

God and the Welfare-state – Substitutes or Complements?
An Experimental test of the effect of the belief in God's control

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Abstract

The belief in God's control of the world, common to many of the world's religions, raises conflicting theoretical predictions regarding its role in shaping attitudes toward the welfare-state. In this paper we present the results of priming experiments designed to resolve this theoretical dispute. Study 1 demonstrates that priming the belief in God's control increases support for income redistribution and welfare-state expenditure among Israeli-Jews. In studies 2 and 3 we replicate this experiment among American-Jews and American-Christians, and show that this effect largely holds across cultural/political contexts (Israel and US) and three major religious traditions (Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism). These results challenge existing arguments about the substitutability of religious belief and support of strong political institutions, and the welfare-state in particular. The findings suggest that the traditional and common political gap between the economic left and the religious, based on the evaluation that religious beliefs form conservative economic preferences, might be over-stated.

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“No man is an island”

John Donne

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Last but not least, the One who gives wisdom to the wise.

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1. Introduction

Rabbi Meir used to say:

The critic [of Judaism] may bring against you the argument, 'If your God loves the poor, why does he not support them?'

If so, answer him, 'So that through them we may be saved from the punishment of Gehinnom.'

--- Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Baba Bathra, Folio 10a, Soncino Edition (translated)

R. Meir, a Jewish sage of the second century (A.D.), presents an imagined argument with 'the critic', regarding the theological consistency of the religious commandment of charity. In a world controlled by God, an act of charity could be interpreted as an act of heresy. This insight challenges the dialectical nature of religious morality. On one hand, according to many religious traditions God asks men to strive to moral excellence, and to build a morally decent society. On the other hand, and according to the same traditions, God is an important, if not the most important actor in world affairs, with His providence responsible for the rise and fall of nations as well as for the fate of individuals. Needless to say, this godly intervention is seen as morally perfect, given God is attributed with perfect information (omniscience) and a perfect moral sense. The religious mind can be seen as antithetical: human action is believed to be very important while at the same time it is undermined by the belief in the absolute control of God over world affairs.

This antithesis is further augmented when taking into account the deep psychological implications of the belief in God's control: on the one hand, it encourages reliance on a divine 'invisible hand', which stands beyond and above any human effort. On the other hand, this reliance could strengthen a habit of relying on external forces to provide security and order, and the subsequent endorsement of strong political institutions.

This seemingly inherent contradiction within religious belief gives rise to contradictory expectations with regard to religious involvement in building and endorsement of political institutions. Indeed, emerging literature in social and political psychology has shown that a belief in a controlling god can undermine support for political institutions (Kay et al. 2008, 2010, Laurin et al. 2012b). According to this understanding, God and earthly political institutions function as *substitutes*.

On the other hand, a substantial body of studies shows that religion strengthens prosociality and the ability to bind people together (for a review see Saroglou, 2012). This phenomenon was asserted by cultural evolutionary theorists to be conducive for the creation of large-scale societies

and their accompanying political institutions (Norenzayan and Shariff 2008, Graham and Haidt 2010). In addition, it was shown that religiosity tends to be associated with justification of political institutions. This finding was interpreted as driven by a higher demand for existential and epistemic security among religious individuals (Jost et al. 2013). According to this approach, a belief in a controlling God is *complementary* to earthly political institutions, and supports them.

In a similar vein, recent research shows mixed results with regard to the effect of religion on attitudes toward a specific political institution, namely the welfare-state (Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Guiso et al. 2003, Pittau et al. 2012). These results present a theoretical puzzle, given religion's tendency to cultivate self-transcendence (Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013) and a psychological need for external source of security (Pitlik and Kouba 2013), that suggest a *complementary* relationship between religion and the welfare-state.

A prominent response to this challenge in the religion and welfare-state literature is reminiscent of the '*substitutes* approach' from the general literature on religion and political institutions. It is suggested that that the religious belief in God's control of individuals' life events facilitates coping with the psychological burdens caused by adverse life events, resulting in a substantial overlap with the societal function of the welfare-state (Clark and Lelkes 2005, Scheve and Stasavage 2006). In addition, the belief in God's control also strengthens individuals' confidence in the justice of 'natural' economic market outcomes – a confidence that weakens the moral logic of the welfare-state (Jost et al. 2013).

Is the belief in God's control indeed responsible for decreasing support of the political institution of the welfare-state? The current literature provides only preliminary and indirect evidence in favor of this theoretical assertion. The current study tests the the effect of the belief in God's control (BGC) and welfare-state attitudes (WSA). In order to determine the impact of BGC on WSA we have designed several experimental studies that utilize a priming framework. Using either question-order manipulation or short essay priming, BGC is made cognitively accessible to some participants before they report their WSA, and their responses are compared to participants who did not receive any priming (control). In addition, following recent contributions in experimental research of religiosity (for instance, Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012), we provide cross-cultural replication of the experiment to facilitate generalization. We replicate the experiment across three American religious traditions (Jews, Catholics and Protestants) and Jews across two political/cultural contexts (Israel and the US). The key result that emerges from this study is that BGC *increases* WSA. This effect is largely robust across three religious traditions and two political contexts.

The study thus makes a threefold contribution:

First, on a *theoretical* level, these results provide support to the hypothesis that predicts a complementary relation between religious belief and the welfare-state. While this finding helps to illuminate the effect of religious belief on welfare-state, it challenges some recent contributions that concluded that BGC weakens endorsement of political institutions in general (Kay et al. 2008, 2010, Laurin et al. 2012a) and welfare-state in particular (Scheve and Stasavage 2006).

Second, on a *methodological* level, to the authors' knowledge, this is the first study researching the relationship between religion and WSA to employ an experimental method to manipulate BGC. It also serves as evidence for the importance of the cross-cultural replication of experiments.

Third, the results might have also *practical* implications. Historically, left-wing parties saw religious belief as opposed to their social justice agenda – religion is the "opiate of the masses" in the Marxist tradition (Marx 1964 (1844)). In contrast, this study shows that a common component of religious belief can be associated with higher support of the welfare-state. Although religious faith is composed of numerous beliefs – often seemingly contradictory – it still suggests the potential of political cooperation between religion and socio-political forces that seek to promote the idea of redistribution and the welfare-state. With the challenges that the welfare-state system faces in the new millennia (Pierson 2006), and the ongoing civil unrest regarding economic structure in diverse countries around the world, this observation could prove to be valuable.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

This review is organized as follows: First, we survey the broad literature on religion and WSA, comparing and contrasting it with the findings of the literature of the relationship between religion and prosociality. Second, we develop a theoretical framework for the influence of BGC on WSA. Two competing approaches emerge – the 'substitutes approach' and the 'complements approach' – both emerging from the general religion and political institutions literature and what we interpreted as their particular occurrences within the religion and WSA literature. For each approach, we generated hypotheses regarding main effects and moderators. Finally, in accordance with our cross-cultural experimental design, we offer theory-driven predictions with regard to the sensitivity of the effect to varying political context and religious traditions.

2.1 The relationship between religion and attitudes toward the welfare-state

2.1.1 Religion and prosociality

The vast majority of world religions emphasize prosocial values in their religious teachings: helping others, altruism and virtuousness (Chang 2005, Van Slyke and Brooks 2005). Furthermore, religious institutions have historically played a significant role in the provision of welfare and are known for evoking charity and compassion for the weak, and thus religion is known as one of the best predictors of philanthropy and charity (for a literature review, see Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011).

Indeed, there is a growing body of research demonstrating a connection between religiosity and helping behavior (e.g. Bloom 2012, Randolph-Seng and Nielsen 2007, Torgler 2006). For example, studies show associations between self-reported measures of religiousness and such prosocial characteristics as benevolence (Saroglou et al. 2004) and forgiveness (McCullough et al. 2003). The frequency of church attendance and religious identification have been found to be positively correlated with philanthropy in both observational studies (Chang 2005, Chaves 2002, Lyons and Nivison-Smith 2006) and in experimental studies in which the participants have an opportunity to donate in varying contexts (Bekkers 2007, Bekkers and Schuyt 2005, Eckel and Grossman 2004). Overall, the positive effect of religion on helping behavior seems to be significant and crosses cultures, religious traditions and methodological approaches (Saroglou et al. 2004, 2012).

Based on this literature, one would predict religiosity to have a positive effect on WSA due to its association with pro-social orientations.

2.1.2 Does religious prosociality translate into pro-welfare tendencies?

As compared with the solid evidence of the connection between religion and prosociality, when moving to the realm of the welfare-state, the picture becomes more complex. Research on the relationship between religiosity and WSA has yielded mixed results. Religiosity clearly impacts WSA independent of political context. Yet, the direction of the effect varies between contexts – a strengthening effect in some countries and a weakening effect in others. An important example is the cross-sectional analysis by Pittau et al. (2013). They show that while in the US higher worship-house attendance is associated with weaker support for redistribution, an opposite association is evident in Europe. Furthermore, diversity is found among European countries themselves. When they allow the relationship to vary across European countries a significant variance emerges: In some European countries (e.g. Germany, Portugal, UK, France, Greece, Sweden) religious attendance is negatively

associated with redistribution support. Yet, religious people who live in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, instead, tend to be more supportive.¹

In addition, different dimensions of religiosity were found to have opposite relationships with support for welfare policies. In a recent analysis of comparative data, Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2013) show that sensitivity to the multidimensional nature of religiosity and to different mechanisms underlying the religion-welfare relationship, uncovers differential effects of religiosity on welfare attitudes. The multidimensional framework allows for differential effects of the *social behavior* and *belief* dimensions of religion (Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2013, 2012). The *belief* dimension of religiosity concentrates on the extent of acceptance of theological assertions by individuals (e.g. existence of God, life after death, hell and heaven etc.). The religious *social behavior* dimension of religiosity consists of social practice which involves participation in organized religious communities and attendance at places of worship. Employing this framework, they show that the social dimension is associated with weaker support of welfare attitudes, while the association of the belief dimension with self-transcendence values had a strengthening effect.²

These findings suggest that in general the mechanisms relating religion to welfare attitudes are complex. In this study we explore conflicting theoretical expectations concerning the effect of a specific belief – the belief in God's control over the world.

2.2 The Belief in God's control and welfare attitudes

Before we analyze the effects of BGC on WSA we will first justify the selection of this specific belief as the focus of this paper.

First, as one of the most common beliefs in various world religions (Laurin et al. 2012a,b), this belief could be considered a good starting point to explore the effect of religious belief in general.

Second, a recent paper by Pitlik and Kouba (2013; described in more detail below) shows that the perceived degree of control over one's life is an important predictor of that individual's welfare attitudes – more important than other predictors that were surveyed in the extant literature, such as interpersonal trust. As a result, the authors designate religiosity, with its common (but not universal) belief that God's control constrains individual's ability to shape one's fate, as a worthwhile subject for inquiry to explore its effect on welfare attitudes (ibid., p. 14-16).

¹ Huber & Stanig (2011) and Amat and Wibbels (2009) arrive at similar conclusions regarding the context-sensitivity of the religion-welfare relationship, using different measures and data.

² Yet, they show that overall the effect of religious belief on welfare attitudes is negative, due to its association with conservative political ideology. Earlier evidence regarding the varied effect of different measures of religiosity can be found in Guiso et al. (2003).

Third, the effect of the belief in God's control on endorsement of political institutions has recently received attention in experimental social psychology (Kay et al. 2008, 2010; Laurin et al. 2012a,b). As will be described in detail below, these experiments can inform expectations regarding the effect of this belief on welfare attitudes, and also provide an empirical grounding for experimental manipulation of this belief.

A fourth motivation for focusing on this belief comes from a preliminary probing stage, which was conducted prior to the series of experiments described in this paper. In this stage, we explored – using experimental priming design – the effect of diverse mechanisms that were theorized in the extant literature to regulate the relationship between religiosity and welfare attitudes. The most interesting effect that was found in this stage (described in more detail in Appendix A) was received for the 'religious insurance' condition. In this condition, we prompted participants with an essay which explains that religious people have larger capabilities to cope with adverse life-events. According to the essay, these capabilities should be explained by the sense of security that stems from the religious belief that God controls the world and that the adverse event can be attributed to Him. When we analyzed the data we saw that the effect of this prime is moderated by type of religiosity: participants, who agreed that religion is more about relationship with other people than with God, increased their support for the welfare-state, while participants who disagreed showed decreased support. From this we can learn that (1) BGC might have effect on WSA; (2) this effect seems relatively important, as it was more evident than the effect that other mechanisms that were tested have shown; and that (3) the moderated effect suggests that the nature of the effect BGC is complex, and deserves further clarification.

Given these preliminary insights, it seems promising to investigate the effect of BGC on WSA. We now turn to construct the theoretical grounding for the competing hypotheses – one that asserts that BGC weakens WSA while the other asserts that BGC strengthens WSA.

2.2.1 The weakening hypothesis – God and the government as substitutes

One of the mechanisms postulated in recent literature is what can be called the 'Substitutability Argument' (SA). According to this hypothesis religion and the welfare-state overlap to some extent: researchers suggest that religion acts as a substitute for state-provided insurance against adverse life events, thus reducing demand for redistribution as a collective insurance device (Scheve & Stasavage 2006, Chen & Lind 2006).

The SA can be formulated in more than one way. There are two major versions of this argument which are not always clearly distinguished in the literature. These versions can be

characterized along the lines of the multidimensional approach to religiosity (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, 2013) which stresses the difference between the *social behavior* dimension of religiosity and the *belief* dimension.

First, the *social behavior* version – in this version the religious community plays the central role. The religious community allows its members to enjoy certain material benefits. In many cases the community maintains welfare services that provide monetary support to its members when they fall on hard times (Gruber & Hungerman 2007, Huber & Stanig 2011). In addition, participation in the religious community allows individuals to deal not only with the material but also psychological costs that come with major adverse life events such as job loss, major sickness, or even everyday anxiety and challenges (Clark & Lelkes 2005, Scheve & Stasavage 2006).

As this paper is more interested in the effect of religious belief, it does not address this social version. Instead we turn to the *theological version* in which religious belief plays the central role. Religious belief is theorized to function as a substitute to state-welfare in two ways.

First, some common themes in the world's major religions make the psychic costs of adverse life events more bearable (Pargament 1997, Scheve & Stasavage 2006). Recent research generalized this assertion, postulating that *God and government answer the same psychological need – the need of external control*. Both a strong government and BGC preserve a sense of order and structure, in the face of a seemingly chaotic universe. As a result, the existence of one – God or government – compensates for the other. Social psychologists have shown in several experimental studies that manipulating the strength of belief in God or government alters the belief attributed to the other in the opposite direction (Kay et al. 2008, 2010). In this sense, the welfare-state institutions should be seen as a particular case of this general assertion – religion satisfies the need for security that the welfare-state supplies using redistribution and welfare services.

