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Race, Religion, and Boycotts

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Abstract

Using multiple surveys, this study examined the association between attending congregations in which clergy and/or lay persons discussed social-political issues and the perceptions Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics have about the social responsibility of corporations. We also examined racial differences in the degree to which attending political congregations associate with a willingness to and actual participation in boycotts and/or selective buying campaigns. We found that attending social-politically oriented congregations associates with Black and White interest in corporate responsibility. However, the degree to which clergy political appeals associates with Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics participating in boycotting and selective buying campaigns is seemingly tied to the aim of the boycott.

Keywords: Race, boycotts, selective buying, political, social responsibility

Introduction

Religious leaders in America have a long history of encouraging their congregants to consider the ethical values of the companies from which they buy products. The most activist of these clergy claim that humans' natural rights to unpolluted air, water, and soil take precedence over shareholders (Gottlieb). On theological grounds, they dispute the claim that the property rights of shareholders supercede those of workers, consumers, and society in general (Gottlieb). Clergy who preach sermons on these issues attempt to shape their congregants' and the broader public's ideals about the obligation of corporations to meet a public good that goes beyond quarterly returns. In doing so, some call their congregants to join them in questioning and perhaps even boycotting corporations that pollute the earth,

create weapons used to kill civilians, pay workers less than livable wages, discriminate, and indulge in other practices that prevent human flourishing. This was the case during the Greensboro Sit-in Movement of 1960 in which Black and White progressive religious leaders outside of the South encouraged their congregations and others to boycott local franchises of chains until they changed their racially discriminatory service policy in the South (Morris; Dillard). Similarly, since the 1980s, the Southern Baptist Church has encouraged members to boycott Disney theme parks and movies due to claims about the overt sexuality, tolerance of homosexuality, and violence portrayed in their films (CNN).

These and other accounts highlight clergy encouraging congregants to consider their ethical values when buying products and supporting companies. Because of the lack of survey research in this area, however, it is unclear how responsive congregants are to such appeals. The responsiveness of congregants becomes even less clear when considering that race likely impacts the saliency of boycotts for Americans. For example, Whites are more likely than Blacks and Hispanics to report a willingness to boycott a company and to have done so if they believe the company is harming society for political and/or environmental reasons (Smith; Louis Harris and Associates). However, when boycotts aim to improve the treatment of African Americans and Hispanics, Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to support those respective campaigns (CNN and USA Today). Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics are equally likely to support Evangelical-led boycotts against the entertainment industry (Newsweek).

Racial differences in boycotting attitudes and activism raise questions for us about the degree to which hearing social-political sermons associates with Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics supporting companies they believe act ethically and boycotting those that act unethically. In addressing this question, we begin by discussing the theoretical importance of clergy and race to American political and consumer behavior. We then examine our research question using public opinion data from ten national and regional cross-sectional surveys collected between 1961 and 2008. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Religion and Civil Society

Much of what we know about the role religion plays in public life is based upon research that examines the association between religion and politics. Alexis De Tocqueville's classic 1835 book, *Democracy in America*, offers an early and lasting theoretical explanation for why religion may influence American's democratic participation. In his book, De Tocqueville argues that religious life in America reinforces a love for democracy. It does so because religious freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment allow Americans to associate with religious bodies led by clergy and attended by laity with whom they share similar ideological/theological worldviews, historical experiences, and a vision for how a good society looks. Americans also have the freedom to not attend at all, not identify with a religious faith, and not practice religious rituals. Such a calculus is not too dissimilar from the process for supporting parties and candidates or to not participate at all.

Congregants serving in leadership positions and/or who are active in making congregational decisions often gain skills that are transferable to the political arena (Frazier and Lincoln; Lincoln and Mamiya; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady). Congregants, particularly Protestants, can assume leadership positions and/or become actively involved in working with clergy in determining their congregation's mission. Along with clergy, lay leaders and

volunteers make decisions about how they should engage the public, be it through evangelizing others to their beliefs and church, providing human services, participating in social reform efforts, etc. In many cases, these decisions are democratically made by committees that vote on directives before presenting them to their congregations for support. The same civic skills needed to organize and run such congregational meetings, summarize committee decisions, inform and convince the congregation of a committee decision, and act on such decision are also useful for organizing election campaigns and social movements (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady).

