brings us back to TG's initial choice node, where the Target Government now realizes that it must, in effect, choose between non-interference or the violations of its sovereignty that will result if it chooses to explicitly manipulate the FBO's incentives (since that FBO will escalate the confrontation and the TG knows it must later back down). Thus, the sub-game perfect equilibrium in this case is No Interference. Notably, this outcome is the FBO's most preferred outcome.

[22] See Morrow (1994) and Gardner (2003) for accessible introductions to the basic concepts and analytical techniques of game theory.

We now move to the end of the middle branch of the game tree, where the US is likely to back down should a faith-based diplomatic incident emerge. In this case TG effectively confronts a choice between acquiescing to violations of its sovereignty or full suppression of distasteful FBO activities. Clearly, TG prefers the latter. Since the FBO realizes this path will be forthcoming, it should choose to accept the milder conditions that the TG has imposed earlier, since the FBO prefers its own co-optation over its complete suppression or expulsion. Knowing this, TG does indeed choose to impose these conditions at its first opportunity. Thus, FBO co-optation by the recipient government is the rational outcome when the players realize that the US will not choose to support the FBO in a later confrontation with TG.

Figure 2 connects each of the examples introduced at the beginning of this paper to one of the outcomes of this game. When criticism swirled around FBO efforts to evangelize Iraqis under US occupation or to evangelize tsunami orphans in Indonesia, the US quickly backed away from any connection with either operation. The Curry-Mercer case was carried to its logical conclusion as a direct confrontation, one settled finally by military action. When in the post-9/11 period, the Rahman case came to the attention of national officials in an Afghanistan deeply dependent on US support, that government effectively backtracked to acquiesce in his conversion, a situation made more palatable by his expulsion from the country.

Finally, the case of Sudan is listed as a diplomatic confrontation inspired primarily by humanitarian concerns. The government of Sudan, for example, has long supported militia operations that force people living in oil-rich regions to flee to refugee camps, thereby making it easier for the government to profit from any oil production (see African Rights 1995). The US government has long sought to insure that the government of Sudan lives up to its commitment to allow aid organizations access to refugees from the south or from the Darfur region. Sudan has also been a "country of particular concern" from the initial report mandated by the 1998 IRFA. For reasons suggested below, Sudanese authorities have found it difficult to live up to their commitments to allow free access to victims of its own policies.[23]

Each example is consistent with the rational choice that actors should make once a confrontation has begun, that is, for the sub-games designated by bolder lines in Figure 2.

[23] This tendency was most noticeable with regard to the efforts of the government of Sudan to restrict access to internally displaced peoples in Darfur or, earlier, in the Nuba Mountains region or the southern region in general. Especially useful references on these three conflict regions within Sudan are Prunier 2005 on Darfur, African Rights 1995 and Pantuliano 2005 on the Nuba Mountains, and Aboum et al. 1990 and Prendergast 1997 on southern Sudan in general.

However, it must be noted that none correspond to the subgame perfect equilibria for the overall game (denoted in outlined boxes). This disjuncture between equilibrium prediction and observable outcomes suggests that our analysis of this game model is not yet complete. In particular, we must consider some complications entailed by the very nature of the decision units under consideration. In brief, neither the TG nor the FBO fully lives up to the standard assumption of being a unitary rational actor.

*Reasons for Instability and More Confrontations*

To simplify presentation, the model is set up as a game involving only one FBO. In practice, a large number of FBOs may be engaged in similar activities. Since there is no central authority that can dictate or even coordinate the behavior of all FBOs, different organizations may see the situation differently. FBOs engaged in humanitarian relief may be competing to capture a larger share of the potential donor market. If proselytism is their true goal, different religious organizations may be competing to convert the same people or to solicit funds from similar arrays of potential contributors. (This latter factor may prove to the most important source of competition among FBOs.) In sum, some FBOs may find it in their interest to act in ways that are not optimal for the FBO community as a whole.

This problem is especially apparent under the co-optation equilibrium illustrated in the middle branch of Figure 2. Here FBOs suffer the indignity of cooperating with a corrupt or repressive regime, which may prevent them from reaching previously unevangelized people groups or from helping those victims of a civil war who support anti-government forces. Although some FBOs may come to accept this situation as a necessary corollary to their ability to reach innocent victims or potential converts, others may be especially offended by these compromises. Agents of these FBOs may seize upon this opportunity to publicize the complicity of rival agencies in propping up corrupt regimes or in foregoing access to particularly lucrative mission fields out of deference to government restrictions. By doing so the rebel FBO may attract favorable media coverage and the increased donations and support that goes with it. According to this equilibrium path, the TG is poised to react to these evasions or criticisms by increasing their control over all such activities.