A second role that is played by theology is based on the argument that *attributing a dominant role in world affairs to God undermines the need for human effort in building political institutions*. This assertion had been put forward in two papers by Laurin and colleagues: In the first paper, Laurin et al. (2012a) show experimentally that priming BGC lowers goal-attainment motivations – when God plays an active role in the world less human assertiveness is needed.

In a second paper, Laurin et al. (2012b) provided evidence that the finding regarding people's private lives extends to political life. The authors show that support for state-sponsored judicial punishment decreases if the belief in God's control is made salient (studies 1-3). In addition, they show evidence that this effect is driven by a type of SA mechanism: people view God as responsible for distributing punishment, which makes their human actions less needed. They show that a belief in God's control is correlated with attributions to God of responsibility for distributing punishment

(study 4A) and that experimentally priming such attributions yields a similar effect to priming God's control (Study 4B). This argument can be imported from the realm of judicial justice to the realm of economic-social justice: the belief in God's control over the world – given the omniscience and perfect moral will, commonly attributed to Him – suggest that he is the best protector of justice, giving each person his or her due and helping the needy. In comparison to Him the welfare-state seems inadequate and unnecessary. God's providence substitutes for human-run political and societal institutions.

This theoretical line of thinking lays the groundwork for the following prediction regarding the effect of God's control:

H1: Increasing salience of belief in God's control over the world will weaken support for the welfare-state and its institutions.

In addition, Laurin et al.'s (2012b) evidence that the effect is driven by attributions to God of responsibility gives rise to the possibility that the effect would be stronger for individuals who tend to attribute societal responsibility to God, resulting in the following moderation hypothesis:

H2: The weakening effect of the prime would be greater for participants that report high levels of attribution to God of societal responsibility (and vice versa).

2.2.2 The strengthening hypothesis – God and the government as complements

In contrast to the SA literature, a different theoretical basis tends to support the opposite expectation, namely, that BGC might actually *strengthen* the support for the welfare-state. The complementary relations between BGC and WSA, is related both to the 'demand' for the welfare-state and the willingness to 'supply' the welfare-state.

With respect to the ramifications of this belief for the 'demand side', an important contribution was brought forth recently in a work by Pitlik and Kouba (2013). Using a large pool of cross-sectional surveys, the authors show that support for the welfare-state is associated with the degree of control over one's life: people who report a high level of control over their lives exhibit weaker support for welfare-state measures, and vice versa. Individuals who have the impression that they have no control over their own lives, a belief that individual success or failure does not depend on personal effort, may see less justice in 'market outcomes' and would be more willing to insure

themselves using a governmental 'security net'.³ Furthermore, the authors recognize the particular relevance of religious belief in this context. *The belief that one's fate is determined by God is at the core of many religious traditions. As a consequence, it is probable that religious believers would have a weaker feeling of control over their lives, and stronger demand for the welfare-state.*⁴

As for the positive effect of BGC on the 'supply side' of the welfare-state, i.e. the willingness to contribute resources to facilitate its operation, two theoretical lines should be considered. First, it could be the case that even if God is perceived in the religious cognition as running worldly affairs, it is perceived mainly as regulator of human action, and not as a "competitive provider", so to speak. In other words, God gives humans freedom of action and His interventions are mainly aimed at rewarding the good-doers and punishing the wrong-doers. Following this line, a dominant school in social and evolutionary psychology contends that the effect of religious belief on behavior is explained by the *supernatural monitoring* mechanism (Norenzayan & Shariff 2008). For example, it was shown that the effects of priming religious belief are similar to the effect of social surveillance and the fear from punishment implicit in it (Geravis et al. 2012). In addition, it was found that priming religious belief reduced cheating only for those who endorsed a punishing god image and not for those with a forgiving image (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2011). The supernatural monitoring hypothesis offers a unified explanation for these findings and implies that God concepts may promote prosociality by reminding people of watchful supernatural agents who are capable of moral judgment (Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008). This accumulation of research has led some scholars to theorize that religion has an important function in the social infrastructure that underlies the rise of large-scale societies (Norenzayan & Shariff 2008, Graham & Haidt 2010). Priming BGC could thus be reasonably assumed to augment this effect – the stronger the cognitive accessibility of the possibility of divine intervention of a moralizing god, the greater the effect on prosociality is expected, and a stronger WSA.

A second reason on the 'supply side' in support of the strengthening effect is the argument that *BGC might augment benevolent values*. First, and as discussed above, most major religions teachings encompass helping the poor and the needy, and embrace teachings about the responsibility of the devout towards fellow human beings. Religious beliefs may be thus *generally* expected to promote values that emphasize altruism, helping people in need, being concerned with the well-being of others and contributing to collective goods (Malka et al. 2011, Saroglou et al. 2004). As a result,

³ As the authors note, this psychological tendency is also supported by Alesina et al.'s contribution (2001) on the positive relationship between the belief that that wealth is more the result of luck rather than effort and preferences for redistribution. See also Tabellini (2010) and Williamson & Kerekes (2011).

⁴ Although Pitlick and Kouba do not find evidence for stronger welfare attitudes among the religious, the theoretical case they make is strong enough to justify further inquiry. This is especially true since their operationalization of religiosity is limited to a single-item measuring the subjective importance of religiosity.

religious belief is suggested to have a positive effect on redistribution and government responsibility because it is associated with concern for the well-being of others. Indeed, in a recent analysis of comparative data, it has been shown that the belief dimension of individual religiosity is related to higher support for the welfare-state. Specifically, this effect is mediated by the correlation between religious beliefs and self-transcendence values (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013).

Beyond these general considerations regarding religious belief, there are additional, more *specific* reasons that associate BGC in particular with benevolence, and a strengthening effect on WSA. These are based on recent findings in the psychological literature. As an extension of Attachment Theory (the psychological theory that stresses the importance of close attachments to 'significant others'; Bowlby 1982) emphasizes the possibility of God as being a 'significant other' for the believer. Specifically, it was shown that belief in God's control might function as a 'secure base' from which the individual can securely explore the world (Granqvist et al. 2012). Experimental studies that follow this theoretical line show that 'secure base' feelings tend to increase prosocial behavior and altruism (Mikulincer et al. 2003, 2005). Recently, evidence was found for the argument that this 'secure base' feeling might have an effect on political preferences. It was found that arousing feelings of security tends to strengthen liberal political orientation, such as weaker support for a strong leader and for the American military campaign in Iraq (Hart & Gillath 2010). A pro-welfare stance is a common (but not universal) component of liberal ideology, and is centrally based on other-regarding discourse – thus BGC may increase the support for it. As a result, increasing the accessibility of the belief in God's providence and control of the world might increase the support for the welfare-state.

All these theoretical lines stand in contrast to the 'weakening hypothesis'. Consequently, competing, 'strengthening hypothesis' is raised:

H3: Increasing salience of belief in God's control over the world will increase support of the welfare-state and its institutions.

In addition, building on the theoretical considerations regarding the mechanism behind the strengthening effect – BGC positive association with benevolence and supernatural monitoring – two additional moderation hypotheses are raised:

H4: A strengthening effect of the prime would be greater for participants that report higher levels of benevolence (and vice versa).

H5: A strengthening effect of the prime would be greater for participants that report higher levels of belief in God-given reward and punishment (and vice versa).

2.3 Sensitivity to Context and Religious Tradition

Although religion in general has a universal dimension, and BGC is common to many religious traditions, it cannot be taken for granted that its effect is uniform across different religious cultures (Laurin et al. 2012b). The multidimensional framework in the research of religion calls for sensitivity not only to dimensions of *belief* and religious social *behavior*, but also to the *belonging* to a specific religious culture (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, 2013). Two main determinants of a religious culture are its political-national context and religious affiliation (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, 2013, Johnson & Cohen 2014).

2.3.1 Sensitivity to political context: Israel and the US

The interaction of religious and national cultures has long been recognized in the humanities, anthropology, sociology and political science and more recently in psychology (for a review see Johnson & Cohen 2013). As was recently asserted:

"There are many aspects of the national culture that converge to shape the different components of a religious culture including (but not limited to) socioeconomic conditions, real or perceived threats to national security, and cultural innovations such as technological advances, mass media and entertainment... As Diamond (1997) has elaborated the local ecology (available resources, types of food, water, predictable weather patterns, topography, etc.) and the prevalence of disease also afford threats and opportunities in the national level. Religious cultures may institute various moral codes, rituals, and social norms to deal with conditions in the local ecology such as level of disease threat ..."

(Johnson & Cohen 2013, pp. 340-341)

As these authors note, national-political contexts do not only effect religious beliefs and norms themselves, but can also moderate the effects of religious culture on individual identity formation. A few examples that also have relevance to socio-economic policy are worth mentioning. First, Protestantism was found to be associated with individualism and the values of self-expression and prosperity (Weber 1993 [1922]). However, these values appear to be less important to Protestants in Communist national cultures (Roccas & Schwartz 1997). Second, Sasaki and Kim (2011) found that individualistic themes were more common in US churches, whereas communitarian themes were more frequent in Korean churches. As last example Stark (2001) found that, in Western cultures, religion sustains moral order only if religious beliefs center on an omnipotent, omniscient, moralizing deity. This is not the case in Eastern national cultures. Varying national-political contexts (in a relevant manner) could thus be credibly expected to condition effects of religious beliefs on political attitudes.

In this paper, in order to control for such contextual differences, we replicated our experiment among the same religious tradition – Jews – living in substantially different political/cultural contexts, namely, Israel and the United States. Although these contexts are home to the two largest Jewish communities in the world, they differ both by the importance of Judaism in the national context, as well as by the prevailing cultural tendencies regarding economic ideology.

Israel is currently home to the majority of Jews in the world. Judaism is the dominant religious tradition in Israel, both by numbers and by formal institutions. With regard to the prevailing economic discourse, although Israel's economic discourse has shifted in the neo-liberal direction in the last 25 years (Shafir & Peled 2002), it still has deep roots in the European-style welfare-state discourse. In fact, the attitudinal support for income redistribution in Israel is among the highest in the Western world (Be'ery 2014, Olivera 2012).

By comparison, the US is home to the largest concentration of Jews outside Israel (DellaPergola 2012). Yet, Jews comprise only 3% of the US population (Teigh et al. 2013), and thus should be considered as a minority culture. Being a minority raises the possibility of being affected by the dominant culture (Johnson & Cohen 2013). What are the prevailing economic ideology tendencies in the US? According to many scholars, the US is characterized by a distinctive relationship between religion and economic policy. Building on Max Weber's theoretical foundations, the Protestant Work Ethic has been identified by Katz and Hass (1988) as one of America's "core values," and it is conceptually linked to perceptions of deservingness and the justification of market outcomes (Jost et al. 2013). This is an important difference from Israel's more European-oriented welfare-state discourse.⁵ As a result we deduce that:

H6: for American-Jews, the belief in God's control will have a negative effect on welfare attitudes, or at least a less positive effect than among Israeli Jews.

2.3.2 Sensitivity to Religious Affiliation: Jews, Catholics, Protestants

The basis for expecting divergent effects of different religious traditions on attitudes gains its support from a line of empirical investigations that showed that belonging to different religious traditions yields dispositional differences. Three specific findings have relevance to our inquiry. First, it was shown that American Protestants and Jews differ on the degree to which they are willing to attribute immorality to thoughts. This difference is related to the praxis-orientation of Judaism vs. the belief-

⁵ Furthermore, a comparison of Israeli and North-American samples allows us to be closer to political context in which Laurin et al. (2012b) received their weakening effect on support for political institutions. This is also manifested in the fact that using an English version of the questionnaire allowed us to use the original prime for BGC as in Laurin et al. (2012b), resulting in a more natural environment for comparison and replication of their results.

orientation of Christianity, and Protestantism in particular (Cohen & Rozin 2001). Furthermore, it was demonstrated that American Jews tend to be less individualistic than Christians, especially Protestants. Additionally, this difference can be accounted for by relying on the level of emphasis on individual salvation in Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism (Cohen & Hill 2007). Finally, Protestants were found to attribute results to one's deeds rather to external influence, relative to Catholics (Li et al. 2012). These three examples document dispositional differences between adherents of different religions and religious denominations.

In the current study we replicate our experiment among adherents of Judaism and the two main strands of Christianity - Catholicism and Protestantism. As was mentioned above, Christianity is more belief-oriented than Judaism, and this difference was found to have an impact on dispositions and attitudes (Cohen & Rozin 2001, Cohen & Hill 2007). As a result, one might hypothesize that Christians would tend to be more sensitive to the 'substitution effect' of BGC with human actions.

In addition, we would like to be attentive to the fundamental division within Christianity, namely between Catholicism and Protestantism. Protestants are theoretically more prone to the weakening effect of BGC. This division could be relevant for two reasons. First, Protestantism tends to emphasize the belief-orientation of Christianity (Cohen & Rozin 2001), and this tendency might augment the weakening effect of the BGC. Second, Protestant dogma tends to emphasize individualistic religiosity and to strengthen belief that one's fate is attributable to his decisions, and this dogmatic difference was found to induce empirical differences, at least among American Protestants (Cohen & Hill 2007, Li et al. 2012). These two tendencies are related to the fact that American Protestantism was the paradigmatic exemplar for Weber's Protestant Work Ethic (Weber 1958/1905). As discussed earlier, this paradigm predicts a stronger weakening effect of the belief in God's control.

We thus hypothesize:

H7: The belief in God's control will have a negative effect or weaker positive effect among Christians, relative to Jews. This will be more evident for Protestants compared to Catholics.

2.3.3 Relationship between self-reported and primed belief in God's Control (BGC)

Finally, we were also interested in studying the potential dynamics between self-reported and primed BGC. In Laurin et al.'s experiments (2012b), the effect of belief in God's control on endorsement of political institutions, was moderated by the salience of this belief. When participants' God beliefs were salient, those who saw God as a powerful, intervening entity endorsed state-sponsored punishment less. In contrast, when participants' God beliefs were not salient, those who saw God as a

powerful, intervening entity endorsed state-sponsored punishment more. However, in another paper by Laurin and colleagues investigating BGC's effect on self-regulation (2012a) the priming effect is independent of the level of belief. In addition, a large number of papers that investigate the effect of religious priming report that the effect of contextual manipulation of religion is independent of one's level of devoutness. (e.g. Ahmed & Salas 2013, Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, Norenzayan & Shariff 2008). This substantial literature seems to outweigh the single paper by Laurin and colleagues that showed dependency on level of belief. As a result we hypothesize:

H8: The effect of the priming of belief in God's control is independent of participants' self-reported level of this belief.