Even when laity are not in leadership positions or their collectively arrived upon decisions are overridden by their clergy and/or regional/national church directives, congregants still exert a heavy influence on their congregations' missions. Congregations are almost completely dependent upon their congregants' volunteer and financial contributions for their survival. As such, congregants can vote with their feet by not attending and their wallets/purses by not giving if they disagree with their congregation's mission. Americans' freedom to support or oppose clergy leadership and missions reinforces their freedom to support or oppose political leadership. In a free-market economy like ours, democratic skills reinforced within religious settings may also have implications for consumer behavior and the degree to which Americans support or oppose certain industries altogether. Seen from this light, it is not coincidental that the Quakers, Presbyterians, and Black Protestant Abolitionists led the free-produce movement of the 19th century during which they boycotted products made by slave labor (Holcomb). It is sensible that Mainline Protestant religious congregations, such as the Church of the Good Shepherd in Ann Arbor, MI, collectively decided to support the grape and lettuce boycott during the 1980s to pressure landowners to improve working conditions for their Mexican and Filipino American farm workers (León). It also makes sense that committees are convened in churches like Central United Methodist Church in Detroit, MI, that discuss ways in which they may become more environmentally conscious, such as boycotting and/or cutting back on the use of non-renewable energy sources, as called for by the World Council of Churches in 2014 (Vaughan).

Religious Frames and Social Capital

When encouraging activism, clergy and laity tend to frame their appeals with religious stories that congregants are familiar with in an attempt to link their position on social issues to their faith as well as to their membership within their congregation. American worship-goers are likely receptive to such appeals because they are able to freely choose their place of worship or not to attend at all. As such, many attend and become active in their congregations because they like the people with whom they attend (Stroope and Baker). Three-quarters of worship-goers report that at least one of their close friends attends their congregation and they trust their fellow congregants (Smidt et al.). The more Americans attend services, the more worship friends they have and the more likely they are to trust their fellow congregants and clergy (Putnam, Malkin, and Malkin 2000).

Many worship-goers see their worship-friends as part of their extended family, inviting them to their homes for holidays, birthdays, special occasions, or just because (Glock, Ringer, and Babbie; Roof and Hoge). Many also confide in their church friends when experiencing a death in their family, concerns about wayward children, concerns about finding work, and

other hardships (Glock, Ringer, and Babbie; Roof and Hoge; Wimberly). The more they attend, the more likely they are to have close friends with whom they can talk to about private matters or call on for help (Putnam, Malkin, and Malkin 2006). Because of these close relationships, it is sensible congregants would consider political activism and/or participate in economic boycotts when encouraged to do so by their fellow congregants and/or clergy. Congregants are also likely to consider clergy civic appeals because they tend to view clergy experts in scripture and in interpreting how God wants their flock to follow God's commands (Wood; Warren). All of this is to say that the social capital resources of trust and reciprocity shared among persons within congregations and religiously-framed social-political appeals likely contribute to the willingness of congregants to consider clergy and lay appeals for them to vote, participate in social movements, and, perhaps, support boycotts.

To that end, it is sensible that worship-goers who heard sermons by clergy or testimonies by laity in Quaker houses or Presbyterian churches in the 19th century that encouraged boycotting products made by slave labor may have done so. It is also quite possible that the congregants of Woodridge Baptist Church in Mobile, AL, would consider boycotting Nike after their pastor, Mack Morris, cut up Nike brand clothing during his sermon on Sunday, September 9, 2018, to demonstrate criticism of Nike's support for Colin Kaepernick's choice to kneel during the national anthem at NFL games (Sharp). Again, it is sensible because American worship-goers tend to trust that their clergy and laity encourage them take positions in their best interests and the best interests of their nation and world.

Clergy Cues/Church Affects and Political Activism

Research suggests that clergy and places of worship may influence their congregant's political and consumer behavior (Djupe and Grant; Djupe and Gilbert 2003; Brown 2010, 2011; Brown and Brown; Brown et al.). Congregants who attend congregations led by clergy who are politically active, that discuss politics during their sermons, and where other congregants encourage political activism tend to be more politically active themselves (Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 2008). While racial experiences impact much of social-political life in the United States, this does not seem to be the case when it comes to the association between sermons and political activism. Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics who attend congregations where they are encouraged to be politically active are all more likely than their counterparts attending non-political congregations to participate in protest demonstrations, contact elected officials about issues of concern, organize community meetings, participate in political campaigns, and/or practice other forms of political activism (Mattis; Brown 2011; McKenzie and Rouse).