Originally this branch of the tree was defined by the non-credibility of the US's threat to confront the TG, so TG's suppression effort may succeed. However, the same FBOs that evaded the earlier restrictions by publicizing their complaints are likely to exert increased pressure on their own home government to do something about this terrible situation, in which innocent victims are being kept from receiving life-saving assistance or in which unevangelized peoples are kept in ignorance of the message that could save their souls. If this mobilization campaign succeeds, we have arrived at the confrontation outcome.

Similar complications may push participants off of the equilibrium path that leads to the no interference equilibrium in the top and bottom branches of Figure 2. Here the problem concerns the nature of the target government, which may not have sufficient capacity to control the actions of its own agents. Those officials most directly concerned with the management of refugee assistance or in charge of granting entry permits face incentives to shirk on the official policy, by diverting resources or by making it more difficult for the representatives of any FBOs to enter the country without paying bribes. These uncontrolled agents will be effectively manipulating FBO incentives, even if the central government has chosen to do otherwise.[24] As a consequence, some FBOs may begin exactly the sort of mobilization campaign discussed above, especially since that is their rational strategy in this particular case. The equilibrium path then indicates that the TG should acquiesce in violations of its own sovereignty.[25] However, these violations may give dissenters within the regime a rallying cry, making it all the more likely that new leaders will emerge who insist on rectifying these humiliations.[26]

Under both cases, then, there are credible explanations for why we should expect to see confrontations emerge as the rational outcome of games between these less than fully unitary actors. Such confrontations should be especially likely when a large number of uncoordinated FBOs interact with target governments unable to control many of their own agents. Some implications of these increasingly likely confrontations are considered in the final section.

[24] It may even be the case that the central government proclaims a non-interference policy in order to garner international support, while surreptitiously acting to undermine that policy.
[25] The fact that the TG prefers the original equilibrium to this outcome may suggest that this deviation is irrational. However, the process was started by state agents shirking on their responsibilities, and these agents have managed to extract resources for their own use along the way. So this equilibrium is vulnerable to disruption because of the weak central control of that state.
[26] This countermove is especially likely when TG officials already feel endangered by pressure from the international community, as discussed above.

## 6. Further Extensions

In subsequent research, I plan to use the model presented here as a basis for an evaluation of data on the frequency of disputes generated by government restrictions on humanitarian aid, political activism, and especially proselytism. To do so will require a more systematic formulation of the observable factors underlying the preference orderings postulated above.

The credibility of US or international community threats or promises to protect FBOs operating abroad are affected by the extent to which that regime depends on the political support of constituents affiliated with that faith tradition and by its geopolitical interest in maintaining good relations with the target government. These two considerations will combine to determine that government's level of willingness to devote its political capital in the protection of proselytizers or faith-based operatives of different kinds. The target government's decisions are in turn affected by its sensitivity to foreign operations, which is going to be high for any autocratic regime or for any regime, autocratic or not, that relies on connections to a particular religious tradition or organization for its legitimacy. Furthermore, different TGs will exhibit differing levels of capacity to actually control access to its own population. Faith-based organizations will differ in the closeness of their ties to the home government and to the religious traditions dominant in both countries, and in the relative emphasis that FBO places on proselytism as its primary mission.

FBO preferences can be grounded in the mutual influence of such explicit factors as the number of refugees generated by government policies who receive assistance and the overall level of aid flows and diversions. The number of converts will be especially important to examine proselytism games, and some measure of domestic unrest might be used to evaluate the consequences of FBO political activism. It may prove more difficult to operationalize the costs of confrontation and especially the costs entailed in violations of state sovereignty. Still, it should be possible to use empirical data to generate ordinal preferences for specific cases.[27]

Using the non-unitary nature of FBO and TG actors may prove an especially promising direction for future research. As noted above, this factor can be used informally to help explain

[27] Grim (2005) and Grim and Finke (2006) report an important recent innovation in data on government restrictions of religious freedom and on relationships between governments and dominant religions. Their data in based on systematic coding of the reports generated in response to the 1998 IRFA. Thus, their procedures may establish the baseline for the regular collection of updated data in future years.

deviations from the subgame perfect equilibria that standard game theoretic techniques would predict. Such deviations should be more likely for certain kinds of target governments and FBO constellations. For example, decisions of TG agents will be affected by the potential benefits from shirking and likelihood of being caught and punished, factors which are directly related to the structure of these regimes and to the economic opportunities for illicit commerce in different regions. Newer FBOs might prove especially susceptible to the temptation of obtaining access to increased resources by publicizing the sins of rival more well-established organizations.

It may also prove useful to integrate into this strategic perspective some aspects of the alternative explanations. Explanations for the outcome of specific cases seemed especially dependent on the overall strategic context of relations between the US and the target government. In subsequent work I hope to develop a hybrid explanation which accepts this broader diplomatic context for the resolution of particular disputes, but which also highlights the extent to which the organizational structure of FBOs constitutes evidence of their longer-term strategic response to government incentives. If the incentives are structured correctly, some types of FBOs should prove more naturally inclined to particular forms of political expression and participation.