3. The Current Study – Overview

As reviewed above, the current literature gives rise to competing hypotheses regarding the effect of BGC on WSA. In this study we aim to test these hypotheses experimentally. We manipulate the salience of BGC and then measure its effects on attitudinal support for redistribution and welfare-state. In three studies we replicate this experimental framework among four distinct samples that vary in both political/cultural and religious contexts – Israeli-Jews, American-Jews, American-Catholics and American-Protestants. Varying our sample along both political/cultural and religious lines, allows us to overcome the narrow sampling limitation, common to psychological experimentation (for example of cross-cultural experimental apparatus in the field of religion and politics, see: Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012).

3.1 Prime Manipulation of BGC

Priming is typically thought to affect political cognition by increasing the accessibility of particular memory objects (Valentino et al. 2002, Wyer & Srull 1986). Thus, certain questions being asked before target items may make some considerations more accessible to respondents (Tourangeau & Rasinski 1988). It is currently agreed that even salient issues, such as abortion beliefs, may be susceptible to such question order effects (Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, Tourangeau et al., 1989). Consequently, the priming framework in this study varied the question order of items that tap the belief in God's control. Abundant research finds that question order affects responses to subsequent items (e.g. Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, Tourangeau et al. 1989, Zaller & Feldman 1992). Experimental studies also tested for question order effects involving religiosity items, reporting that religious attitudes were affected by prior questions about religious behaviors (Ben-Nun Bloom &

Arikan 2012). With notable importance to our investigation, this method was used in the line of research that asserted the weakening effect of God's control on political institutions – and specifically to test its validity with respect to the welfare-state (Laurin et al. 2012b, Kay et al. 2010).

For these reasons, question-order priming technique is central to the current paper. However, Study 1 varies the manipulation technique, utilizing an essay priming in addition to question-order priming. Varying the prime instrument provides an additional test of the robustness of the experimental effect.

4. Study 1

In this first study, we test the effect of manipulating the salience of the belief in God's control on preferences for redistribution and welfare-state expenditure, among Israeli Jews.

4.1 Methods

4.1.1 Participants

A total of 78 Israeli Jews participated in the study: 23 political science undergraduates attending the Hebrew University were recruited for partial course credit and an additional 38 participants were voluntarily recruited utilizing a 'snowball' method using a Qualtrics link distributed to the first author's social networks. In order to add diversity into the religious sample of this study an additional 17 participants were recruited from the Ultra-Orthodox College in Jerusalem (of these, 11 defined themselves as Ultra-Orthodox/Haredi).⁶ Due to the religious character of the hypothesis, over-sampling of religious participants was conducted – about three-quarters of the sample defined themselves as religious (n=55, 73%).⁷

4.1.2 Procedure

After reviewing and signing the consent form, the participants filled out a questionnaire. Participants were randomly allocated to one of three experimental conditions– two 'salient' conditions and a one 'not salient' condition (control). In the first 'salient' condition (*salient1*) the participants were first exposed to a battery of questions regarding God's control and then asked to answer an array of questions regarding the dependent variable (DV). In the second 'salient' condition (*salient2*), we varied the priming technique, and used a short essay that stresses God's control of the world. In the

⁶ The first two groups participated in a computerized version of the experiment, while the third (Ultra-Orthodox College in Jerusalem) was implemented in a pen-and-paper version due to limitations posed by the environment of the college.

⁷ Descriptive statistics of this sample – and the samples of the following studies – are displayed in Appendix C.

'not salient' condition the participants answered the DV items, without any the prior prompt. In both conditions, after answering the DV items, participants reported additional demographics and attitudes on social issues related to the welfare-state.

4.1.3 Materials

Primes:

- Question-order Prime (*salient1*): As in previous study (Laurin et al. 2012b), we prime BGC using a battery of three questions measuring participants' BGC. These questions attempt to make the concept of God's control cognitively accessible for participants. The three items were (original Hebrew version is provided in appendix A): 'God, or some type of supreme being, is in control, at least in part, of the events within our universe;' 'The events that occur in this world unfold according to God's, or some other supreme being's, plan;' and 'God, or some other supreme being, makes most events in our world happen' (A scale created by averaging these three items showed very strong internal consistency, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$.) The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent each of the statements resembles their beliefs, on a five-point scale (1 - "not at all" to 5 – "to a great extent").
- Essay Prime (*salient2*): Some previous studies that investigated experimentally the effect of BGC on endorsement of political institutions, used essay priming. In these studies, participants' were exposed to a short essay that makes arguments in favor of BGC, before answering the DV items (Kay et al. 2011, Laurin et al. 2012a). We also employ this technique in our study. In the *salient2* condition, participants' read an essay, written by the authors, stressing the viability of BGC in face of modern doubts about it (original Hebrew version is provided in appendix A). In order to facilitate cognitive processing, participants were also asked to summarize in few sentences the main point of the essay.

Dependent variables:

1. Government Responsibility for redistribution (*Redistribution DV*) – This single item is a commonly used measure in studies of preferences for redistribution and a welfare-state (e.g. Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Olivera 2012, Stegmüller et al. 2012). Its wording is: "*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels*". Responses are recorded using a five-point scale (1 – "strongly agree" to 5 – "strongly disagree"; responses were later reversed so that higher results would represent higher support of redistribution).

2. Preferences for welfare-state expenditure (*Expenditure DV*) – this scale is based on a module adapted from the ISSP 2006 questionnaire.⁸ The introduction to the module is as follows: *'Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you indicate "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it.'* Participants were then asked to report their expenditure preferences on a 5-point scale (1- "much less" to 5 – "much more"). The expenditure areas they were asked to relate to were as follows: health, old age benefits, welfare services to the needy, and unemployment benefits.⁹ Based on this module, a scale for welfare-state expenditures was then constructed, consisting of the four basic functions of welfare-state's social insurance – health, old age, unemployment, and welfare (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$).

Controls:

Religiosity: We have included in our analysis controls for two aspects of religiosity – first, we controlled for degree of belief in God's control over the world, using the aforementioned battery of questions. In addition, we controlled for the general religiosity of respondents using the prayer-house attendance item, a conventional item for measuring individual religiosity (Scheve and Stasavage 2006, Stegumüller 2012; 8 point scale – 1 – "Never or almost never" to 8 – "More than once a day").

Demographics: we included a series of relevant demographic controls in the analysis: *age* (continuous numerical measure), *sex* (dummy; 1 if male, 0 if female), *class* (5 point scale, 1- low class to 5-high class); *political orientation* (1 to 10 scale, the higher the score, the more right wing).

4.2 Results and short discussion

Table 1 and the accompanying Figures 1 and 2 show the main effect of the 'salient' conditions, compared to the 'not salient'/control group. The results are shown with respect to the two dependent variables described above: government responsibility for redistribution (Figure 1) and preferences for welfare-state expenditure (Figure 2).

⁸ For more information see the survey's web page:
<http://www.gesis.org/en/issp/issp-modules-profiles/role-of-government/2006/>

⁹ We also included in this module items regarding 'religious services' and 'children benefits' but these were not included in the scale since they are not related to the conceptual core of welfare-state.

Table 1: Effect of BGC on WSA (Study 1)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redistr.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> |
| <i>Salient1</i> | 0.568* (0.268) [0.036] | 0.736** (0.262) [0.006] | -0.101 (0.800) [0.899] | -0.067 (0.775) [0.931] | 0.308* (0.152) [0.045] | 0.474** (0.144) [0.001] | -0.416 (0.456) [0.363] | -0.302 (0.419) [0.474] |
| <i>Salient2</i> | 0.675* (0.263) [0.012] | 0.949** (0.251) [0.000] | 0.924 (0.717) [0.200] | 1.044 (0.670) [0.123] | 0.268+ (0.149) [0.075] | 0.435** (0.140) [0.003] | 0.196 (0.409) [0.634] | 0.039 (0.364) [0.914] |
| <i>Age</i> | | -0.015 (0.017) [0.391] | | -0.012 (0.017) [0.470] | | 0.005 (0.011) [0.667] | | 0.007 (0.011) [0.531] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | -0.797** (0.279) [0.005] | | -0.858** (0.285) [0.003] | | -0.287+ (0.151) [0.061] | | -0.306* (0.153) [0.048] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.169 (0.135) [0.213] | | -0.131 (0.139) [0.347] | | -0.045 (0.073) [0.539] | | -0.030 (0.074) [0.686] |
| <i>Worship-house attendance</i> | | -0.026 (0.069) [0.705] | | -0.007 (0.072) [0.927] | | -0.087* (0.038) [0.025] | | -0.085* (0.039) [0.033] |
| <i>Political orientation</i> | | -0.107+ (0.057) [0.061] | | -0.097+ (0.057) [0.095] | | -0.041 (0.031) [0.186] | | -0.033 (0.031) [0.294] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | 0.010 (0.114) [0.931] | -0.113 (0.138) [0.416] | -0.055 (0.154) [0.720] | | 0.098 (0.062) [0.118] | -0.049 (0.079) [0.536] | -0.011 (0.084) [0.900] |
| <i>BGCXsalient1</i> | | | 0.187 (0.208) [0.371] | 0.224 (0.204) [0.274] | | | 0.195 (0.118) [0.103] | 0.218+ (0.110) [0.052] |
| <i>BGCXsalient2</i> | | | -0.056 (0.183) [0.762] | -0.023 (0.171) [0.892] | | | 0.022 (0.104) [0.830] | 0.111 (0.093) [0.237] |
| Constant | 3.000** (0.191) [0.000] | 4.945** (0.768) [0.000] | 3.377** (0.532) [0.000] | 4.876** (0.871) [0.000] | 3.307** (0.109) [0.000] | 3.667** (0.429) [0.000] | 3.479** (0.306) [0.000] | 3.900** (0.475) [0.000] |
| Observations | 113 | 105 | 110 | 105 | 112 | 103 | 109 | 103 |
| R-squared | 0.064 | 0.271 | 0.093 | 0.283 | 0.043 | 0.289 | 0.070 | 0.319 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Figure 1: Effect of BGC on Support for government redistribution (Study 1; Israeli-Jews)

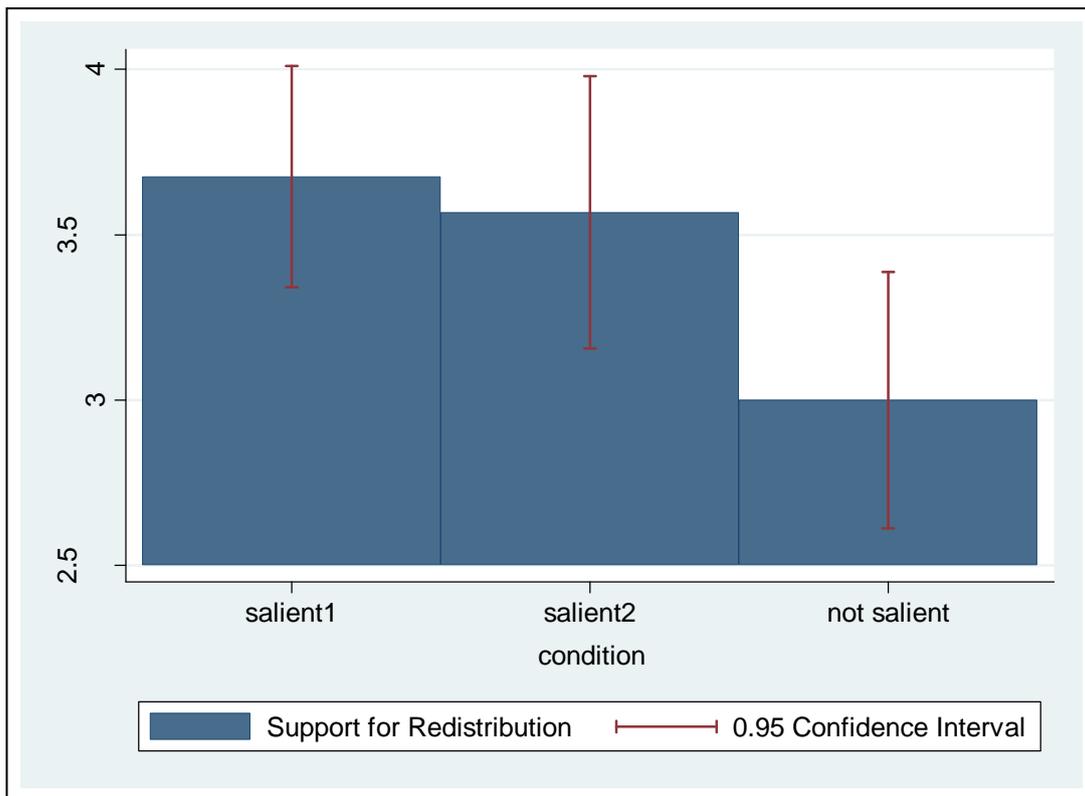
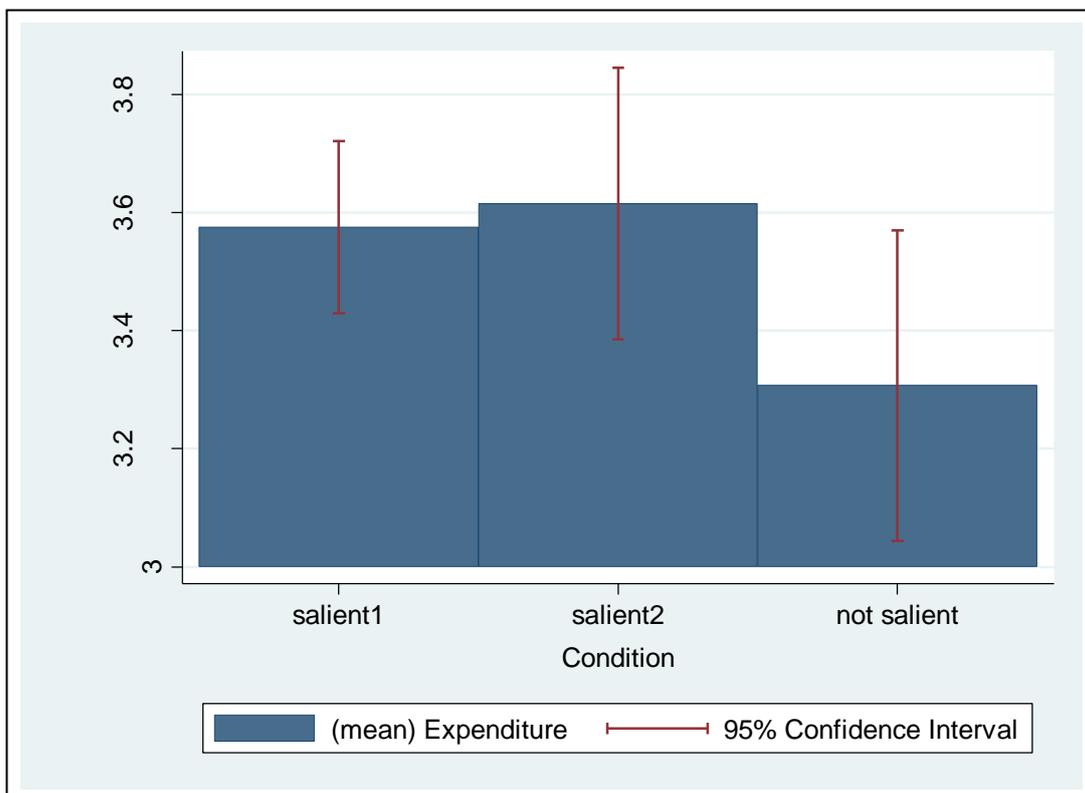