While it seems plausible that congregants attending "political" congregations would also be more likely to participate in boycotts, this relationship has not been empirically established. We know from the 2000 and 2008 Cooperative Clergy poll that roughly 70% of clergy report that, at some point in their lives, they boycotted a product to protest corporate policy (Smidt et al.). In both years, Black and White clergy were equally likely to have ever boycotted; Hispanics were less likely than either group to have done so. That individuals attending religious congregations led by activist clergy are more politically active themselves suggests that both Whites and Blacks are more likely to participate in boycotts if encouraged to do so by clergy. At the same time, Whites are more likely than Blacks and Hispanics to say that their religious faith led them to boycott a product (Religion and Ethics Newsweekly and U.S. News

and World Report). This may suggest that when clergy religiously frame political issues, such as the ethical responsibility of corporations and/or government officials, Whites are more likely to respond by boycotting than are Blacks and Hispanics. At this point, however, we are still only able to speculate about the relationship between race, clergy political appeals, and boycotting behavior. We hope to clarify this relationship by examining our research question.

Research Question

To what degree does attending a “political congregation” associate with White, Black, and Hispanic views about the social responsibility of corporations, their willingness to boycott, and their involvement in boycotts?

Samples

We rely upon ten surveys spanning forty-seven years to examine our research question.

1. 1961-1962 Negro Political Participation Study
2. Harris 1969 New York City Racial and Religious Survey, No. 1925, Jewish
3. 1984 National Black Election Study (NBES)
4. 1996 National Black Election Study (NBES)
5. 1968 Detroit Area Study (DAS)
6. Presbyterian Panel Survey, August 1995 - Social Issues in Investing
7. 2000 Religion and Politics Study
8. 2006 Faith Matters Study
9. Pew 2007: Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion
10. The Henry Institute National Survey of Religion and Public Life, 2008

These surveys were collected in different years, with different modes and sampling frames (see Appendix A). As indicated in the Measures section and in Appendices B and C, these surveys do not use identical questions to assess whether a congregation is political, their willingness to boycott, and their actual boycott participation. The degree to which we find that attending political congregations associates with Whites, Blacks and/or Hispanics boycotting should, therefore, provide fairly strong support for this relationship.

Measures

Corporate Responsibility/Boycotting

The 2000 Religion and Politics Study allows us to examine the extent to which respondents are “quite interested” in corporate responsibility. The 1961-1962 Negro Participation Study examines the willingness of Whites and Blacks to participate in boycotts. As referenced earlier, the data collected for this study occurred during the early months of the 1960 Greensboro, NC, sit-in movement in which four Black college students from North Carolina A & T broke Woolworth’s policy and a Greensboro segregation ordinance by demanding to be served food at the lunch counter alongside White patrons. Among Whites, we examine the extent to which they would boycott a store if they served food to Blacks, a

clear reference to the sit-in movement. Also referencing this movement among Blacks, we assess the extent to which they would boycott a store if they were refused service because of their race.

We measure boycott participation in two ways. First, we assess boycott participation for a specific cause, for any reason: the Harris 1969 Survey asks New York City Jews if they had ever boycotted a store; the 1984 and 1996 NBES assess the extent to which Blacks report having ever picketed, taken part in a sit-in, or boycotted a business or governmental agency in the previous five years; and the 1995 Presbyterian Panel Survey examines the degree to which Presbyterians boycotted the products or services of a corporation. We also assess the extent to which boycott participants “deliberately avoided buying a stock or bond issued by a corporation and/or a share in a mutual fund.” The 2006 Faith Matters Study assesses the extent to which respondents, in the past twelve months, “bought or boycotted a certain product or service because of the social or political values of the company that provides it.”

We measure boycotting for a specific cause through the 1968 Detroit Area Study, which examines the degree to which African American respondents had ever taken part in a boycott for civil rights. The data for this study were collected a year after the 1967 Detroit riots, the deadliest and costliest race riot in a Northern US city up to that point. The 2007 Pew Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion Study assesses if, in the past 12 months, Hispanics reported that their place of worship participated in an immigration rights protest or boycott. This question is a loose reference to the May 1, 2006, Day Without an Immigrant boycott. This boycott encouraged immigrants, particularly Hispanic immigrants, and those in solidarity with them to not buy anything and withhold their labor that day to demonstrate the importance of immigrants to the US economy and pressure the federal government to create a path to citizenship for the nation’s undocumented immigrants. The 2008 Henry Institute National Survey of Religion and Public Life assesses the extent to which, in the past twelve months, individuals reported boycotting or deliberately buying “certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons” (see Appendix B).

