The Effect of Religion & Spirituality on Negotiation

ABA DR Section Mediation Committee
Teleseminar June 21, 2011

Jane Juliano
Associate, Initiative on Religion in International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School
How I came to study religion and negotiation

- HNII
- Divinity School: world religions, negotiation, ethics
- Psychology of decision-making
- Research methodology and design
**Systems of thinking**

- **Unconscious, intuitive:** quick, automatic, effortless; influenced by emotion (System 1)

- **Conscious thought:** lower, more conscious, effortful and logical (System 2)
Automaticity (or automatic processing)

- an “automatic” response;
- thinking that is nonconscious unintentional, involuntary, and effortless

Prime triggers access to stored mental structures

Together these processes show we have “sophisticated, flexible, and adaptive unconscious behavioral guidance systems.”

(Bargh and Morsella 2008)
Participants given series of five word sets:

“he it hides finds instantly”

Task: unscramble into four word sentences:

“He instantly finds it” or “He finds it instantly”
Example: “old” prime

Walking Time (sec)

Neutral

Old Age

Priming Condition

Bargh, Chen, & Burrows (1997) - Study 2: “Old” prime
Other word prime studies

- **Rudeness:** e.g., “intrude,” “annoyingly,” “interrupt”
- “Fairness”
- “Dependable,” “helpful,” “share,” “support”
Figure 1. Unconscious behavioral guidance systems. “Step 1” (solid lines) refers to automatic activation of distinct internal information processing systems; “Step 2” (dotted lines) refers to automatic influences of these activated systems on behavior.

(Bargh, Morsella, in press)
Object primes

Items on conference table
Is the tail wagging the dog?

- Relevant
- Novel or ambiguous situations
- Time?
Honesty/religious concept
Priming Studies
Surveys over past decades show that 85-90% of Americans believe in God and over 70% say religion is either very (54%) or fairly (26%) important to them (Gallup.com, 2009)

About 90% identify with a specific religion (Newport, 2009)

Many managers who believe in God “say their relationship with God influences their work lives more than any other factor” (D. W. McCormick 1994)

In a survey of 733 nationwide millionaires, 37% reported a strong religious faith, saying it is a “very important factor in explaining their economic success” (T. J. Stanley 2001)
## Major Religious Traditions in the U.S.

**Among all adults...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian</strong></td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Evangelical churches</em></td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mainline churches</em></td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hist. black churches</em></td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormon</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah’s Witness</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Greek Orthodox</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Russian Orthodox</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other Christian</em></td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Religions</strong></td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other</em></td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zen Buddhist</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Theravada Buddhist</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tibetan Buddhist</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other</em></td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim*</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunni</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shia</td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other world rel.</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Other faiths</em></td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Unitarians and other liberal faiths</em></td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>New Age</em></td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Native American rel.</em></td>
<td>&lt;0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unaffiliated</strong></td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing in particular</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Secular unaffiliated</em></td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Religious unaffiliated</em></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don’t Know/Refused</strong></td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100.
Religious Priming: Individual Task Studies

- Significantly less cheating with religious word primes
  (Brandon Randolph-Seng, Michael E. Nielsen) (2007)

- No cheating with Ten Commandments prime
  (Ariely et al.) (2008)

Word examples: heaven, bless, gospel, cross...
Primming stimuli: honest, dishonest, and control stimulus
1. Religious/spiritual words prime caused subjects to give more of $10 to other person
   - *Intrinsic* religious gave somewhat more than atheists after religious prime

2. “Law and order” words prime caused subjects to give almost as much

(Shariff and Norenzayan 2007)
“Law and order’ prime words:
civic, jury, court, police, and contract

“God” prime words:
spirit, divine, God, sacred, and prophet,
Religious and neutral words (subliminal) Does it matter if it's a *positive* religious word?

Number of charity pamphlets taken

![Bar chart showing the comparison between positive and neutral words in religious and non-religious prime conditions.](chart.png)
Moral Reasoning
Moral judgments are made quickly and intuitively. We know what is right and wrong like we know what is beautiful.

When called on to explain ourselves we make up reasons after the fact.

Humans react with intuition-based responses along the lines of an innate moral domains, then justify their answer with a reason afterwards.

(J. Haidt)
Social Intuitionist Model of Moral Judgment

How “A” Makes Moral Judgments

Eliciting Situation

A’s intuition → A’s judgment → A’s reasoning

B’s reasoning ← B’s judgment ← B’s intuition
Moral Hypocrisy

When we don’t follow our own moral values
Cognitive Dissonance Theory

- A most powerful behavioral motivation is the need to preserve a stable, positive self-image

- We need to see themselves as reasonable, moral and smart
Cognitive Dissonance

Shame, guilt, self-criticism
Anger and disgust with oneself

**Information clashes with self concept**

Option #1: Become aware
- Adjust behavior OR
- Adjust view of oneself

Option #2: Stuff it
- Justify, rationalize behavior OR
- Deny responsibility for behavior
Religiousness and hypocrisy
Religious quality/motivation (intrinsic v. extrinsic)

Priming studies with intrinsic v. extrinsic

- Intrinsic with religious prime = no hypocrisy (Carpenter & Marshall 2009)
- Intrinsic may have more accessible religious beliefs; may act more consistently with their faith (Cohen, Shariff, Hill 2008)
Putting it all together:

How religious values affect behavior and choices
Example from interview study
**MODEL**

- **Priming** *(e.g. prayer, scripture, meditation)*

  - **Negotiation situation**
    - Ent. Co wants land; files lawsuit; Homeowners protest

  - **Automatic, intuitive reaction and thoughts***
    - “We are right legally. They’re being unreasonable”

  - **Discomfort, Cognitive dissonance** ***

  - **Comfort**

  - **ACTION**
    - Review our choice, values and made decision re: action
    - “quiet seed” – Is this right? “We should see what is going on with them individually…”

---

*Influenced by culture, ingrained values

** Occurs When we perceive information that clashes with our self-image (e.g. I am good, virtuous, religious, etc...)
Mediator Implications

Practice Possibilities
Effect of continuing “cues” or “primes”

What about context primes

- Cues from attorney-advocates
- Mediator’s influence
- Setting
Mediation Implications

- Moral (e.g., fairness, character judgments) issues may be engaged outside of individuals’ awareness.

- Working with negotiators may require methods other than rational, interest-based bargaining paradigms.
Mediator Methods

- **Watch:**
  - Words
  - Objects and environment
Dealing with the tendency to be morally inconsistent:

- **Pre-mediation or caucus:**
  - Discuss personal/business ethical or moral standards in pre-mediation (or mediation) caucus meeting – e.g. mission statement, philosophy
  - Reason through how standards might apply in bargaining scenarios

- **Mirror; make dilemma salient**
  - Save face
Mediation Methods

Influencing a moral “intuitive” judgment

- Use narrative to try inspiring a different moral intuitive response
Thank you!