Clearly, much more work needs to be done to clarify the nature of strategic interactions between the agents of religious and political organizations. My preliminary analysis suggests that the faith-based organizations enjoy a surprisingly wide array of strategic advantages. First, they set the agenda to which governments and other political actors react. Because of the fundamentally distinct nature of religious motivations, FBOs engage in activities for their own reasons that have external effects on political conditions. Yet as long as the religious imperative behind these actions remains vital, political agents will be unable to dissuade FBO agents entirely, although they may affect some of their behavior on the margins. In this sense, FBO agents are only partially responsive to policy incentives. This does not mean that governmental manipulation is impossible, but it does impose a unique limitation in this area of public policy.

A second advantage comes from conditions conducive to the increased political influence of faith-based organizations, especially in the United States. FBOs are well-organized and able to lobby freely in their home countries, and many target governments lack the capacity to exclude them even if they wanted to do so.

Even when conditions are not propitious for religious expansion, faith-based organizations have demonstrated a remarkable ability to survive even the most repressive regimes. The survival of Catholic and Orthodox versions of Christianity in the countries of the former Communist Bloc is especially noteworthy, and Islam has become politically active throughout countries long under the domineering influence of Western countries. The situation of China remains uncertain, since religious activists can still not operate freely in that still-autocratic regime. All this suggests a third and more subtle advantage. Throughout history, some faith traditions have been strengthened by extensive campaigns of persecution. Despite the multitudinous capabilities of the modern state, it falls well short of the the capacity needed to snuff out religion.

What does this insulation from the threat of politically-generated extinction imply more generally? Perhaps religion, and the myriad faith-based organizations it continues to inspire, can serve as a check on the expansion of politics into more and more realms of human life. Faith-based organizations should claim their rightful position in a system of checks and balances more extensive than the political realm itself. That was certainly not the original inspiration behind any major religion, and it may never become an important consideration for many believers within any one faith tradition. Nonetheless, as political scientists and policy analysts we should come to a fuller appreciation of religion's critical role as an ultimate check on what otherwise be unbridled political power.

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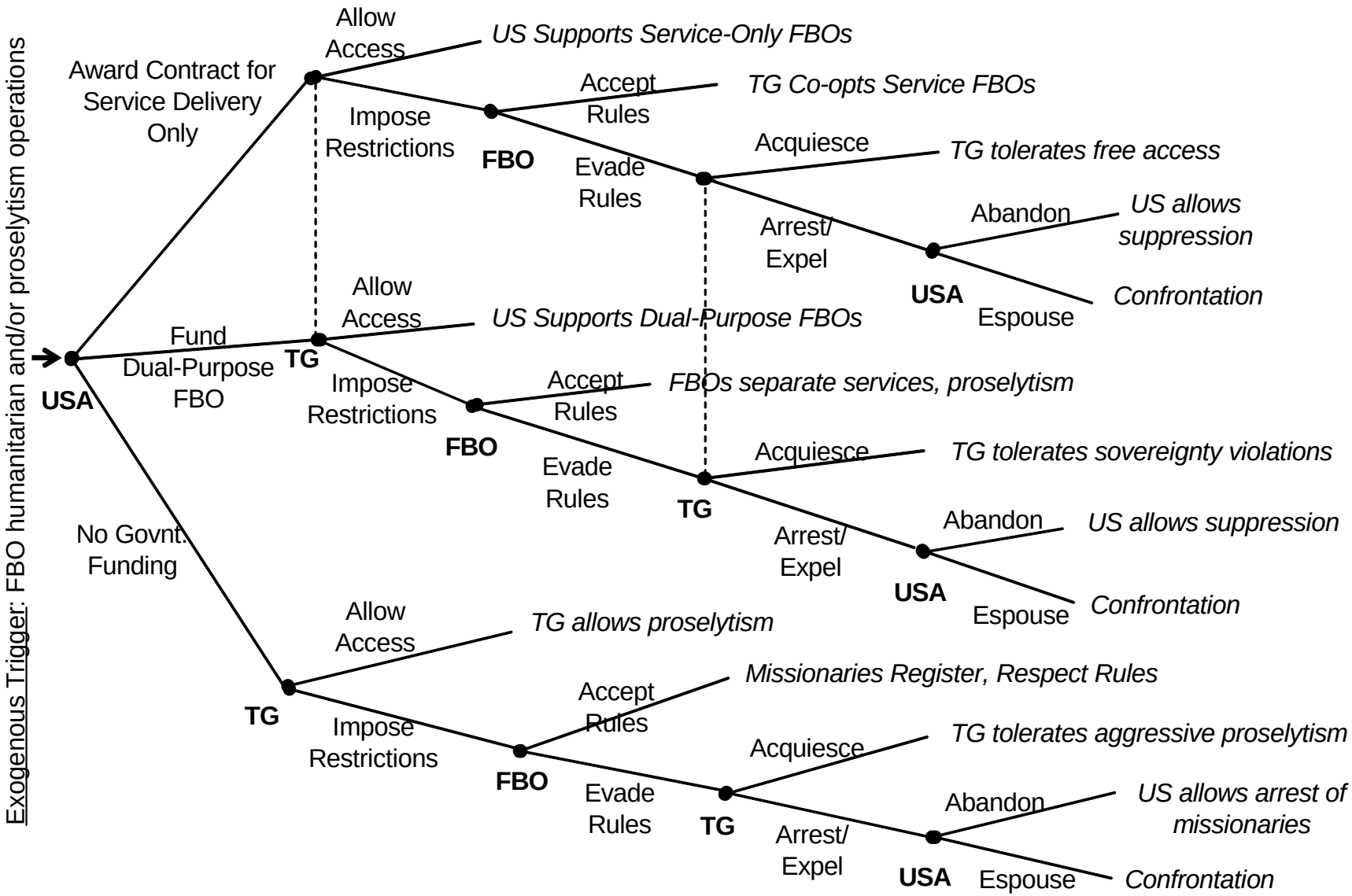
## Table 1. Generic Effects of Religion on Politics and Public Policy: Potential Tensions and Responses