Figure 2: Effect of BGC on Support for welfare expenditure (Study 1; Israeli-Jews)



Models 1-4 present regression analysis results for the redistribution DV (*Redistribution*) and models 5-8 for the welfare expenditure DV (*Expenditure*). Our primary focus of analysis is the effect of the God's control primes on the DVs. The relevant pair models are 1 and 2 and 5 and 6. In each pair the first model is the bare-bones specification and in the second relevant covariates are added. In all four models the coefficient of the primes (*salient1* and *salient2*) is positive and highly significant ($p < 0.01$; see Figures 1 and 2 for graphic illustration). Exposure to the concept of God's control increased the support for the welfare-state across two priming variations and two DVs. This consistent effect lends evidence to the strengthening hypothesis (H3), which argued for the positive effect of belief in God's control on welfare attitudes.¹⁰

Next, we test if the level of the belief in God's control moderates the effect of the prime (Models 3 and 4 and 7 and 8). The interaction term yields insignificant coefficients, except for model 8 ($p = 0.052$). Broadly speaking it seems then that the priming effect is not restricted to believers. This phenomenon is consistent with our hypothesis (H8).

All in all, the results of the first study provide evidence for the strengthening effect of BGC control among Israeli-Jews. The subsequent studies are aimed at testing the generalizability of this result by varying the nature of the sample.

5. Study 2

In study 1 we have observed that priming BGC strengthens WSA among Israeli Jews. Is this effect context-sensitive? In order to control for context effect, we replicated the experiment among Jews living in substantially different political/cultural context, namely, the US, which is home to the largest concentration of Jews outside Israel (DellaPergola 2012). As was discussed in the literature review, the US is an interesting context for comparison, since its political culture is characterized by a distinctive relationship between religion and economic policy, namely, the Protestant Work Ethic. In this relationship religious belief is associated with conservative economic preferences (Katz & Hass 1988, Jost et al. 2013). As a result we predicted that for American Jews, the belief in God's control would have negative effect on welfare attitudes or at least weaker positive effect (compared with Israeli-Jews; H6).

¹⁰ Although only of secondary interest, we will comment briefly the results for demographic variables: age and social class have an insignificant effect; sex has a substantial and significant negative effect across the models, which represents the documented weaker WSA of men (Alesina 2011, Pittau et al. 2012); prayer-house attendance has a small but significant effect in the expenditure DV models (6,8) which is consistent with the weakening effect on WSA of social dimension of religion (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013); political orientation has a marginally significant negative effect, which represents the correlation between conservative ideology and weaker support of WSA (Alesina 2011).

In addition, we introduced to the current study items that would allow us to find evidence – using moderation analysis – for the mechanisms that were hypothesized to drive the effect of BGC on WSA, namely, (1) attribution of societal responsibility to God; (2) the value of the benevolence; and, (3) belief in God-given reward and punishment.

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Participants

78 American Jews participated. The participants were recruited using a Qualtrics link that was distributed through virtual outlets in a method aimed at attaining diversity of sample, with regard to age, sex, religiosity, social class and geographical location.^{11,12}

5.1.2 Procedure

Upon clicking on the distributed link, the participants were directed to a Qualtrics-powered online questionnaire. The questionnaire was essentially the English version of the questionnaire from Study 1. The priming instrument was the English original of Laurin et al. (2012b), and the measures for the dependent-variables were adapted from the American version of ISSP 2006. Demographic measures were adjusted to fit the American context. In addition, and in order to facilitate comparison with Laurin et al.'s experiment (2012b) we included the subjective religiosity measure they used to control for individual differences in religiosity: *How religious do you consider yourself? Please use this scale to indicate 1 means 'not at all religious' and 5 means 'very religious'*. Responses were recorded using a five-point scale (1- "Not at all religious" to 5 – "very religious").

For measuring attribution of social responsibility to God, we used the following single item, in which participants were asked to indicate the extent they agree with the following statement: *"Alleviating people's economic hardships is up to our maker, not up to other human beings"* (seven-point scale, 1 – "not at all" to 7 – "extremely"). This item is based on the one that Laurin et al.

¹¹ The link to the experiment was distributed via the following outlets: Facebook groups of American alumni of Taglit (a popular travel program to Israel for overseas Jewish youth; this pool is characterized by young age, geographical diversity and more liberal religious affiliation – see Saxe et al. 2013); Mailing lists of Yeshiva University and Yeshivat Har-Etzion American Alumni (characterized by young age, East-coast concentration, and Modern-Orthodox affiliation in religiosity); Silver Spring, MD community mail list (characterized by diverse age, geographically East-coast, religious diversity skewed towards Orthodoxy); Facebook groups of diverse west-coast religious institutions (diverse age, West-coast concentration, and non-orthodox affiliation in religiosity); Facebook group of Pardes (learning program in Israel intended for American students) alumni (characterized by young age, geographically and religiously diverse).

¹²As the descriptive statistics in Appendix C (Table C2) show, diversity was largely attained. The only exception is that the vast majority of participants reside on the East-coast (64 of 76). Yet, this skewed geographical distribution resembles in some sense real-world demographics, as the Northeast region is the most Jewishly-populated region in the US (Teigh et al. 2013)

(2012b) used in order to reveal that the negative effect of belief in God's control on support for political institutions is related to attribution of social responsibility to Him.¹³

For measuring the benevolence value, we used an item from the shortened version of Schwartz Values Inventory (SVI), taken from the fourth wave of the World Value Survey (see also Held et al. 2009), aimed at measuring benevolence – one of the ten values in SVI inventory. Its wording is as follows: *Now I will briefly describe some people. Would you please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you? ... It is important to this person to help the people nearby; to care for their well-being.* Responses were recorded using a six-point scale; 1 – "Not at all like me" to 6 – "Very much like me")

For measuring belief in God-given reward and punishment (GGRP) we used three items to construct a GGRP scale. The three items were taken from McKay et al. (2010) studying the effect of GGRP on behavior. The participants were asked to indicate their level of approval of three belief statements: "*I believe God knows everything we do or think*"; "*I believe God will punish sinners*"; "*I believe God will reward believers*" (Responses were recorded using a five-point scale; 1 – "Not at all" to 5 – "to a very large extent"). These three items combine God's omniscience with God's ability and willingness to intervene on the basis of deservingness, and thus tap into the relevant *GGRP* beliefs. Indeed, the '*GGRP*' scale constructed from these items yielded high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$).

5.2 Results and short discussion

5.2.1. Main effects analysis

In order to test the effect of priming God's control on welfare attitudes among American-Jews, we submitted it to a linear regression analysis. Table 2 reports the regression results for the dependent variable of government's responsibility for redistribution.

¹³ Cf. Study 4a,b in the cited paper and the accompanying electronic supplementary material, pp. 6-8. As Laurin et al.'s paper was focused on the political institution of judicial punishment, the attribution item they used was: 'Punishing people's moral failings is up to our maker, not other human beings'. Consequently, our item should be interpreted as adapted form of this item.

Table 2: Effect of BGC on WSA (Study 2)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 0.313 (0.290) [0.283] | 0.361+ (0.209) [0.089] | 0.343 (0.808) [0.673] | -0.410 (0.613) [0.506] | 0.032 (0.215) [0.883] | -0.054 (0.163) [0.740] | 0.482 (0.562) [0.394] | -0.103 (0.485) [0.832] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.010 (0.007) [0.175] | | 0.011 (0.007) [0.123] | | 0.010+ (0.006) [0.078] | | 0.010+ (0.006) [0.080] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | 0.116 (0.217) [0.594] | | 0.088 (0.217) [0.685] | | 0.104 (0.170) [0.542] | | 0.102 (0.172) [0.554] |
| <i>Class</i> | | 0.293+ (0.164) [0.078] | | 0.315+ (0.164) [0.059] | | 0.005 (0.128) [0.970] | | 0.006 (0.129) [0.962] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.203+ (0.104) [0.055] | | 0.207* (0.103) [0.049] | | 0.150+ (0.081) [0.069] | | 0.150+ (0.082) [0.071] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.399** (0.054) [0.000] | | -0.418** (0.055) [0.000] | | -0.257** (0.042) [0.000] | | -0.258** (0.044) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.165* (0.081) [0.045] | -0.255+ (0.141) [0.075] | -0.275* (0.115) [0.020] | | -0.160* (0.063) [0.014] | -0.154 (0.098) [0.121] | -0.167+ (0.091) [0.071] |
| <i>BGCXSalient</i> | | | -0.043 (0.166) [0.797] | 0.168 (0.126) [0.186] | | | -0.140 (0.116) [0.231] | 0.011 (0.099) [0.915] |
| Constant | 2.472** (0.213) [0.000] | 2.837** (0.677) [0.000] | 3.682** (0.698) [0.000] | 3.353** (0.775) [0.000] | 3.278** (0.157) [0.000] | 4.141** (0.528) [0.000] | 4.008** (0.485) [0.000] | 4.173** (0.613) [0.000] |
| Observations | 78 | 74 | 77 | 74 | 78 | 74 | 77 | 74 |
| R-squared | 0.015 | 0.604 | 0.181 | 0.615 | 0.000 | 0.560 | 0.257 | 0.560 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Models 1 through 4 present regression results for the redistribution DV and models 5 through 8 for the welfare expenditure DV. Model 1 and 5 report the main effect of the prime on the DV and Models 2 and 6 add controls. The controlled models are identical to Laurin et al. (2012b) in order to facilitate comparison. For the redistribution DV, the coefficient of the 'salient' condition in model 1 is positive and not negligible in size, although not significant at conventional levels ($B=0.313$, $p=0.283$). In Model 2, when controls are added, this effect approached statistical significance ($p=0.089$).¹⁴ Yet, for the welfare expenditure DV (Models 5 and 6), the effects of the prime are negligible and insignificant.

Generally speaking, these results seem to confirm, or at least not to contradict, the strengthening effect of the belief in God's control (H3), that received support in Study 1. Yet this effect is weaker and less significant than the one that was observed for the Israeli-Jews in Study 1. Although reversal of the effect was not observed, this result is still in line with the contextual hypothesis that claimed that American political context would be less conducive for positive effects (H6).

Does the level of belief in God's control moderate this effect? Models 3 and 4 (for redistribution) and 7 and 8 (for welfare expenditure) report the interactive effect of BGC with the salient condition. As in Study 1, these models show that effect of the prime is not contingent upon the level of belief in God's control (supports H8).

5.2.2 Interaction Analysis

We hypothesized that negative effects of BGC would be driven by the attribution of responsibility for the social sphere to God, while positive effects might be due to the benevolent nature of respondents or to their belief in God-given reward and punishment. The prediction implied in this hypothesis is that the effect of the prime would be conditioned by respondents' level of attribution, benevolence and beliefs in God-give reward and punishment.

Table 3 and table 4 report the results for the interaction terms for the redistribution DV and the welfare expenditure DV, respectively.

¹⁴ With regard to religiosity measures coefficients one should note that the coefficient for the religiosity covariate is positive across the different models while the coefficient of the BGC's control scale is negative (both at least marginally significant). This seems to be consistent with the results of Laurin et al. (2012b, Study 1) that found similar pattern in their data. Yet, one should not conclude from these *reported* measures that BGC has weakening effect on WSA, for two reasons: first, our sample is not representative, and thus should not be considered as a valid instrument for generalization about the correlation in the whole population. Second, reported measures might be confounded by confounding variables, such as associations with dimensions of religiosity or personality traits that were negatively associated with WSA. By contrast, experimental manipulation of BGC could be considered as a more valid test of the effect (ibid, Studies 2 and 3). Indeed, it is shown in this paper that the *manipulated* effect of BGC on WSA is largely strengthening.