Political Congregation

We operationalize political congregation by assessing whether respondents report that they attend a place of worship in which their clergy preach sermons, make announcements, pray, and/or otherwise discuss the importance of political activism and social-political issues, such as race, gender, environmental conservation, poverty, corporate responsibility, and a number of other social concerns. Based on their responses, respondents are coded into three groups: not attending worship services; attending a worship service in which they do not hear about social-political issues; or attending worship services where they hear about social political issues (see Appendix C).

Control Variables

Our analyses also control for political party, religious faith, and social-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, region, and income) (see Appendix D).

Statistical Analyses

We report predicted probability estimates based upon logit regression analyses to examine the association between attending a political congregation with interests in corporate responsibility, willingness to boycott, and actual participation in boycotts. Although not displayed, all of our probability estimates control for political party, religious faith, and social-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, region, and income).¹ We employ treatment effects to assess the extent to which attending political congregations contributes to consumer attitudes and behavior.²

Results

The analyses from the 2000 Religion and Politics Study indicate that, for Blacks and Whites, attendees of political congregations were more likely than attendees of non-political congregations to express interest in the social responsibility of corporations (see Table 1). Among Whites, attendees of political congregations were also more likely than non-worship-goers to express interests in these issues. Among Hispanics, however, we found no such relationship.

Findings from the 2006 Faith Matters Study suggest that only among Whites is it the case that attendees of political congregations are more likely than attendees of non-political congregations to boycott a product because of the company's political values. Blacks and Hispanics that heard sermons about political issues were no more or less likely than their counterparts to have ever boycotted a company (see Table 1). What should we make of these findings? Does this suggest that clergy social-political appeals heighten Blacks and Hispanics interest in corporate responsibility, but not enough to actually do something about it, such as boycotting? The remaining analyses drills down on this question.

Table 2 shows that in 1961-1962, Southern Whites who attended a political congregation were less likely than other Whites to boycott a store if they served Blacks. Put another way, Southern Whites who attended a political congregation were more likely than other worship-going Whites to support a store if they served Blacks. The other studies indicate that Whites who heard sermons about social-political issues were more likely than other worship-going Whites to report boycotting a store, boycotting and/or buying a product, and boycotting and/or buying stock in a company due to the company's values.

¹ The logit regression analyses upon which our predicted probability estimates are derived, listed in Tables 1-4, are available upon request. Direct all inquiries to Khari Brown at kharib@wayne.edu.

² The probability estimates of Tables 1-4 are derived from logit regression analyses that assess the relationship between attending political congregations with boycott attitudes and behaviors. That being said, the estimates for Tables 1 - 4 are based upon the following formula:

$\Pr(y=1 | \overline{X}, \max x_k) - \Pr(y=1 | \overline{X}, \min x_k)$, in which Y represents boycotting and X represents type of congregation (e.g., does not attend, non-political congregation, political congregation).

Table 1: Probability Estimates of Interest in Corporate Responsibility and Boycotting and/or Selective Buying by Race, Social-Political Sermons, and Survey: Controlling for Religious Faith, Political Partisanship, and Social-Demographic Factors

	2000 Religion & Politics Study	2006 Faith Matters Study
	Interested in Corporate Responsibility	Bought or boycotted a certain product or service because of the social or political values of the company.
Whites	N=4,116	N=2,268
Doesn't Attend Worship Services	0.4223 [0.3974, 0.4472]*	0.2952 [0.2535, 0.3368]
Attends a Non-Political Congregation	0.3693 [0.3438, 0.3947]**	0.2644 [0.2377, 0.2911]**
Attends a Political Congregation	0.4785 [0.4447, 0.5122]	0.3452 [0.2982, 0.3921]
Blacks	N=550	N=313
Doesn't Attend Worship Services	0.4449 [0.3619, 0.5278]	0.1249 [-0.0002, 0.2500]
Attends a Non-Political Congregation	0.4090 [0.3311, 0.4869] *	0.1150 [0.0658, 0.1643]
Attends a Political Congregation	0.5183 [0.4447, 0.5920]	0.1433 [0.0773, 0.2092]
Hispanics	N=520	N=347
Doesn't Attend Worship Services	0.3488 [0.2935, 0.4042]	0.0735 [0.0196, 0.1273]
Attends a Non-Political Congregation	0.4122 [0.3234, 0.5011]	0.1370 [0.0809, 0.1930]
Attends a Political Congregation	0.4362 [0.3421, 0.5303]	0.1516 [0.0681, 0.2352]

*<.05, **<.01³

³ Those who do not attend worship services and those who attend non-political congregations are compared to attendees of political congregations.