| | *Effects of Religious Belief, Behavior or Organizations* | *Positive Contributions (As Seen by Political Leaders)* | *Potential Sources of Tension with Public Authorities* | *Policy Instruments Available to Influence or Incentivize Religious Leaders* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primarily Apolitical Activities (With Indirect Effects on Politics) | Proselytism can change individual beliefs and behavior | • New members may be open to influence<br>• Links to foreign support | • Converts may take resources away from existing groups<br>• Links to foreign support | • Legal limits on methods of proselytism<br>• Support "deprogrammers"<br>• [Criminalize conversion or proselytism] |
| | Members may enjoy access to education and increased social capital | • More secure individuals make better citizens<br>• Practical experience in self-governance | • Some groups may choose to withdraw from society;<br>• Religious communities may foster authoritarian attitudes<br>• Internal disputes may escalate or become violent | • Allow/support religious education<br>• Require participation in public schools<br>• Protect isolated groups<br>• Allow internal disputes to be litigated, or limit financial liabilities<br>• [Restrict rights to certain faiths] |
| Partially Apolitical Activities with Direct Effects on Policy or Politics | Provision of some social services to community and to non-members | • Volunteers provide services at lower costs<br>• Enjoy unique advantages of FBO programs<br>• Allows authorities to focus on other problems | • May proselytize or discriminate in hiring or service delivery<br>• Distinctive aspects of FBO programs too religious? | • Provide tax breaks for charitable causes & religious organizations<br>• Award conditional grants, contracts<br>• Strict oversight of FBO programs<br>• [Shirk responsibility, let FBOs do it all] |
| | Strengthen foundations for public morality (civil religion) | • Increased legitimacy of political regime, leaders<br>• Foundations for peace and prosperity | • Groups may be offended by some religious symbols<br>• Disputes concerning limits on acceptable public symbols<br>• Religion in public schools<br>• Religious and social morality may contradict each other | • Emphasize certain public symbols<br>• Let judges determine limits of civil religion, role in public education<br>• Make school curricula faith-friendly<br>• Criminalize some religious practices<br>• [Require registration of religions; refuse to let some operate legally] |
| Direct Political Participation | Prophetic voice: apply high moral standards to judge policy outcomes | • Enhance public discourse<br>• Inspire reforms that counter long-standing grievances | • Intensity of emotions evoked may foster intolerance;<br>• May set unrealizable expectations | • Enact reforms<br>• Prohibit hate crimes<br>• Promote civic education<br>• [Enforce religious legal codes] |
| | Involvement of groups who might otherwise not participate in political process | • Significant blocks of new voters (may be welcomed or opposed by politicians)<br>• Facilitates emphasis on new issues | • May not be knowledgeable or willing to compromise, with unreasonable expectations<br>• Some religious leaders may dominate followers and gain too much power or influence | • Highlight issues, implement policies<br>• Mobilize opponents<br>• Promote civic education<br>• Regulate religious media<br>• Enforce laws on corruption<br>• [Let religious leaders rule: Theocracy] |

Note: Policies in [] are not feasible in U.S. *Categories of Policy Instruments:* Financial, Symbolic, Legal/Regulatory, Political

## Figure 1. Proselytism and Humanitarianism Game



## Figure 2. Examples of Faith-Based Diplomatic Incidents