Table 3: Effect of BGC on WSA, Moderation analysis, Redistribution DV (Study 2)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist</i> | <i>Redist</i> | <i>Redist</i> | <i>Redist</i> | <i>Redist</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 1.785 (1.478) [0.231] | 0.803 (1.090) [0.464] | 0.856 (0.700) [0.225] | 0.253 (0.548) [0.645] | 0.596 (0.585) [0.312] | 0.195 (0.421) [0.645] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.010 (0.007) [0.161] | | 0.010 (0.007) [0.183] | | 0.012 (0.007) [0.108] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | 0.084 (0.224) [0.707] | | 0.136 (0.216) [0.533] | | 0.140 (0.219) [0.526] |
| <i>Class</i> | | 0.294+ (0.166) [0.082] | | 0.286+ (0.165) [0.087] | | 0.291+ (0.165) [0.082] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.185+ (0.105) [0.083] | | 0.245* (0.107) [0.025] | | 0.202+ (0.105) [0.058] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.378** (0.057) [0.000] | | -0.379** (0.056) [0.000] | | -0.401** (0.054) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.181* (0.084) [0.034] | | -0.108 (0.087) [0.218] | | -0.199* (0.085) [0.023] |
| <i>BenevolenceXSalient</i> | -0.321 (0.318) [0.316] | -0.100 (0.237) [0.676] | | | | |
| <i>Benevolence</i> | 0.424+ (0.247) [0.090] | 0.202 (0.182) [0.269] | | | | |
| <i>GGRPXSalient</i> | | | -0.201 (0.203) [0.325] | 0.039 (0.160) [0.807] | | |
| <i>GGRP</i> | | | -0.343* (0.164) [0.039] | -0.206 (0.142) [0.152] | | |
| <i>AttributionXSalient</i> | | | | | -0.183 (0.286) [0.525] | 0.108 (0.205) [0.601] |
| <i>Attribution</i> | | | | | -0.061 (0.182) [0.737] | 0.083 (0.124) [0.506] |
| Constant | 0.531 (1.141) [0.643] | 1.988+ (1.063) [0.066] | 3.584** (0.570) [0.000] | 2.998** (0.728) [0.000] | 2.591** (0.413) [0.000] | 2.725** (0.715) [0.000] |
| Observations | 77 | 74 | 77 | 74 | 78 | 74 |
| R-squared | 0.058 | 0.615 | 0.265 | 0.621 | 0.033 | 0.614 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 4: Effect of BGC on WSA, Moderation analysis, Expenditure DV (Study 2)

| Models | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | -0.396 (1.109) [0.722] | -1.063 (0.852) [0.217] | -0.091 (0.544) [0.868] | -0.524 (0.432) [0.229] | 0.374 (0.422) [0.378] | -0.108 (0.332) [0.747] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.011+ (0.006) [0.058] | | 0.010+ (0.006) [0.075] | | 0.010+ (0.006) [0.088] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | 0.067 (0.175) [0.704] | | 0.114 (0.170) [0.506] | | 0.107 (0.173) [0.539] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.020 (0.130) [0.880] | | 0.024 (0.130) [0.851] | | 0.003 (0.130) [0.980] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.154+ (0.082) [0.065] | | 0.152+ (0.084) [0.076] | | 0.149+ (0.082) [0.076] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.269** (0.045) [0.000] | | -0.262** (0.044) [0.000] | | -0.257** (0.043) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.141* (0.066) [0.036] | | -0.150* (0.069) [0.033] | | -0.162* (0.067) [0.019] |
| <i>BenevolenceXSalient</i> | 0.093 (0.239) [0.698] | 0.224 (0.185) [0.232] | | | | |
| <i>Benevolence</i> | 0.064 (0.185) [0.731] | -0.117 (0.142) [0.411] | | | | |
| <i>GGRPXSalient</i> | | | 0.015 (0.158) [0.924] | 0.149 (0.126) [0.240] | | |
| <i>GGRP</i> | | | -0.309* (0.127) [0.018] | -0.119 (0.112) [0.293] | | |
| <i>AttributionXSalient</i> | | | | | -0.228 (0.206) [0.272] | 0.030 (0.162) [0.852] |
| <i>Attribution</i> | | | | | -0.109 (0.131) [0.408] | -0.008 (0.098) [0.931] |
| Constant | 2.988** (0.856) [0.001] | 4.727** (0.831) [0.000] | 4.293** (0.443) [0.000] | 4.412** (0.573) [0.000] | 3.490** (0.298) [0.000] | 4.160** (0.564) [0.000] |
| Observations | 77 | 74 | 77 | 74 | 78 | 74 |
| R-squared | 0.017 | 0.570 | 0.177 | 0.570 | 0.066 | 0.560 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

For each DV, Models 1 and 2 report the results for interaction with benevolence, Models 3 and 4 report the interaction with belief in God-given *GGRP*, and Models 5 and 6 report the interaction with attribution to God (the even-numbered models are the controlled specifications). The interaction analysis results indicate that the null hypothesis for these interactions cannot be rejected – all three interactions come out highly insignificant: for the redistribution DV p-values are 0.68, 0.81, and 0.60 for the interaction terms with benevolence, *GGRP* and attribution to God, respectively; for the welfare expenditure DV p-values are 0.23, 0.24 and 0.85 for the interaction terms with benevolence, *GGRP* and attribution to God, respectively.

Overall, replication of the experiment among American Jews yielded results that are not inconsistent with the general trend portrayed in study 1. For the redistribution DV the effect of priming God's control is positive, marginally significant and substantial in size. On the other hand, the welfare-state expenditure DV, that was sensitive to the prime on Study 1, seems to be indifferent to the priming in this study. As in Study 1, the positive effect is not dependent on the level of belief in God's control. In this study we also introduced potentially relevant moderators - benevolence, *GGRP* and attribution to God. Nevertheless, no significant moderation effect has emerged.

6. Study 3

Thus far, we have limited our investigation to one religious tradition – Judaism – varying its political context between Israel (Study 1) and the US (Study 2). We now aim to reduce this limitation by replicating the same experiment with two American-Christians denominations. We hold constant political context (the US, as in study 2) and vary religious tradition (Christianity, in contrast with the Jewish sample in studies 1 and 2). This is especially important as our results thus far stand in contrast to those of Laurin et al. (2012b): The latter have shown that priming God's control decreased support of the political institution of law enforcement and punishment – and their sample was largely based on North-American Christian students. As we elaborated in the literature review, theoretically, Christianity is more belief-oriented than Judaism, which is behavior-oriented (Cohen & Rozin 2001). Consequently, one might hypothesize that Christians would tend to be more sensitive to the 'substitution effect' of belief in God's control and human actions. As a result, extending our investigation to Christian sample would be an important test for the generalizability of the effect of priming belief in God's control.

In addition, we would like to be attentive to the fundamental division within Christianity, namely, the one between Catholicism and Protestantism. This division could be relevant, as Protestants are theoretically more prone to the weakening effect of the belief in God's control, for

two reasons: first, Protestantism tends to emphasize the belief-orientation of Christianity (Cohen & Rozin 2001), and this tendency might augment the weakening effect of the belief in God's control, as was discussed earlier. Second, Protestant dogma tends to emphasize the individualistic religiosity, and this dogmatic difference was found to induce empirical differences, at least among American Protestants (Cohen & Hill 2007). These two tendencies are related to the fact that American Protestantism was the paradigmatic exemplar for Weber's Protestant Work Ethic (Weber 1958/1905). As discussed earlier, this paradigm should hypothetically predict a weakening effect of the belief in God's control. Thus, it could be reasonably asserted that a replication among American Protestants could serve as a critical case for testing the general validity of the strengthening effect, found in Study 1 and 2. For all these reasons we would analyze separately the results for Catholics and Protestants.

6.1. Method

6.1.1. Participants and Procedure

We collected data for this study using participants recruited with Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online crowdsourcing marketplace increasingly used in social scientific experimental research (Berinsky et al. 2012). MTurk samples – while not as representative as the best national representative samples – usually have better demographic distributions than typical convenience samples. Indeed, MTurk data at least resemble “high quality” internet surveys and have been used to replicate classic experimental findings (Berinsky et al. 2012, Buhrmester et al. 2011). Recently, results based on Mechanical Turk samples have appeared in key journals (e.g. Huber et al. 2012).

Our participants were paid \$0.50, which is consistent with standard rates on MTurk (Mason and Suri 2012). In order to ensure the quality of responses we have used MTurk filtering mechanism to restrict the sample to those who had at least a 95% approval rate on at least 50 MTurk tasks (HITs).¹⁵

Overall, 159 American Christians have participated. Of them 80 participants identified themselves as Catholics and 79 as Protestants. This sample size allows us to analyze separately the effect for Protestants and Catholics.

¹⁵ Additional precaution measures that were taken to ensure the quality of responses: (1) Identifying that the participant was indeed from the US, using IP-address detection of Qualtrics. (2) Two items to assure concentration among participants – an item asking 'what is 2+2?', and a CAPTCHA (Completely Automated Public Turing Test to tell Computers and Humans Apart) item supplied by the Qualtrics engine. The latter has the capability to assure that the survey is not filled out by automated software. The items were put in different places in the questionnaire.

6.2. Results and short discussion

6.2.1 Catholic sample

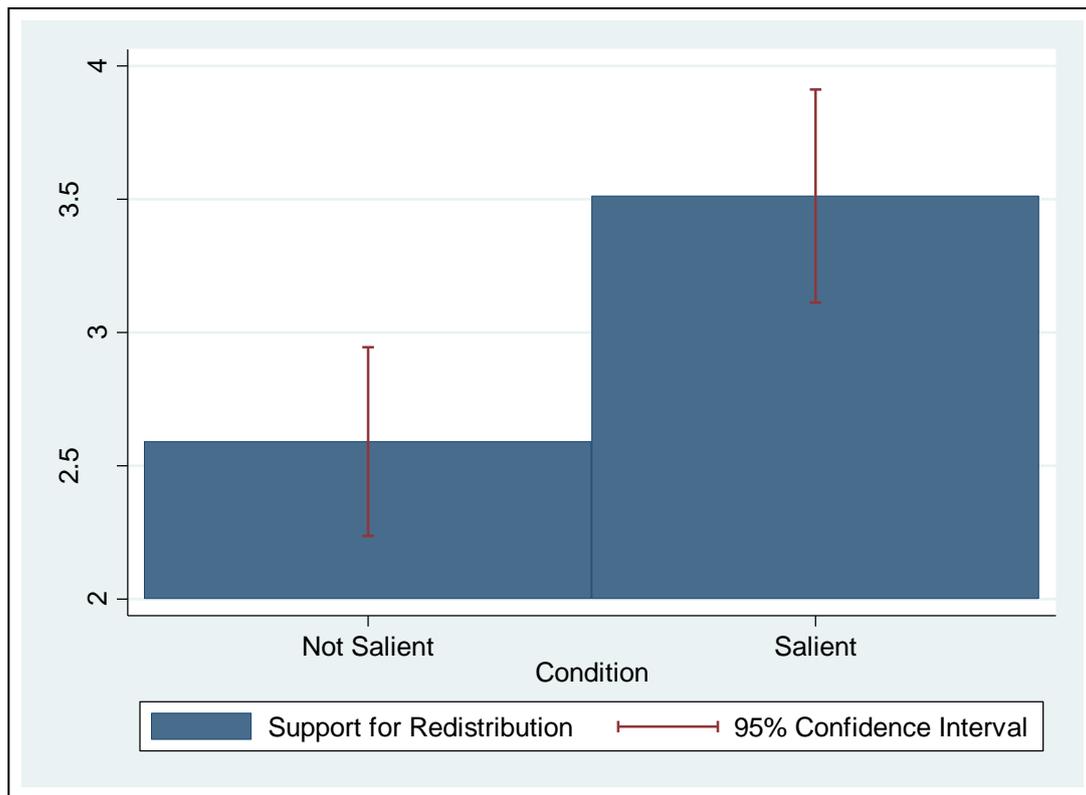
Table 5 presents the results of regression analysis for the effect of the priming in the Catholic sample, and Figure 3 depicts the difference in means between the group that was exposed to prime ('salient') and the group that was not exposed ('not salient').

Table 5 : Effect of BGC on WSA (Study 3, catholic sample)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 0.922** (0.265) [0.001] | 0.647* (0.248) [0.011] | 2.007* (0.820) [0.017] | 1.256 (0.776) [0.110] | 0.076 (0.190) [0.688] | 0.068 (0.167) [0.684] | 1.066+ (0.582) [0.071] | 1.115* (0.506) [0.031] |
| <i>age</i> | | -0.024* (0.011) [0.029] | | -0.023* (0.011) [0.034] | | -0.003 (0.007) [0.706] | | -0.002 (0.007) [0.808] |
| <i>sex</i> | | -0.023 (0.249) [0.928] | | -0.008 (0.250) [0.975] | | 0.137 (0.167) [0.415] | | 0.163 (0.163) [0.322] |
| <i>class</i> | | -0.122 (0.151) [0.421] | | -0.143 (0.153) [0.355] | | -0.226* (0.101) [0.029] | | -0.262* (0.100) [0.011] |
| <i>religiosity</i> | | 0.378* (0.155) [0.018] | | 0.380* (0.156) [0.017] | | 0.035 (0.104) [0.742] | | 0.038 (0.101) [0.708] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.278** (0.063) [0.000] | | -0.270** (0.064) [0.000] | | -0.225** (0.042) [0.000] | | -0.213** (0.042) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.182 (0.111) [0.104] | -0.005 (0.118) [0.970] | -0.125 (0.131) [0.342] | | 0.053 (0.074) [0.481] | 0.082 (0.084) [0.332] | 0.151+ (0.085) [0.081] |
| <i>BGCXsalient</i> | | | -0.250 (0.169) [0.141] | -0.128 (0.155) [0.410] | | | -0.225+ (0.120) [0.064] | -0.220* (0.101) [0.032] |
| Constant | 2.590** (0.190) [0.000] | 4.931** (0.725) [0.000] | 2.611** (0.591) [0.000] | 4.620** (0.818) [0.000] | 3.308** (0.136) [0.000] | 4.533** (0.487) [0.000] | 2.920** (0.419) [0.000] | 3.998** (0.533) [0.000] |
| Observations | 80 | 74 | 79 | 74 | 80 | 74 | 79 | 74 |
| R-Squared | 0.134 | 0.432 | 0.175 | 0.438 | 0.002 | 0.381 | 0.048 | 0.424 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Figure 3: Effect of BGC on Support for Redistribution, (Study 3; Catholics)



Again a difference between the two DVs is evident: for the redistribution DV a positive, large ($B=0.92$) and significant ($p=0.001$) main effect of the prime is evident both in the uncontrolled model (Model 1) and the controlled model (Model 2; $B= 0.67$, $p=0.011$). As can be seen from models 3 and 4, this effect is not conditioned by the level of belief in God's control.

For the welfare-state expenditure DV, the coefficients are positive but insignificant for the main effects models (Model 5 and 6). Yet, in the models adding the interaction with BGC control (Models 7 and 8), a marginally significant effect is exposed – positive effect for the low-believers and negative effect for the high-believers ($B=-0.25$, $p=0.12$ for the interaction term). This is the first instance of such difference. This finding is inconsistent with our hypothesis (H8).