Table 2: Probability Estimates of White Boycotting and/or Selective Buying by Social-Political Sermons and Survey: Controlling for Religious Faith, Political Partisanship, and Social-Demographic Factors

	1961-1962 Negro Participation Study	Harris 1969 New York City Racial and Religious Survey, No. 1925, Jewish	1995 Presbyterian Panel Survey	1995 Presbyterian Panel Survey	2008 Henry Institute National Survey of Religion and Public Life
	Would Boycott Store if Served Blacks.	Boycotted a Store	Boycotted the products or services of a corporation.	Boycotted shares in a mutual fund and/or stock.	Boycotted, or deliberately bought, certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons
Doesn't Attend Worship Services	0.5765 [0.4331, 0.7198]**	---	---	---	0.4293 [0.3917, 0.4669]
Attends a Non-Political Congregation	0.4734 [0.4225, 0.5244]**	0.1281 [0.0992, 0.1571]*	0.2908 [0.2524, 0.3292]**	0.3408 [0.3008, 0.3807]*	0.4310 [0.3687, 0.4933]*
Attends a Political Congregation	0.3126 [0.2195, 0.4056]	0.2475 [0.1392, 0.3557]	0.6429 [0.4535, 0.8322]	0.5468 [0.3463, 0.7473]	0.5916 [0.4653, 0.7179]
N=	694	580	571	568	1,167

*<.05, **<.01⁴

Table 3 shows that Blacks who heard sermons about social-political issues were more likely than other worship-going Blacks in 1963 to say they would boycott a store if they were discriminated against. In 1968, Black attendees of political congregations were more likely than attendees of non-political congregations to have participated in a civil rights boycott, and, in 1984 and 1996, to have boycotted and/or picketed against a business or government agency.

Table 4 shows that Hispanics were more likely to attend congregations that participated in boycotts for immigrant rights. It is likely that Hispanics who attend congregations that lead boycotts are more likely to participate in those boycotts. Unfortunately, however, because the survey does not ask respondents if they actually participated in the boycott, we have no way of knowing for sure.

⁴ Those who do not attend worship services and those who attend non-political congregations are compared to attendees of political congregations.

Table 3: Probability Estimates of Black Boycotting and/or Selective Buying by Social-Political Sermons and Survey: Controlling for Religious Faith, Political Partisanship, and Social-Demographic Factors

	1961-1962 Negro Participation Study	1968 Detroit Area Study	1984 NBES	1996 NBES
	Would Boycott Store if Racially Discriminated	Participated in a Civil Rights Protest	Boycotted a business or governmental agency	Boycotted a business or governmental agency
Doesn't Attend Worship Services	0.4894 [0.2164, 0.7623]	0.1070 [0.0230, 0.1910]	0.0599 [0.0138, 0.1059]	0.0738 [0.0242, 0.1235]
Attends a Non-Political Congregation	0.4723 [0.4032, 0.5415]**	0.0162 [0.0025, 0.0300]**	0.0301 [0.0100, 0.0502]**	0.0368 [0.0131, 0.0606]**
Attends a Political Congregation	0.6007 [0.5190, 0.6823]	0.0625 [0.0331, 0.0919]	0.1007 [0.0726, 0.1288]	0.1137 [0.0858, 0.1417]
N=	404	619	849	859

*<.05, **<.01⁵

Table 4: Probability Estimates of Hispanic Congregation Participating in Immigrant Rights Boycott by Social-Political Sermons: Controlling for Religious Faith, Political Partisanship, and Social-Demographic Factors (Source: Pew 2007: Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion)

	Congregation Participated in an Immigrant-Rights Boycott
Attends a Non-Political Congregation	0.0949 [0.0819, 0.1080]**
Attends a Political Congregation	0.2997 [0.2758, 0.3236]
N=	3,521

*<.05, **<.01

Treatment Effects: Political Congregations and Boycott Attitudes and Behavior

In addition to the standard probability estimates based upon logit regression analyses, we employed treatment effect analyses via STATA 13 to estimate the causal effect of attending political congregations on our outcome, boycott attitudes and behaviors, among Non-Hispanic Whites: the one group in which we observed significant relationships. We do this to explore the likely behaviors and attitudes of White worship-goers if they have the same opportunity to attend a political versus a non-political congregation. This allows us to address the empirical contention that individuals may self-select into institutions reflecting their

