

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies conducted over the years have focused on the political activism of clergy members. Political activism by clergy members can take several different forms, including the delivery of political cues from the pulpit. Studies to date have utilized surveys to query large pools of clergy informants to self-report political activity, including cue giving or have engaged in direct observation of a limited number of worship services. These studies have thoroughly established the fact that many clergy members approve of and/or engage in political cue giving, have arranged instances of cue giving into useful categories, and have also quantified the impact of variables such as denominational affiliation, education, orthodoxy, etc., on the likelihood and frequency of political cue giving.

The current paper fills a gap in the research of the political cue giving of clergy members through the use of primary data sources, namely 235 sermon texts delivered in the five weeks leading up to the 2008 Presidential election. The data collection method utilizes the convenience of the Internet that yields both a broad sample and a depth of findings thus enabling the current researcher to quantify and qualify the breadth and depth of political cue giving by clergy members from the pulpit by relying on sermon texts as the primary data. The researcher gathered additional demographic data concerning the clergy members through a brief questionnaire delivered by email.

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Guth, et al, (1997) conducted the seminal study determining that the political cue giving of clergy members tends to follow one of two agendas depending on degree of orthodoxy. Conservative or high orthodox clergy members report giving political cues that promote a moral values agenda while liberal or low orthodoxy clergy members report giving political cues that promote a social justice agenda. Guth used data collected from four different, non-identical mail surveys of more than 5,000 clergy members from eight denominations conducted over a four-year period from 1988 to 1992. Guth culled the survey data for “core batteries on ministers’ theological, social, and political characteristics” and for responses regarding “several political questions that surfaced during the 1988 presidential campaign” (p. 192). A number of studies grew out of Guth’s work that focused on the political activity of clergy members during the 2000 Presidential election year (Smidt, et al, 2003; McDaniel, 2003; Kellstedt and Green, 2003; Djupe and Sokhey, 2003; Green, 2003; Jelen 2003; Campbell and Monson, 2003; and Deckman, et al, 2003). While these studies were able to gather data from a large number of informants, they were limited in their ability to report on specific examples of political activity as afforded by observation or analysis of sermon content.

Brewer, Kersh, and Petersen, (2003) expanded the methodology of research on the political cue giving of clergy members from mailed surveys to systematic observation of religious services. By attending nearly 100 religious services in 1998 and 1999, they documented 264 political messages delivered by clergy members and other congregational leaders during the sermon and other moments within the services. The Brewer study developed a three-part scale for the evaluation of political cues in terms of intensity. The current author uses Brewer’s scale

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in the current paper. While this data is much richer than that gathered by surveys, its collection requires significant investments of time and travel by the researcher while yielding a smaller data set. In addition, the data collection time period did not fall within a Presidential election year.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions guided the current research project:

1. What variable factors affect the incidence of political cue giving in sermons?
2. What variable factors affect the intensity of the information presented by clergy members in the form of political cues expressed within the context of their sermons?

The current paper reports on correlations between the incidence, and intensity of political cues and several demographic variables including age, denominational affiliation, political leanings of clergy members, and the political environment of the communities in which the congregations are located.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

In order to be consistent with prior research by the current author, the data search was limited to sermons delivered by clergy members from seven denominations represented in the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey: Adventist, Baptist, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. The author utilized multiple search strings in the Google search

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engine in order to retrieve sermons delivered on particular dates and by clergy members of particular denominations. Sample search strings include, “Sermon October 5, 2008 Adventist”, “Sermon October 12, 2008 Baptist”, and “Sermon October 19, 2008 Nazarene”. The goal was to collect ten sermons from clergy members of seven denominations for each of the five Sundays leading up to the election, which would yield a sampling of 350 sermons. The final sample consisted of 235 full-text sermons due to the limitations of the methodology explained below.

The data collection was limited to the first ten full-text sermons returned by each search string in the list of Google results so that the Page-Rank Technology of the Google search algorithm determined the sampling (<http://www.google.com/corporate/tech.html> accessed 12/08/2009). No effort was made to determine the size of congregations served by the clergy members represented in the sample, nor to determine the number of persons attending the worship services at which the sermons were delivered, nor how many people may have accessed and read the sermon texts once posted to the web. The researcher copied each sermon text into separate word processing documents saved the URL, the access date of the sermon text, the name and location of the congregation, and the name of the clergy member who delivered the sermon into the document header.