With regard to the three hypothesized moderation effects (benevolence, God-given reward and punishment and attribution) – no significant effects emerged, consistent with previous studies (see Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6: Effect of BGC on WSA, Moderation analysis, Redistribution DV (Study 3, Catholics)

| Models | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 0.006 (1.140) [0.996] | 0.112 (1.101) [0.920] | 1.598+ (0.854) [0.065] | 1.204 (0.775) [0.125] | 1.442** (0.493) [0.004] | 1.230* (0.465) [0.010] |
| <i>Age</i> | | -0.022+ (0.011) [0.052] | | -0.024* (0.011) [0.031] | | -0.025* (0.011) [0.023] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | -0.082 (0.258) [0.752] | | -0.014 (0.252) [0.954] | | 0.006 (0.250) [0.982] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.077 (0.158) [0.628] | | -0.140 (0.154) [0.368] | | -0.106 (0.150) [0.482] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.322+ (0.178) [0.075] | | 0.368* (0.179) [0.044] | | 0.348* (0.158) [0.031] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.269** (0.066) [0.000] | | -0.271** (0.064) [0.000] | | -0.279** (0.064) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.155 (0.117) [0.191] | | -0.198 (0.132) [0.141] | | -0.127 (0.117) [0.281] |
| <i>BenevolenceXSalient</i> | 0.203 (0.250) [0.419] | 0.118 (0.241) [0.626] | | | | |
| <i>Benevolence</i> | 0.168 (0.181) [0.357] | 0.054 (0.181) [0.766] | | | | |
| <i>GGRPXSalient</i> | | | -0.201 (0.240) [0.405] | -0.164 (0.217) [0.451] | | |
| <i>GGRP</i> | | | 0.043 (0.185) [0.819] | 0.117 (0.241) [0.629] | | |
| <i>AttributionXSalient</i> | | | | | -0.173 (0.158) [0.278] | -0.205 (0.145) [0.163] |
| <i>Attribution</i> | | | | | -0.051 (0.118) [0.664] | 0.045 (0.105) [0.671] |
| Constant | 1.846* (0.823) [0.028] | 4.599** (1.019) [0.000] | 2.445** (0.659) [0.000] | 4.639** (0.831) [0.000] | 2.715** (0.343) [0.000] | 4.609** (0.783) [0.000] |
| Observations | 79 | 74 | 80 | 74 | 80 | 74 |
| R-squared | 0.189 | 0.441 | 0.147 | 0.437 | 0.185 | 0.455 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 7: Effect of BGC on WSA, Moderation analysis, Expenditure DV (Study 3, Catholics)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 0.102 (0.834) [0.903] | 0.833 (0.739) [0.264] | 0.699 (0.606) [0.252] | 0.733 (0.492) [0.141] | 0.069 (0.363) [0.851] | 0.186 (0.318) [0.561] |
| <i>Age</i> | | -0.005 (0.007) [0.538] | | -0.003 (0.007) [0.616] | | -0.002 (0.007) [0.742] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | 0.152 (0.173) [0.384] | | 0.129 (0.160) [0.424] | | 0.153 (0.170) [0.372] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.248* (0.106) [0.023] | | -0.245* (0.098) [0.015] | | -0.229* (0.103) [0.029] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.022 (0.119) [0.851] | | 0.161 (0.114) [0.160] | | 0.046 (0.108) [0.668] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.222** (0.044) [0.000] | | -0.221** (0.041) [0.000] | | -0.232** (0.044) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | 0.053 (0.078) [0.498] | | 0.147+ (0.084) [0.085] | | 0.047 (0.080) [0.558] |
| <i>BenevolenceXSalient</i> | -0.004 (0.183) [0.983] | -0.172 (0.162) [0.293] | | | | |
| <i>Benevolence</i> | 0.133 (0.132) [0.319] | 0.075 (0.122) [0.540] | | | | |
| <i>GGRPXSalient</i> | | | -0.186 (0.170) [0.279] | -0.204 (0.138) [0.143] | | |
| <i>GGRP</i> | | | 0.012 (0.131) [0.925] | -0.175 (0.153) [0.256] | | |
| <i>AttributionXSalient</i> | | | | | 0.007 (0.117) [0.949] | -0.048 (0.099) [0.627] |
| <i>Attribution</i> | | | | | -0.031 (0.087) [0.726] | 0.055 (0.072) [0.450] |
| Constant | 2.719** (0.602) [0.000] | 4.319** (0.684) [0.000] | 3.266** (0.467) [0.000] | 4.343** (0.527) [0.000] | 3.382** (0.252) [0.000] | 4.397** (0.534) [0.000] |
| Observations | 79 | 74 | 80 | 74 | 80 | 74 |
| R-squared | 0.029 | 0.392 | 0.035 | 0.452 | 0.005 | 0.387 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Overall, the strengthening effect of BGC was replicated among American Catholics. This effect was somewhat stronger among Catholics that are low in BGC. In addition, no significant moderation effects with benevolence or God-given reward and punishment were recorded.

6.2.2 Protestant sample

Table 8 presents the results of the regression analysis for the effect of the priming in the Protestant sample.

Table 8: Effect of BGC on WSA (Study 3, Protestants)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | -0.188 (0.317) [0.555] | -0.169 (0.281) [0.549] | -1.859 (1.382) [0.183] | -1.125 (1.237) [0.366] | -0.044 (0.205) [0.831] | -0.019 (0.192) [0.921] | -1.536+ (0.899) [0.092] | -0.728 (0.846) [0.393] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.011 (0.011) [0.291] | | 0.011 (0.011) [0.312] | | 0.015* (0.007) [0.046] | | 0.014+ (0.007) [0.052] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | -0.249 (0.274) [0.367] | | -0.234 (0.275) [0.398] | | -0.071 (0.187) [0.707] | | -0.060 (0.188) [0.752] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.178 (0.174) [0.310] | | -0.137 (0.182) [0.454] | | -0.020 (0.119) [0.868] | | 0.010 (0.124) [0.933] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.011 (0.146) [0.943] | | -0.023 (0.153) [0.879] | | 0.158 (0.100) [0.118] | | 0.133 (0.104) [0.206] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -.381** (0.063) [0.000] | | -.375** (0.064) [0.000] | | -.228** (0.043) [0.000] | | -.223** (0.043) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.010 (0.103) [0.924] | -0.205+ (0.117) [0.085] | -0.040 (0.110) [0.719] | | -0.025 (0.070) [0.723] | -0.110 (0.076) [0.156] | -0.047 (0.075) [0.532] |
| <i>BGCXsalient</i> | | | 0.316 (0.239) [0.191] | 0.171 (0.216) [0.430] | | | 0.272+ (0.156) [0.084] | 0.127 (0.147) [0.393] |
| Constant | 2.951** (0.220) [0.000] | 5.240** (0.934) [0.000] | 3.973** (0.598) [0.000] | 5.351** (0.947) [0.000] | 3.195** (0.142) [0.000] | 3.497** (0.639) [0.000] | 3.732** (0.389) [0.000] | 3.580** (0.647) [0.000] |
| Observations | 79 | 76 | 78 | 76 | 79 | 76 | 78 | 76 |
| R-Squared | 0.005 | 0.414 | 0.050 | 0.420 | 0.001 | 0.354 | 0.046 | 0.361 |

Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

The coefficients of the 'salient' condition for both DVs are negative – which allegedly stands in contrast with the effect observed in the other samples. However, almost all of these coefficients are insignificant at the conventional levels.¹⁶ This possibly suggest that the models are not well-specified and include countervailing influences.¹⁷

If such entanglement exists, utilizing an interaction analysis in order to disentangle the conflicting influences could be helpful. We repeated the three interaction terms that were used in the interaction analysis in the previous studies - benevolence, God-given *GGRP* and attribution to God (Table 9 and 10, for the redistribution and the expenditure DVs, respectively). An interesting result has emerged for the interaction with the benevolence value, when regressed on the redistribution DV (Table 9, Models 1-2): while for participants low on benevolence the prime decreases support for redistribution, support is increased for high-benevolence participants (Model 1: $B=0.49$, $p=0.05$; Model 2: $B=0.375$, $p=0.06$; for graphic presentation of Model 2, see figure 4).

As we suggested in the literature review, priming the belief in God's control might trigger different reactions among different kinds of believers. For believers that value benevolence, a reminder of God's control might reaffirm their benevolent inclination, and the feeling of security associated with it, thus allowing their generosity to increase their preferences for redistribution. On the other hand, for less benevolent believers, priming the belief in God's control might reaffirm their non-benevolent inclination, by making the 'substitution argument' more accessible. This result lends some evidence to the relevant moderation hypothesis (H4). This result could also be interpreted as consistent with Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2013) who showed that the strengthening effect of religious belief on welfare attitudes is mediated by the level of benevolence.¹⁸

At the same time interactions with belief in God-given reward and punishment and attribution to God of social responsibility (Tables 9 and 10, Models 3-6) are statistically insignificant, as in the previous studies.

¹⁶ The only exception is Model 7 (the uncontrolled specification for the welfare-state expenditure), which includes interaction term with level of belief in God's control [$B=-1.536$, $p=0.09$]. Yet, the controlled version of this model (Model 8), is not significant ($p=0.3$).

¹⁷ It is reasonable that such conflicting effects might be found among American Protestants, as they are known to be a much more heterogeneous a group than Catholics and Jews (Mockabee et al. 2009). See also General Discussion below.

¹⁸ Yet, this finding is not replicated for the expenditure DV (Table 15, Model 1 and 2, $p=0.72$ and $p=0.31$, respectively).

Table 9: Effect of BGC on WSA, Moderation analysis, Redistribution DV (Study 3, Protestants)

| Models | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | -2.201* (1.088) [0.047] | -1.645+ (0.896) [0.071] | -1.559 (1.021) [0.131] | -1.141 (0.929) [0.224] | -0.561 (0.576) [0.333] | -0.258 (0.523) [0.623] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.008 (0.010) [0.411] | | 0.012 (0.011) [0.283] | | 0.011 (0.011) [0.313] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | -0.314 (0.256) [0.224] | | -0.203 (0.292) [0.490] | | -0.244 (0.278) [0.383] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.216 (0.161) [0.186] | | -0.143 (0.180) [0.429] | | -0.166 (0.178) [0.354] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | -0.057 (0.135) [0.675] | | -0.059 (0.178) [0.740] | | -0.003 (0.151) [0.985] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.350** (0.058) [0.000] | | -0.386** (0.064) [0.000] | | -0.370** (0.068) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.028 (0.095) [0.769] | | -0.024 (0.137) [0.862] | | -0.003 (0.106) [0.980] |
| <i>BenevolenceXSalient</i> | 0.490* (0.245) [0.049] | 0.375+ (0.198) [0.063] | | | | |
| <i>Benevolence</i> | 0.044 (0.179) [0.808] | 0.094 (0.150) [0.536] | | | | |
| <i>GGRPXSalient</i> | | | 0.366 (0.254) [0.153] | 0.264 (0.225) [0.245] | | |
| <i>GGRP</i> | | | -0.407* (0.164) [0.015] | -0.014 (0.250) [0.956] | | |
| <i>AttributionXSalient</i> | | | | | 0.216 (0.212) [0.312] | 0.045 (0.186) [0.808] |
| <i>Attribution</i> | | | | | -0.382* (0.166) [0.024] | -0.067 (0.152) [0.659] |
| Constant | 2.711** (0.806) [0.001] | 5.247** (0.991) [0.000] | 4.480** (0.652) [0.000] | 5.447** (0.974) [0.000] | 3.752** (0.409) [0.000] | 5.310** (0.959) [0.000] |
| Observations | 77 | 74 | 79 | 76 | 79 | 76 |
| R-squared | 0.126 | 0.519 | 0.081 | 0.430 | 0.088 | 0.416 |

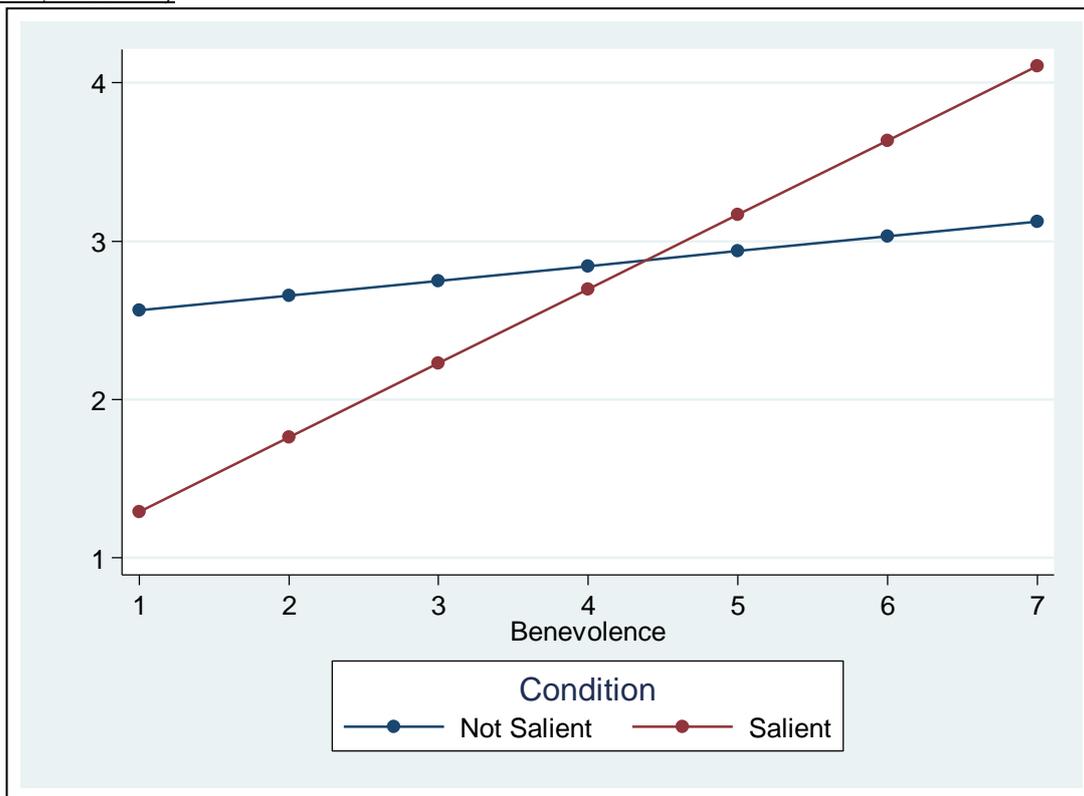
Standard errors in parentheses, p-values in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Table 10: Effect of BGC on WSA, Moderation analysis, Expenditure DV (Study 3, Protestants)

| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> | <i>Expend.</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 0.272 (0.692) [0.695] | 0.697 (0.618) [0.263] | -0.930 (0.674) [0.171] | -0.582 (0.637) [0.364] | -0.014 (0.361) [0.970] | 0.080 (0.353) [0.823] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.011 (0.007) [0.114] | | 0.015* (0.007) [0.045] | | 0.014+ (0.007) [0.069] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | -0.174 (0.177) [0.327] | | -0.031 (0.200) [0.878] | | -0.068 (0.188) [0.717] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.029 (0.111) [0.794] | | -0.002 (0.123) [0.990] | | -0.005 (0.120) [0.968] |
| <i>Religiosity</i> | | 0.108 (0.093) [0.253] | | 0.104 (0.122) [0.395] | | 0.132 (0.102) [0.201] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.218** (0.040) [0.000] | | -0.233** (0.044) [0.000] | | -0.206** (0.046) [0.000] |
| <i>BGC</i> | | -0.047 (0.065) [0.469] | | -0.044 (0.094) [0.640] | | -0.023 (0.072) [0.751] |
| <i>BenevolenceXSalient</i> | -0.057 (0.156) [0.717] | -0.138 (0.136) [0.314] | | | | |
| <i>Benevolence</i> | 0.332** (0.114) [0.005] | 0.341** (0.104) [0.002] | | | | |
| <i>GGRPXSsalient</i> | | | 0.234 (0.168) [0.167] | 0.157 (0.154) [0.314] | | |
| <i>GGRP</i> | | | -0.167 (0.108) [0.126] | 0.019 (0.172) [0.910] | | |
| <i>AttributionXSsalient</i> | | | | | 0.034 (0.133) [0.799] | -0.024 (0.125) [0.847] |
| <i>Attribution</i> | | | | | -0.244* (0.104) [0.021] | -0.077 (0.102) [0.456] |
| Constant | 1.730** (0.513) [0.001] | 2.529** (0.683) [0.000] | 3.824** (0.430) [0.000] | 3.604** (0.668) [0.000] | 3.708** (0.256) [0.000] | 3.630** (0.647) [0.000] |
| Observations | 77 | 74 | 79 | 76 | 79 | 76 |
| R-squared | 0.173 | 0.478 | 0.035 | 0.369 | 0.139 | 0.374 |

Standard errors in brackets, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Figure 4: Support for redistribution, by experimental condition and level of benevolence (Study 3, Protestants; Model 2)



Overall, as was noted in the literature review to this study, American-Protestants function as the most stringent test to the strengthening effect of BGC. Indeed no significant effects were observed. However, when we distinguished between Protestants on the basis of their benevolence values, a positive significant effect emerged for those high on benevolence, consistent with one of our theoretical predictions regarding interaction effects. From the above one might conclude that the American-Protestant sample, partially supported the strengthening effect recorded in the other samples, or at least did not supply enough evidence for an effect in the opposite direction.