⁵ Those who do not attend worship services and those who attend non-political congregations are compared to attendees of political congregations.

political/consumer preferences. The average treatment effects based upon the 1963 Negro Participation Study White analyses (Table 2) provide a baseline estimate of the proportion of Southern Whites who believe they would boycott a store if they served Blacks (47.99%) had the entire population of worship-going Southern Whites attended a political congregation (Base). It also provides us with the proportion of Southern Whites who would hold this belief assuming they all attended a non-political congregation (36.39%). This 11.6 percentage point drop in willingness to boycott represents a statistically significant difference. These analyses (available on request) also indicate that attending political congregations contributes to the consumer preferences of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics in the remaining analyses shown in Tables 2 and 3 that yield significant effects. In sum, our treatment affect analyses complement our predicted probability estimate analyses by providing a greater degree of certainty that attending political congregations associates with and likely informs consumer attitudes and behaviors.⁶

In sum, attending social-politically oriented congregations associates with Black and White interest in corporate responsibility. However, the degree to which clergy political appeals associates with participation in boycotting and selective buying campaigns is seemingly tied to the aim of the boycott. Regardless of the boycott's aim, clergy political appeals associate with White congregants' willingness to participate and actual participation in boycotts. For Blacks and Hispanics, however, it seems that clergy political appeals associate with boycott behavior only if their group is affected.

Discussion

This study examined the association between attending congregations where clergy and/or lay persons discussed social-political issues and the perceptions that Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics have about the social responsibility of corporations. We also examined racial differences in the degree to which attending political congregations associate with a willingness to and actual participation in boycotts and/or selective buying campaigns. Whites and Blacks who hear sermons about social-political issues are generally more interested in corporations acting responsibly, such as not polluting the environment, not producing munitions used to kill civilians, paying fair wages to workers, not discriminating, and, more generally, considering the impact of their business practices.

Similar to work on religion and political activism (Brown 2011), White attendees of religious congregations that inform them of social-political issues and/or encourage them to become politically active are more likely than other worship-going Whites to participate in boycotts. During the 1960s and 1970s, attending worship settings led by clergy who opposed the Vietnam War likely led many Whites to avoid buying products from companies producing war munitions (Hall and Hall). Between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s, White attendees of political congregations may have been more likely than other worship-going Whites to support Cesar Chavez's farm worker strike, which called for better working conditions for Mexican and Filipino American farm workers. During the 2000s, White attendees of political congregations may have been more inclined than other worship-going Whites to heed the call of clergy that supported the resolutions of the Presbyterian Church to divest from companies

⁶ While not displayed, the remaining treatment effect analyses are available upon request.

that did business in Israel until they respected the human rights of Palestinians (Goodstein). Overall, Whites who attend religious congregations where clergy, laity, and guest speakers make ethical appeals for congregants to take stands on issues and/or vote their conscience are more likely than Whites that hear no such messages to support and/or participate in economic boycotts.

Unlike Whites, Black and Hispanic attendees of political congregations were no more or less likely to boycott companies due to their political values than other Black and Hispanic worship-goers. However, when the aim of the boycott was to end discrimination, target a government agency to bring about policy reform, and/or to promote immigrant rights, Blacks and Hispanic attendees of political congregations were more likely to participate. It is quite likely that Black attendees of political churches in the 1960s were more likely than other Blacks to participate in “don’t shop where you can’t work” campaigns aimed at pressuring business to hire more Blacks in cities across America. In 2001, Black attendees of political congregations were likely more inclined to heed their clergy’s call to boycott Cincinnati businesses because of the city’s history of police brutality towards Blacks, the culmination of which was the acquittal of police officers for killing Timothy Thomas on April 7, 2001, an unarmed Black criminal suspect. Hispanic attendees of political congregations may have been more likely than other worship-going Hispanics to have participated in the May 1, 2006, Day Without an Immigrant boycott.

This study seems to suggest that when it comes to the capacity of clergy and lay leaders to encourage boycotts, race matters. As the dominant group, Whites, on average, hold greater wealth, have more opportunities for economic mobility, have better health, are more insulated from crime and police abuse, and overall are more satisfied with their lives than are Blacks and Hispanics (Oliver and Shapiro; Massey and Denton; Williams and Collins). This greater quality of life presumably grants Whites more time to contemplate how corporate practices effect carbon emission levels, evasive species, or even the future of human life on the planet. The freedom to not be overly concerned with the cost of necessities provides Whites with a greater capacity to heed clergy appeals to apply ethics to political and consumer behavior. Heeding such appeals may translate into persons not buying vehicles that emit greater carbon emissions, plastic toys, and/or non-biodegradable toiletries for environmental reasons as the World Council of Churches advocates. Regardless of how much they care about the environment, working class and poor families – which are disproportionately Black and Hispanic – have relatively greater difficulty affording political protests against essential low-cost items like toilet paper, disposable diapers, or food.