Additionally, the researcher sent an email message to the 88 clergy members in the sample pool informing them of the research project and asking for additional demographic information. Thirty-three clergy members (37.5%) responded to the request. Variables include age, gender, ethnicity, education level, denominational affiliation, years of ministry, years with current congregation, and political leaning. The researcher accessed public voting records by individual counties in which congregations are located to determine the political environment of

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the clergy members. A summary of the demographic characteristics of the sample pool are as follows:

- In 2008 the average age of the informant sample was 52.88 years with a standard deviation of 8.799
- Predominantly male with 29 male and 4 female clergy members
- Exclusively Caucasian
- Well educated with 51.48% having earned a Master of Divinity or Master of Theological Studies degree, 27.27% with a D. Min, and 21.21% with a Ph.D.
- Extensive ministry experience with an average term since ordination of 23.26 years with a standard deviation of 12.06
- In 2008 the members of the informant sample had served their respective congregations for an average of 8.06 years with a standard deviation of 7.009
- Serve congregations of various sizes:
 - Average worship attendance of 280 with a range from 24 to 1100
 - Seven congregations have an average worship service attendance of 100 or less
 - Nineteen congregations have an average worship service attendance between 101 and 499
 - Seven congregations have an average worship service attendance of 500 or more
- Varied by denominational affiliation: American Baptist (2), Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (2), Southern Baptist (3), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (9), Presbyterian Church USA (7), United Church of Christ (5), and United Methodist Church (5)

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- Varied by self-described political leaning: Conservative (4), Moderate (12), Liberal (12), Very Liberal (5)

The 33 clergy members who responded to the email message request delivered 98 of the 235 sermons (41.7%) originally collected from the Internet and 18 of the 33 clergy members (55%) gave political cues in this refined sermon text sample. The 33 clergy members serve congregations located in predominantly urban and suburban areas and 26 serve congregations in counties that voted for Obama in the 2008 General Election. See Appendix 3 for selected demographic attributes of this smaller sample of clergy members.

Validity of the Data

Given the exploratory nature of the current research project, the informant sample is small especially when compared to previous studies. The even smaller number of clergy member respondents to the email request for demographic data raises a concern for the validity of the informant sample. The researcher used the data collected on the variables of clergy member political leaning and clergy member age to measure for sample validity against similar findings of two national surveys. The researcher compared the political leanings of the clergy member respondents in the current study against the findings of the U.S. Congregational Life Survey, 20001, for Lutheran, PCUSA, Southern Baptist, UCC, and UMC clergy members. Comparison data was not available for American Baptist and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship clergy members.

As presented in Table 1 below, the demographic data for the current study closely matches the findings from the national survey. Sufficient data from the current study allowed for 14 comparison points of political leaning and denominational affiliation with the national survey.

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The demographic data of the current study distributed within 10 percentage points on 10 of the 14 comparison points. These 10 comparison points are marked with shading in the table.

Table 1 – Data Validity Measured by Findings on Political Leaning

Denomination	Political Learning				Total
	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Very Liberal	
ABC	0	0	1	1	2
CBF	0	2	1	0	3
ELCA	1 (11.1%) -2.8%	4 (44.4%) -3.7%	3 (33.3%) +2%	1 (11.1%) +7.4%	9
PCUSA	2 (28.6%) +3.1%	1 (14.3%) -21.4%	3 (42.9%) +8.9%	1 (14.3%) +6.3%	7
SBC	1 (50%) +7.7%	1 (50%) +2.8%	0	0	2
UCC	0	0	3 (60%) +15.6%	2 (40%) +23.4%	5
UMC	0	4 (80%) +36.1%	1 (20%) -1.1%	0	5
Total	4	12	12	5	33

Next, the researcher compared the age of the clergy respondents in the current study against the findings of the Pulpit and Pew National Survey of Pastoral Leaders, 2001. As presented in Table 2 below, the age distribution of respondents for the current study falls within acceptable parameters of ten percentage points of the national survey for all but one age group category, i.e., 55-64 years of age.

Table 2 – Data Validity Measured by Age Distribution of Informants

	Current Study Count	Percent	Pew and Pulpit Survey 2001
34 years and under	1	3.0	6.1
35 – 44 years of age	4	12.1	19.7
45 -54 years of age	12	36.4	34.4
55 – 64 years of age	15	45.5	27.3
65 years and older	1	3.0	12.5
Total	33	100.0	100.0

These comparisons suggest sufficient validity of the informant sample, especially in light of the exploratory nature of the current research project. Despite the small size of the informant sample, it serves as an accurate representation of Christian Protestant clergy members as a whole.