7. General Discussion and Conclusions

Summing up the three studies reported in this paper, four main findings emerge:

First, of the two competing hypotheses that were proposed based on the extant literature, it appears that the findings presented in this paper largely support the hypothesis that the BGC has a strengthening effect on WSA (H3), and not a negative one (as was asserted by the competing hypothesis, H1). Strengthening effects for the prime were found among four different samples –

Israeli-Jews, American-Jews, American-Catholics and American-Protestants – a fact that adds robustness to this finding.¹⁹

Second, in spite of this general pattern regarding the direction of effect, differences in the strength of this effect based on political/cultural context and religious tradition did emerge. Comparison of the same religious tradition (Judaism) along differing political/cultural contexts (Israel and the US), showed that the positive effect of belief in God's control is weaker in the American context – as was predicted (H6). With regard to a differential effect for different religious traditions in the same political context (American Jews, American Catholics and American Protestants), we hypothesized that Jews would be affected more positively than Christians, especially Protestants (H7). Our expectations were partially confirmed: Both American-Jews and American-Catholics have increased their approval of income redistribution upon being exposed to the prime, but this effect was more substantial in size and statistical significance in the Catholic sample. That contradicts the expectation that the strengthening effect would be stronger for Jews than for Christians. However, Protestants indeed show a more subdued reaction to the priming compared with the other two groups, with its effect moderated by the level of benevolence value.

Third, this positive effect was achieved largely regardless of the level of the measured belief in God's control (except for the second DV in the catholic sample). This finding supports our hypothesis that the priming of belief in God's control is independent of the level of belief (H8).

Fourth, we found modest evidence that the effect of the belief in God's control is associated with endorsement of benevolence values in one of the samples but not in any other sample. This offers some initial support for the expectation that a positive effect is associated with self-transcendence values (H4). Nevertheless, no supporting evidence can be shown to other hypothesized moderators – attribution of social responsibility to God (H2) and belief in God-given reward and punishment (H5).

We will now elaborate on the contributions of these findings, evaluating their meaning and significance in light of the current literature.

¹⁹ This effect is considerably more pronounced for the redistribution DV than for the welfare expenditure DV. See Limitations section (below) for discussion.

7.1. Contributions

7.1.1. Complementary relationship between belief in God's control and welfare-state support

First, we will consider the major outcome from this series of studies, namely, the strengthening effect of BGC on WSA. As described in the literature review, religiosity has divergent effects on economic policy preferences (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013, Huber & Stanig 2011, Pittau et al. 2012). Our findings prove useful in understanding at least one mechanism behind the strengthening effect – BGC. When BGC is salient, individuals tend to align more with leftist stance on economic issues. As many religious traditions frequently put reminders regarding BGC into their adherents' everyday life (Laurin et al. 2012a,b), our experiment can be taken to have external validation.

In addition, these findings are consistent with previous ones: Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2013) conclude, based on comparative-correlative analysis, that while the religious social dimension tends to decrease support of welfare-state measures, the belief dimension can have also positive effects.²⁰ Indeed, our analysis has shown a positive effect of an important particular belief regarding welfare-state measures – *God's control and welfare-state appear as complements*.

However, these findings are in contrast with previous evidence that posit a weakening effect of BGC on the endorsement of interventionist political institutions. Building on a theoretical model that predicts substitution relations between God and Government (Kay et al. 2008), few studies have shown that priming God's control tends to decrease support of a strong government in general (Kay et al. 2010) and judicial punishment (Laurin et al. 2012b), with the latter using the same prime instrument utilized in our study. We suggest two explanations for this disagreement in findings with this line research:

First, at the technical level, we argue that our sampling methodology engenders greater internal validity. A limitation acknowledged by Laurin et al. (2012b, p. 3279) is the fact that their samples have pooled together different religious traditions – among them Islam and Eastern traditions – and were limited to North-American participants. As our analysis was aimed at differentiating between religious traditions and political/cultural contexts, we conducted sampling which was large enough to analyze every tradition by itself, and to control for at least two different political contexts (Israel and the US).

Second, even if we do find the results of these studies valid, the divergence in results could be attributed to the difference in the dependent variable. While the aforementioned studies have investigated the effect of BGC on support for strong government in general (Kay et al. 2010) and

²⁰ However, the overall effect of the belief dimension is negative, because of the much stronger association between religious belief and conservative political orientation, which is usually characterized by lower WSA.

judicial punishment (Laurin et. al .2012b), our research is focused on the specific institution of the welfare-state. As the welfare-state can be perceived as an institution association with religious charity obligations, common to many religious traditions, the competition between God and political institutions is less pronounced. Therefore, the 'complementary relations' model might be more explanatory than the 'substitution relations' model.

A practical implication of this central finding should also be considered: The strengthening effect of belief in God's control is in contrast to the Marxist tradition that such beliefs necessarily promote social conservatism. God may not be after all the "opiate of the masses", as was famously coined by Marx. Since historically this Marxist analysis has driven a wedge between religiosity and left-wing parties in many political contexts (Stegmueller et al. 2012), our findings could have practical implications for both religious groups and supporters of left-wing economics: first, it facilitates recognition in a possible common ground. Second, it suggests the possibility that messages that encompass BGC in religious discourse might be a fertile ground for political mobilization to left-wing economics. As previously suggested in the literature, priming experiments might emulate the effect of political cues (Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, Djupe & Calafno 2009). Consequently, political and religious leadership willing to strengthen WSA might want to incorporate BGC in their public discourse.

7.1.2 Political context and religious affiliation sensitivity

Scholars of religion debate the question whether religion should be studied as a universal phenomenon, with little importance attributed to differences between the various religious cultures (e.g. Saroglou 2003) or, to the contrary, that these differences are substantial and command sensitivity to particularities (e.g. Belzen 2010). In recent years a synthesis of this dichotomy has emerged positing that there "should be both universals and cultural specifics to religion and individual religiosity" (Saroglou 2011, p. 1321).

It seems that our results support the latter synthesis: on the part of universality, we observed a largely common – positive – effect of BGC on WSA. However, differences with regard to significance and strength did arise – the positive effect was more pronounced among Israeli-Jews (compared with American-Jews) and American-Catholics (compared with American-Protestants).

In addition, this specific pattern of difference, in which American context and Protestantism elicit weaker effects, are in line with the wider literature, starting with Max Weber, regarding the link between Protestantism and conservative economic attitudes on the one hand, and American culture

on the other hand (Jost et al. 2013, Uhlmann & Sanchez-Burkes 2014). Our findings seem to be both consistent with and providing additional support to the current evidence on the topic.

7.1.3 Independence of religious priming from level of belief

The positive effect of priming the belief in God's control was largely independent of the reported level of belief. This pattern is consistent with previous studies in which religious priming had an effect regardless of measured religiosity (Ben-Nun Bloom & Arikan 2012, Laurin et al. 2012a, Norenzayan & Shariff 2007, and unlike Laurin et al. 2012b). Why does religious priming make a difference for people who report low level of belief? A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that since religion is an important part of contemporary American and Israeli culture, the idea of God's control and its implications are part of the socialization process in these societies. Consequently, making these belief cognitively accessible yields similar results for high and low believers alike (a similar argument can be found in: Laurin et al. 2012a,b).

7.1.4 Mechanism

Although not at its core, this investigation also tried to take an initial glance at the mechanisms that regulate the relationship between BGC and WSA. Moderation analysis showed no evidence either for the 'supernatural watcher' hypothesis nor the attribution hypothesis. On the other hand, in the American-Protestant sample, the effect was moderated by the degree of respondents' benevolence – participants that reported high levels on the benevolence value increased their support of welfare attitudes upon exposure to priming of BGC, while participants low on benevolence decreased their support.

As this moderation effect was observed in only one sample it should be taken as preliminary, and should be put to further investigation. On the other hand, it seems more reasonable to find moderation effects among American Protestants, as they represent a much more diverse group than American Jews or American Catholics (Mockabee et al. 2006) – a diversity that allows more variable, and even contradicting, effects of the same belief in God's control. With precaution, this finding reinforces previous findings on the relationship between religious belief and benevolence (Mikulincer et al. 2003, 2005, Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013).

7.1.5 Methodological implications

To the authors' knowledge, this study is the first attempt to manipulate a particular religious belief experimentally and to test its effect toward the welfare-state.²¹ Experimental manipulation of religiosity is by now a common method (for a review see: Hoffman 2013). However, it was not employed in conjunction with this specific religious belief (BGC) and this DV (WSA). Using this method, we were able to test competing hypotheses about the nature of BGC's effect on WSA.

Furthermore, this study attempted to be culture-sensitive, by replicating the experiment in three different religious groups and two different political contexts. This characteristic contributes to the generalizability of the results, at least with regard to Jewish and Christian believers. This is evidence to the fruitfulness of this method, also demonstrated in previous studies that utilized cross-cultural experimental methods in the investigation of the political ramifications of religiosity (Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012)

7.2. Limitations and future directions

We will now address the limitations of our study, and suggest future directions for research on this topic:

7.2.1 Specific-belief effect vs. general religious effect

In this series of studies we were interested in the effect of a specific religious belief – the belief in God's control. We operationalized BGC priming mainly by priming participants with a battery of items concerned with this specific belief, previously used in the literature (Laurin et al. 2012b). However, it could be claimed that our methodological approach does not offer the opportunity to distinguish between the particular effect of this specific belief and the general effect of merely priming religiosity. It could be further argued that since it was shown that priming religiosity in general tends to increase prosociality (Norenzayan & Shariff 2007, Pichon et al. 2007), this general effect might be driving the strengthening relationship between the prime and WSA.

Addressing this limitation we note: First, in Study 1 we primed God's control in two different priming methods (question-order and a short essay) that elicited similar positive effects. Second, a previous study demonstrated a significant difference between our prime-instrument effect and general priming of religiosity (Laurin et al. 2012a, Studies 2 and 3). In addition, even if we do limit the interpretation of our results to show that religiosity in general holds strengthening effect on WSA, it is still an important contribution to current literature (and as already noted, it is contrary to

²¹ See also footnote 1.

ideological settings in many political contexts). Nevertheless, future research should indeed try to make a deliberate attempt to disentangle these two hypothetical effects in an experimental setting.

7.2.2. Extending the framework

As the priming of religious belief proved to have significant effects on political attitudes, it seems worthwhile to explore extensions of the framework. First, as discussed above, the priming of BGC yielded differential results for different dependent variables, i.e. different political institutions. Thus far BGC has been investigated regarding the support of a strong government in general (Kay et al. 2010) and judicial punishment (Laurin et al. 2012b), and now, in this paper, regarding WSA. Continuing to vary the dependent variable might shed more light into the complex nature of BGC.²² Second, with regard to the specific sphere of religiosity and the welfare-state, it could be valuable to investigate the effect of other specific beliefs, apart from God's control, such as God's benevolence (cf. Froese & Bader 2010, Johnson et al. 2013). Third, as we noted earlier, we know religion has divergent effects on WSA. Specifically, the social dimension of religiosity was found in correlative analysis to have negative effects on welfare-state attitudes (Arikan & Ben-Nun Bloom 2013). Thus, it could be of interest to validate this result using experimental methodology, potentially creating a more comprehensive picture of both strengthening and weakening ramifications of religiosity on WSA.

7.2.3. Mechanism

As discussed earlier, different theories or hypothesis are available to explain why the belief in God's control would increase the support of the welfare-state. However, although the current research design was able to show some preliminary evidence in the direction of the self-transcendence explanation using moderation analysis, it is necessary to complement this approach with explicit investigation of the mechanism. In addition, even our moderation analysis did not include the appropriate instruments to test for other theoretical moderators, such as the effect of internal/external locus of control on welfare attitudes (Pitlik & Kouba 2013) – another possibility which deserves further investigation.

²² In this regard, one should note that the results for welfare-state expenditure were considerably weaker. This might prove to be another motivation to test the effect of God's control belief on different DVs. However, two optional explanations could be raised. On a technical level, this second DV appeared in the questionnaire after the first DV. The recency of priming has been shown to be correlated with its strength (Higgins et al. 1985). As a consequence, it could be the case that the priming effect was weaker on the later DV. On a more substantive level, the expenditure questions on the second DV were more explicit with regards to the "price tag" that is attached to a bigger expenditure – higher level of taxation. This saliency of the trade-off could have also contributed to the weaker effect.