Just to be clear, the fact that for both Blacks and Whites we observe an association between hearing political sermons and concern about corporate responsibility suggests that those groups are likely receptive to clergy’s theological arguments about the importance of corporations recognizing human dignity over profits. Among Hispanics, we observe no such relationship, however. It is possible that we would have observed similar findings among Hispanics had Hispanic respondents been queried about the responsibility of corporations to treat workers in occupations in which their group predominate more fairly. At this point, however, we can only speculate.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the extent to which clergy's political appeals associate with congregants' interests in corporations acting ethically/responsibly is suggestive of worship-goers trusting that their clergy and fellow laity have their best interests at heart. In making such appeals, the most adroit clergy and lay leaders utilize religious symbols and stories in their testimonies, prayers, and sermons to encourage respondents to consider how their faith beliefs align with their political priorities and consumer behavior. For some congregants, such appeals move them to actually avoid products and stores they believe are out of line with their core beliefs. However, the ability to follow through by boycotting and/or selectively buying from stores that align with theological ideals likely has much to do with race.

Our study relied upon survey data collected in different years with different measurements for political sermons and boycotts. In doing so, we also took into account religious faith, political partisanship, and social-demographic characteristics. The fact that we observed consistent relationships between race, sermons, and boycotts suggests that these relationships are not a function of the survey's mode, time period, question wording, and our statistical controls. Rather, this study provides a fair amount of evidence that race impacts the relationship between hearing sermons/messages about social-political issues and Americans' willingness to participate and actual participation in boycotts and selective buying campaigns.

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Appendix A: Samples

Title	Principal Investigator	Date	Universe	Mode	Sample Size	Response Rate
Negro Political Participation Study, 1961-1962	Matthews, Donald, and Prothro, James	1961-1962	Stratified, multistage, probability samples of Black and White adults living in the 11 states of the former Confederacy	face-to-face interviews	618 Blacks 694 Whites	Not Reported
Harris 1969 New York City Racial and Religious Survey, No. 1925, Jewish	Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.	April 1969	Random Sample of White Jewish adults in New York City	face-to-face interviews	634	Not Reported
1984 National Black Election Study (NBES)	James S. Jackson, Patricia Gurin, and Shirley J. Hatchett	August-December 1984	All Black households in the United States with telephones.	Telephone survey	865	Not Reported
1996 National Black Election Study (NBES)	Katherine Tate	September 9, 1996, to January 6, 1997	All Black households in the United States with telephones	Telephone survey	1,216	Not Reported
1968 Detroit Area Study	Howard Schuman	Spring and Summer 1968	Individuals living in Black dwelling units in the city of Detroit during the spring and summer of 1968.	face-to-face interviews	619	82.9
Presbyterian Panel Survey, August 1995 -	Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and	1994-1996	Members and Elders of the Presbyterian	Self-administered mail survey	5,478 White Members and Elders	members, 68%; elders, 73%

Social Issues in Investing	John P. Marcum, Panel Administrator		Church USA			
2000 Religion and Politics	Robert Wuthnow	January 6 and March 31, 2000	American adults	Telephone interviews	Blacks=520 Whites=4,116 Hispanics=550	Not Reported
2006 Faith Matters Survey	Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell	June 29-August 29, 2006	American adults	Telephone interviews	Blacks=313 Whites=2,268 Hispanics=347	53%
Pew 2007: Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion	The Pew Hispanic Center and the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life	August 10-October 4, 2006	Latino adults in America	Telephone interviews	4,016	Not Reported
The Henry Institute National Survey of Religion and Public Life, 2008	Corwin E. Smidt Kevin den Dulk Bryan Froehle Douglas Koopman Stephen Monsma James Penning	November 5-25, 2008	American adults	Telephone interviews	1,167 Whites (Split Sample)	Not Reported