Analysis of the Data

The researcher created a DevonTHINKPro database to facilitate key word searching of all 235 of the sermon texts. The database was searched for the following keywords: elect, election, elected, politics, politician, political, vote, voter, McCain, Obama, President, and Presidential. With each search, the database returned a list of sermon texts containing one or more occurrence of the keywords. The researcher reviewed each keyword occurrence for evaluation as a potential political cue. The researcher identified 91 political cues in 52 sermons (21.94%) from within the total sample.

The researcher assigned a numerical value reflecting the intensity of each political cue based on the work of Brewer. The numerical value of one indicates a bland and brief political

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cue. The numerical value of two indicates a political cue of greater substance and intensity and the numerical value of three indicates a political cue that calls for direct action by the listener.

The average intensity value for all political cues in the sample was 1.78 and less than 10% of the cues called for direct action by the listener.

The researcher matched the demographic data of the 33 clergy members who responded to the email survey to the particular sermons from the sample that each of these clergy members delivered. The researcher then conducted a quantitative analysis of the data subset to search for possible correlations between demographic variables and incidents of political cue giving by type and intensity.

Limitations of the methodology

The data sample of sermon texts is limited to only full-text sermons posted to the World Wide Web. The search strings frequently returned links to audio podcast recordings of sermons that fit the search criteria, which are not included in the sample for the sake of consistent analysis. This resulted in a less than representative sampling of sermons by clergy members of particular denominations in which it is not the norm to write full-text sermons. Consequently, the data sample does not include sermons from Adventist clergy members and includes a less than equal representation from Church of the Nazarene clergy members.

Second, the methodology selected only sermon texts posted to the web sites of congregations served by the clergy member/authors of the sermons. Such a factor assumes financial resources and technological support that might not be available to all clergy members and would thus limit the ability of some clergy members to post sermon texts to the World Wide Web.

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Third, the sampling method for acquiring full-text sermons created an inconsistency in terms of the number of sermons gathered for individual clergy members. In some cases, the sample includes five sermon texts each by individual clergy members and in other cases the sample includes only one sermon text from individual clergy members. The sample also includes two, three, or four sermon texts for individual clergy members. The exploratory nature of the research project also applies to the data collection methodology, which will be modified in future projects. See Appendix 3 for quantification of the number of sermon texts per clergy member included in the sample for the 33 clergy members who responded to the email survey.

FINDINGS

Variable factors and the incidence of political cue giving

The research project sought to measure the impact of several demographic variables on the likelihood of clergy members to engage in political cue giving. The researcher sent an email to all 88 clergy members in the informant pool and 33 clergy members replied with the requested information. The email survey asked the research informants to report on the following variables:

- Gender
- Year of birth
- Year of ordination
- Years served with congregation in 2008
- Denominational affiliation
- Average worship attendance in 2008, and
- Political leaning

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The numerical values for the year of birth, year of ordination, years served with congregation, and average worship attendance variables were grouped into broader categories for the sake of analysis. Data regarding the variable of the political environment in which each clergy member serves was collected by determining the county in which their congregation is located and then using election return data to determine if the county voted either for McCain or Obama. The researcher utilized statistical software to analyze the data and search for potential correlations between the different variables and the incidence of political cue giving.

Denominational affiliation and the incidence of political cue giving

As indicated in Table 3 below, 51 (42%) of the clergy members in the original sample of 88 gave a political cue in at least one sermon in the five weeks before the 2008 Presidential Election. The disparity in the distribution of clergy members by denominational affiliation makes it difficult to draw comparisons. From an initial review of the data, the researcher realized that clergy members originally identified as Baptist could not be lumped together. One motivation for the email survey was an effort to better identify the denominational affiliation of Baptist clergy members and this resulted in the larger diversity yet smaller numbers of clergy by denominational affiliation.

The current study yielded results very similar to previous studies in terms of the percentage of clergy members giving political cues. Hofrenning, et al, (2004, p. 53) found that 38% of ELCA clergy reported taking a stand on a political issue while preaching and their finding is nearly identical with the 36% of ELCA clergy in the current study giving political cues in their sermons. Weston (2004, p. 66) found that 54% of Presbyterian (USA) clergy members reported taking a stand on a political issue while preaching, which is slightly more than the 45%

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of Presbyterian (USA) clergy in the current studies who gave political cues in their sermons. The current study also yielded findings similar to those of Brewer in terms of cue giving intensity.