7.2.4 Attitudinal markers vs. behavioral markers

A common limitation in social psychology research is its vulnerability to 'demand characteristics'. This is known to be especially significant with regards to the relationship between religion and prosociality, when the relationship is investigated using explicit, self-reported measures which raise impression-management considerations (Norenzayan & Shariff 2008, Bloom 2012). A useful complement to our study would be to replicate it with behavioral markers – such as economic games that emulate the real-world decisions regarding welfare-state issues, such as economic games that ask participants to make budgetary decisions (e.g. Neustadt 2011).

Despite its limitations, this study sheds new light upon the effect of the religious belief in God's control on attitudes towards the welfare-state, and on political institutions in general. The results support some existing theory and empirical findings, while challenging others. Specifically, it challenges the view that belief in God's control of the world stands in tension to human-constructed political institutions. Our results suggest, at least with regard to the welfare-state, that God is perceived to give his blessing to his creatures' creations, and not to be their competitor. We believe that this tentative conclusion is intriguing enough to motivate further investigation of the subject.

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Appendix A: Pre-test Stage

As described in the body of the text, the results an experimental exploratory stage was one of the motivators leading us to focus our investigation on belief in God's control.

150 Israeli-Jews participated in the experiment: the majority of the sample (N=113) consists of individuals that voluntarily responded to a Qualtrics-powered online survey, distributed in a snowball method. In addition, and in order to attain some religious diversity in the sample, a substantial minority was recruited from the Ultra-Orthodox community (N=37). All in all, 116 participants reported being religious (either Ultra-Orthodox, National-Religious, or Traditional-Religious). This makes the sample largely religious (77%), which seems appropriate when testing the effect of religious primes.

The participants were randomly allocated to one of five conditions – four experimental conditions, where they were prompted with an essay before answering the DV items and one control group where participants answered the DV items without any prior prompt. Our main focus was the fourth condition, which is close in substance to the concept of God's control. In this condition, we prompted participants with an essay about how religious belief makes it easier for the religious to cope with adverse life-events. The main argumentation was based on the idea that if God has control of the situation, the psychological stress associated with such events can be eased. We hypothesized (based on Scheve and Stasavage 2006) that this argument would weaken support for the welfare-state, because it makes religious belief an alternative to the security ensured by the welfare-state.

Yet, the results have demonstrated a different pattern from the hypothesized direction (see the regression table below):

Table A1: Effect of 'Religious Insurance Prime' (Pre-test)

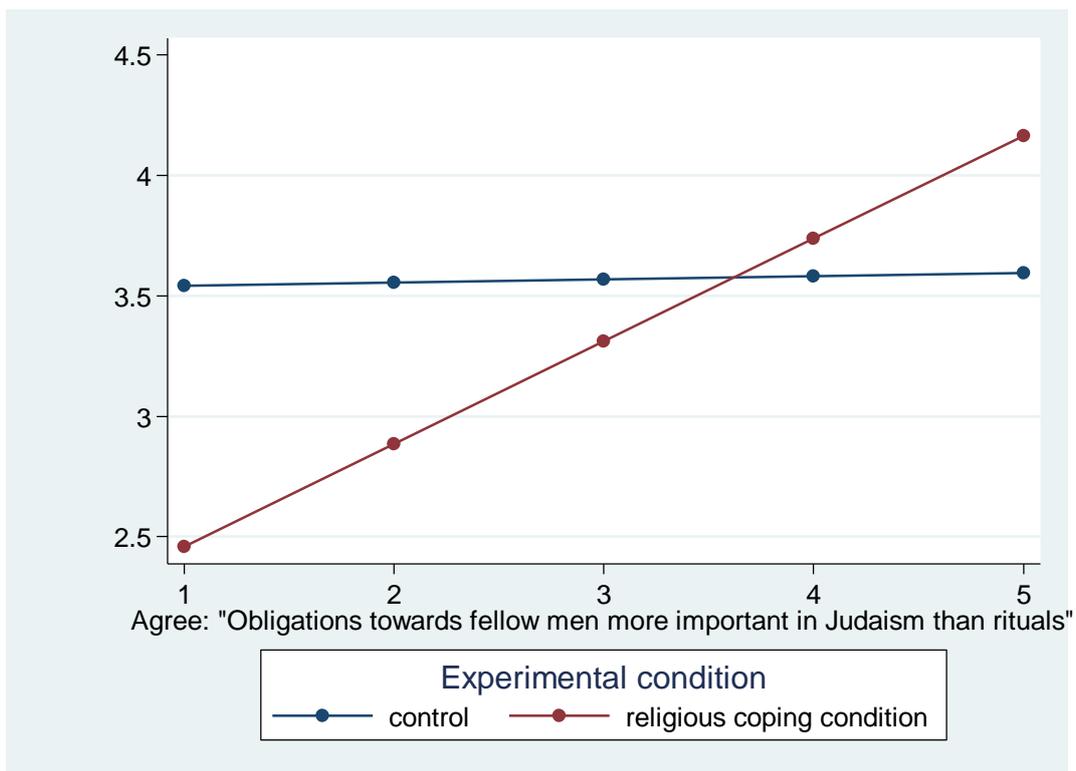
| Model | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| VARIABLES/DV | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Redist.</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> | <i>Expend</i> |
| <i>Salient</i> | 0.022 (0.318) [0.946] | 0.107 (0.301) [0.722] | 0.055 (0.319) [0.864] | 0.106 (0.297) [0.722] | -0.011 (0.038) [0.770] | 0.008 (0.040) [0.849] | -0.010 (0.038) [0.784] | 0.009 (0.039) [0.818] |
| <i>Age</i> | | 0.024 (0.015) [0.124] | | 0.041* (0.017) [0.019] | | 0.002 (0.002) [0.222] | | 0.004+ (0.002) [0.059] |
| <i>Sex</i> | | 0.008 (0.224) [0.971] | | -0.028 (0.223) [0.901] | | -0.020 (0.029) [0.491] | | -0.022 (0.029) [0.451] |
| <i>Class</i> | | -0.201+ (0.110) [0.071] | | -0.162 (0.112) [0.151] | | -0.016 (0.014) [0.254] | | -0.010 (0.014) [0.499] |
| <i>Worship-house attendance</i> | | -0.117* (0.050) [0.022] | | -0.116* (0.051) [0.024] | | -0.002 (0.007) [0.762] | | -0.002 (0.007) [0.789] |
| <i>Political Orientation</i> | | -0.115* (0.046) [0.014] | | -0.104* (0.046) [0.024] | | -0.012* (0.006) [0.046] | | -0.011+ (0.006) [0.074] |
| <i>RIR</i> | | | 0.171* (0.083) [0.042] | 0.013 (0.089) [0.881] | | | 0.009 (0.010) [0.348] | 0.009 (0.012) [0.442] |
| <i>RIRXReligious_insurance</i> | | | | 0.126 (0.198) [0.527] | 0.413+ (0.217) [0.059] | | 0.032 (0.024) [0.177] | 0.037 (0.028) [0.191] |
| Constant | 3.500* (0.206) [0.000] | 4.828* (0.618) [0.000] | 2.969* (0.340) [0.000] | 4.176* (0.715) [0.000] | 0.649* (0.025) [0.000] | 0.714* (0.080) [0.000] | 0.621* (0.041) [0.000] | 0.610* (0.092) [0.000] |
| Observations | 148 | 135 | 144 | 134 | 147 | 134 | 144 | 133 |
| R-squared | 0.003 | 0.212 | 0.052 | 0.245 | 0.032 | 0.110 | 0.056 | 0.130 |

Standard errors in brackets
 ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

First, the main effect of the experimental condition was insignificant both for redistribution DV ($p=0.9$, controlled model [Model 2]) and the expenditure DV ($p=0.67$, controlled model [Model 6])²³. However, different results arise when we account for different types of religiosity. Our survey contained an item that asked participants to indicate the relative importance they attribute to religious rituals: "The obligations towards fellow men are the most important thing in Judaism, not rituals" (1 – "strongly agree" to 5 – "strongly disagree", reverse coded to facilitate interpretation; *RIR* variable). When the interaction term with the prime (*RIRXReligious_insurance*) was included in the regression (Models 3 and 4 for the redistribution DV; 7 and 8 for the expenditure DV), a quite significant moderation effect has emerged: for the controlled model of the redistribution DV (Model 4), we can observe a negative coefficient ($B=0.413$, $p=0.06$), with a similar effect – but less significant – for the expenditure DV ($B=0.037$, $p=0.19$). As is manifest in the figure below, the positive sign means that for people that see the focal point of Judaism in obligations to fellow men, the prime has increased support for distribution, while decreasing it for those that disagree with the statement. What we concluded from this result is that belief in God's control has a differential effect on welfare attitudes, contingent on the type of religiosity. Those who perceive God as the focal point of religion tend to substitute God for the welfare-state, when reminded of His control. On the other hand, for people who tend to equate religion with prosociality, God's control is more of a reminder of their obligation to benevolence, thus strengthening their endorsement of the welfare-state. This preliminary finding provides some empirical justification to focus our research on the specific belief in God's control, among other reasons that were specified in the literature review.

²³ The measures were identical to the ones used in our research – see Study 1, in the 'procedure' section.

Figure A1: Support for redistribution, by condition and relative importance of rituals



Appendix B: Hebrew Primes, Study 1

A. Questions-order prime Belief in God's control over the world (*salient1* condition)

באיזו מידה אתה מסכים עם הטענות הבאות, באיזו מידה התיאורים הבאים קרובים לתפיסתך את אלוקים:

| כלל לא | במידה נמוכה | במידה בינונית | במידה רבה | במידה רבה מאוד | |
|----------|-------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|---|
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | |
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | "אלוקים (או) ישות עליונה מסוג כלשהו), שולט, לפחות במידה מסוימת על האירועים בעולמנו" |
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | "האירועים המתרחשים בעולם קורים לפי תוכנית של אלוקים (או) ישות עליונה מסוג כלשהו) |
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | אלוקים, או ישות עליונה מסוג כלשהו, הוא זה שגורם לרוב האירועים בעולם לקרות" |

B. Short-essay prime, Belief in God's control over the world (salient2 condition)

ב. אנא קרא בעיון את הקטע הבא וענה על השאלות שלאחריו:

ההשגחה של אלוקים פוגשת אותנו בכל מיני דרכים נסתרות. אמנם ברגעים רבים נראה ש"עולם כמנהגו נוהג", ושדברים מתנהלים באופן טבעי. אבל ברגעים אחרים אנחנו מזהים "נצנוצים" של הרגשה שיש מישהו למעלה שיש לו תוכנית בשבילנו. כל מיני דברים שקורים, כל מיני צירופי מקרים, נראים שרומזים לאיזה התערבות נסתרת של מישהו שדואג שהם יקרו.

אמנם, במסגרת החילונית המודרנית יש שטוענים שהרגילות שבה העולם מתנהל מראה שאלוקים לא משגיח. עם זאת, הם מתעלמים מהאפשרות שההתערבות הזו של אלוקים בעולם לא חייבת להיות בצורה של נס גלוי שמשנה את חוקי הטבע או את ההתנהלות החברתית בצורה בוטה. אלוקים הוא מספיק מתוחכם כדי להשתמש בשינויים מהסוג של "אפקט הפרפר" שבו שינוי קטן במקום אחד מוביל, דרך הרבה גלולים, להתערבות הרצויה במקום אחר.

החשיבות האמונית של השגחה זו היא בכך שהיא מבטיחה את השלטון של אלוקים בעולם, ואת היכולת שלו לממש את התוכנית שלו לגבינו – גם אם איננו תמיד מבינים את התוכנית הזאת, עקב תבונתנו המוגבלת. אם לוקחים את התחושות והתובנות האלה ברצינות, הן יכולות ללמד אותנו שבני האדם הם אינם אלה שמנהלים את העניינים בעולם, בסופו של דבר. ניתן להיזכר בדברי חכמינו זיכרונם לברכה שאמרו: "אין אדם נוקף אצבעו מלמטה אלא אם כן מכריזין עליו מלמעלה" (מסכת חולין) – כלומר, כל דבר שמתרחש בעולם נעשה מכוח הסכמה שמימית. מי ש"מנהל את העניינים" באמת זוהי ידה הנסתרת של ההשגחה האלוהית. אלוקים הוא מלכו של עולם.

Appendix C: Descriptive Statistics

Table C1: Descriptive statistics, Israeli-Jews sample (Study 1)

| Variable | Mean | s.d. |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Age | 26.4 | 6.92 |
| Male | 0.52 | 0.50 |
| Class | 3.16 | 0.73 |
| Political orientation | 6.48 | 2.36 |
| God's control | 3.68 | 1.47 |
| Prayer-house attendance | 4.66 | 2.41 |
| Government responsibility for redistribution | 3.35 | 1.14 |
| Welfare-state expenditure | 3.45 | 0.63 |

Table C2: Descriptive statistics, American-Jews sample (Study 2)

| Variable | Mean | s.d. |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Age | 37.38 | 14.61 |
| Male | 0.53 | 0.5 |
| Class | 3.29 | 0.646 |
| Political orientation | 4.57 | 2.38 |
| God's control | 4.40 | 1.85 |
| Religiosity | 3.32 | 1.32 |
| Government responsibility for redistribution | 2.64 | 1.28 |
| Welfare-state expenditure | 3.29 | 0.94 |
| Attribution to God | 1.78 | 1.05 |
| <i>GGRP</i> scale | 3.15 | 1.34 |
| Benevolence | 4.56 | 0.94 |

Table C3: Descriptive statistics, American-Catholic sample (Study 3)

| Variable | Mean | s.d. |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Age | 35.28 | 12.31 |
| Male | 1.39 | 0.49 |
| Class | 2.63 | 0.80 |
| Political orientation | 4.90 | 2.12 |
| God's control | 4.61 | 1.57 |
| Religiosity | 3.14 | 1.15 |
| Government responsibility for redistribution | 3.06 | 1.27 |
| Welfare-state expenditure | 3.35 | 0.84 |
| Attribution to God | 2.66 | 1.68 |
| <i>GGRP</i> scale | 3.38 | 1.14 |
| Benevolence | 4.44 | 1.06 |

Table C4: Descriptive statistics, American-Protestant sample (Study 3)

| Variable | Mean | s.d. |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Age | 38.47 | 12.93 |
| Male | 1.49 | 0.50 |
| Class | 2.47 | 0.77 |
| Political orientation | 5.01 | 2.32 |
| God's control | 5.29 | 1.65 |
| Religiosity | 3.52 | 1.18 |
| Government responsibility for redistribution | 2.86 | 1.40 |
| Welfare-state expenditure | 3.17 | 0.90 |
| Attribution to God | 2.33 | 1.52 |
| <i>GGRP</i> scale | 3.82 | 1.24 |
| Benevolence | 4.26 | 1.25 |