Appendix B: Boycott Measures

Study	Question Wording	Variable Measurement
Negro Political Participation Study, 1961-1962: Blacks	What if you aren't treated right at some white store? Would you do anything about it, or would you figure there wasn't much you could do?	0=Would not boycott 1=Would boycott
Negro Political Participation Study, 1961-1962: Whites	Now suppose you usually have lunch at a drugstore that is near where you work or shop (in town). One day when you walk in to eat, you see 4 couples of colored people eating there. Would you just go	0=Would not boycott 1=Would boycott

	ahead and eat there like always, walk out, or just what would you do?	
1968 Detroit Area Study	Have you ever taken part in any kind of non-violent protest for civil rights? Boycott	0=No 1=Yes
Harris 1969 New York City Racial and Religious Survey, No. 1925, Jewish	Have you ever boycotted a store?	0=No 1=Yes
1984 & 1996 NBES	Has your church or place of worship encouraged members to vote in this election?	0=No 1=Yes
1995 Presbyterian Panel Survey	Have you personally ever taken any of these actions because of concern about a corporation's actions on social issues? – As part of an organized effort, boycotted the products or services of a corporation	0=No 1=Yes
1995 Presbyterian Panel Survey	Have you personally ever taken any of these actions because of concern about a corporation's actions on social issues? – Deliberately avoided buying shares in a mutual fund and/or stock or bond issued by a corporation.	0=No 1=Yes
2000 Religion and Politics Study	How interested are you in the social responsibilities of corporations?	0=Less than quite interested 1=Quite interested
2006 Faith Matters Study	Have you bought or boycotted a certain product or service because of the social or political values of the company that provides it in the past 12 months?	0=No 1=Yes
Pew 2007: Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion	In the past 12 months, did your (synagogue/mosque/church) participate in an immigration rights protest or boycott, or not?	0=No 1=Yes
2008 Henry Institute National Survey of Religion and Public Life	In the past twelve months, have you boycotted, or deliberately bought, certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons?	0=No 1=Yes

Appendix C: Political Congregation Measures

Study	Question Wording	Variable Measurement
Negro Political Participation Study, 1961-1962	Are problems of race relations -- that is, how white and colored people get along -- ever discussed at your church?	0=Was not Discussed 1=Was Discussed
1968 Detroit Area Study	In your church, has . . . Money ever been collected at Sunday service for the Civil Rights movement? There ever been speakers at Sunday services who were running for public office and were seeking support?	0=No to Both 1=Yes to one or the other
Harris 1969 New York City Racial and Religious Survey, No. 1925, Jewish	Has any rabbi or Jewish organization leader or person talked with you or sent you literature urging you not to be hostile to black people or hasn't this happened?	0=Was not Discussed 1=Was Discussed
1984 and 1996 NBES	Has your church or place of worship encouraged members to vote in this election?	0=No 1=Yes
1995 Presbyterian Panel Survey	In the last two years, how often have you personally heard reference made to the relationship between Christian faith and values on the one hand, and the issue of socially responsible investing on the other? In sermons you have heard?	0=Less than often 1=Often
2000 Religion and Politics Study	During the past year, have you heard a sermon, lecture, or group discussion in your congregation that dealt with any the following? The social responsibilities of corporations? Protecting the environment Improving relations between blacks and whites The widening gap between rich people and poor people The government's policies toward the poor Being more supportive of homosexuals	0=Heard 0 to 2 of these issues 1=Heard 3 to 6 of these issues

2006 Faith Matters Study	How often, if at all, are social or political issues discussed from the pulpit in this congregation?	0=Less than once a month 1=At least once a month
Pew 2007: Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion	Does the clergy at your place of worship ever speak out on the issue of: Abortion Homosexuality Candidates and elections The importance of voting Laws regarding immigration	0=Heard 0 to 2 of these issues 1=Heard 3 to 5 of these issues
2008 Henry Institute National Survey of Religion and Public Life	Did the clergy or other leaders at your place of worship or religious leaders beyond your place of worship discuss any of the following issues during the (Presidential) campaign? Health care Environment Hunger/poverty Immigration	0=Did not discuss any issue 1=Discussed at least 1 issue

Appendix D: Control Variables

Political Party

Our political party variable is the respondents' self-identified political party affiliation: Republican, Democrat, and Independent.

Religious Faith

Using the Steensland et al. religious faith classification, we operationalize religious faith as: Mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, Catholic, Non-Christian, and Religiously Unaffiliated. For African Americans, we also include Historically Black Protestant.

Social-Demographic Characteristics

Our social demographic variables consist of self-identified gender (Male/Female), age, highest level of education, region of the country, and household income.