Table 3 – Cue Giving and Denominational Affiliation

DENOMINATION	Gave Cues?		Total
	No	Yes	
American Baptist Church (ABC)	0	2	2
Baptist	2	1	3
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)	2	1	3
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	13	8 (38%)	21
Nazarene	2	1	3
Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)	11	9 (45%)	20
Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)	0	2	2
United Church of Christ (UCC)	11	8 (42%)	19
United Methodist Church (UMC)	10	5 (33%)	15
Total	51	37	88

The researcher calculated the frequency of political cue giving by denominational affiliation by taking the total number of cues given by denomination and dividing by the total number of clergy from each denomination who gave cues. It is important to note that this calculation is not an average of political cues given by clergy members per sermon, but rather an average of political cues given by clergy members during the five weeks leading up to the election. Again, the disparity in the sample by denomination calls into question the reliability of the findings. For example, as indicated in Table 4 below, Baptist clergy members gave an average of four political cues, but the calculation represents only 1 clergy member who gave 4 political cues spread over 3 sermons delivered during the five weeks.

The data presents a more accurate picture when limited to those denominations represented by a larger sample of clergy members. For example, the 9 PCUSA clergy members

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who gave political cues averaged 3.1 cues during the five week time frame. The 8 UCC clergy members who gave political cues averaged 2.75 and the 8 ELCA clergy averaged 2.375.

Table 4 – Cue giving frequency by denomination

Denomination	Average cues per clergy member	Total cues given
ABC	1.5	3
BAPTIST	4	4
CBF	1	1
ELCA	2.375	19
NAZARENE	2	2
PCUSA	3.1	28
SBC	1.5	3
UCC	2.75	22
UMC	1.8	9
Total	1.8	91

Clergy member political leaning and the incidence of political cue giving

The researcher asked clergy members to self-identify across five categories for political leaning from Very Conservative to Very Liberal. Table 5 below indicates that 24 of the clergy members (73%) self-identified as either Moderate or Liberal. None identified as Very Conservative and only 9 (27%) identified as either Conservative or Very Liberal.

Table 5 - Political Leaning and Cue Giving

POLITICAL LEANING	Gave Cues?		Total
	No	Yes	
Conservative	1	3	4
Moderate	6	6	12
Liberal	5	7	12
Very Liberal	3	2	5
Total	15	18	33

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The findings indicate that clergy members of a Conservative political leaning are the most likely (75%) to engage in political cue giving. However, the Conservative political leaning category is also the least represented in the sample, which negates the ability to make a strong correlation between this particular political leaning and the likelihood to engage in political cue giving. The number of Moderate and Liberal leaning clergy members in the sample are identical and nearly so is the likelihood to engage in political cue giving. The findings indicate that only a minority of Very Liberal leaning clergy members was likely to engage in political cue giving.

The survey respondents represent a diversity of political leaning across denominations. As indicated in Table 6 below, 5 of the 7 denominations represented in the sample included Conservative and Moderate leaning clergy and 6 of the 7 denominations included Liberal and Very Liberal leaning clergy. The most diverse denominations appear to be the ELCA and the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) with four of the five political leaning categories represented. The most conservative denomination represented is the Southern Baptist Convention and the most liberal by representation include the American Baptist Churches (ABC) and the United Church of Christ (UCC).

Table 6 – Cue Giving, Denominational Affiliation, and Political Leaning

Gave Cues?	Denomination	Political Leaning				Total
		Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Very Liberal	
No	Cooperative Baptist Fellowship	0	1	0	0	1
	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	0	3	3	0	6
	Presbyterian Church USA	1	0	1	1	3
	Southern Baptist Convention	0	1	0	0	1
	United Church of Christ	0	0	0	2	2
	United Methodist Church	0	1	1	0	2
	Total		1	6	5	3
Yes	American Baptist Church	0	0	1	1	2
	Cooperative Baptist Fellowship	0	0	1	0	1
	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	1	1	0	1	3
	Presbyterian Church USA	1	1	2	0	4
	Southern Baptist Convention	1	1	0	0	2
	United Church of Christ	0	0	3	0	3
	United Methodist Church	0	3	0	0	3
Total		3	6	7	2	18

The political environment and the incidence of political cue giving

The data gives mixed results as to whether or not the political environment affects the incidence of political cue giving. In the total sample, only 29% of clergy members serving congregations located in McCain voting counties gave political cues. Clergy members serving congregations in Obama voting counties were half again as likely to give political cues at a rate of 45%. See Table 7 below.

Table 7 – Political cue giving and the political environment

COUNTY VOTE	Gave Cues?		Total
	No	Yes	
McCain	12	5	17
Obama	39	32	71
Total	51	37	88

However, when limited to the smaller sample of those clergy members responding to the survey, the political environment does not seem to affect the likelihood of giving political cues. As indicated in Table 8 below, 4 of the 7 clergy members serving congregations in McCain voting counties (57%) gave political cues and 15 of the 26 clergy serving congregations in Obama voting counties (58%) also gave political cues. However, it is notable that the two Liberal and Very Liberal leaning clergy members serving congregations in McCain voting counties did not give cues while two of the three Conservative leaning clergy serving congregations in Obama voting counties did engage in political cue giving.

Table 8 – Political Environment and Political Cue Giving

County Vote			Gave Cues?		Total
			No	Yes	
McCain	Political Leaning	Conservative	0	1	1
		Moderate	2	2	4
		Liberal	1	0	1
		Very Liberal	1	0	1
	Total	4	3	7	
Obama	Political Leaning	Conservative	1	2	3
		Moderate	4	4	8
		Liberal	4	7	11
		Very Liberal	2	2	4
	Total	11	15	26	

Clergy member age and the incidence of political cue giving

The survey respondent sample distributed across three of the four age categories. No clergy members in the sample reported being less than 31 years of age and nearly two-thirds of the respondents fall within the 46-60 years of age category. Cue givers and non-cue givers distribute evenly across the three categories with the exception of the 61 years and over category. As indicated in Table 9 below, clergy members 61 years of age and older are twice as likely to engage in political cue giving than are clergy in the other age categories.

Table 9 - Political Cue Giving and Age of Clergy Member

AGE	Gave Cues?		Total
	No	Yes	
31-45 years	3	3	6
46-60 years	10	11	21
61 years and over	2	4	6
Total	15	18	33

As indicated in Table 10 below, the findings reveal that older clergy members tend to be more liberal and the same is true for clergy members in the 31-45 years of age category. Conservative leaning clergy fell exclusively within the 46-60 years of age category although four of the five political leaning categories are represented within that age range.

Table 10 - Age, Political Leaning, and Cue Giving

Gave Cues?			Political Leaning				Total
			Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Very Liberal	
No	Age	31-45 years	0	1	2	0	3
		46-60 years	1	5	2	2	10
		61 years and over	0	0	1	1	2
		Total	1	6	5	3	15
Yes	Age	31-45 years	0	0	2	1	3
		46-60 years	3	4	4	0	11
		61 years and over	0	2	1	1	4
		Total	3	6	7	2	18

Other variables and the incidence of political cue giving

The researcher examined other variables including gender, years of experience, and years serving a particular congregation for possible correlations with political cue giving. However, the data for these variables were each so heavily weighted towards one category so as to question the validity of any possible correlations. Twenty-nine of the thirty-three survey respondents sample were male so that no correlations can be made regarding gender. Nearly two-thirds of the survey respondents fell within the twenty years or more category for years of experience in the ministry variable as measured by years since ordination. More than half of the survey respondents had served their congregations for five years or less. However, the findings for these variables in relation to cue giving are included in the Appendix.

Variable factors and the intensity of political cue giving

The research project sought to measure the impact of the same demographic variables on the intensity level of those political cues given by clergy members in their sermons during the five weeks before the 2008 Presidential Election. The researcher assigned an intensity value of 1, 2, or 3 to each of the identified political cues based on Brewer’s scale. See Table 11 below for the distribution of intensity values for all the political cues identified in the original sample and how the findings of the current study compare to those by Brewer.

While both the current study and Brewers’ found that the majority of cues fall within Level 2 intensity, the current study identified fewer cues in Level 2 and more in Level 1. The current researcher can only speculate on reasons for the slight differences in these findings, but two important differences between the studies are that the current study includes a larger data sample and reports on data collected during a Presidential election year.

Table 11 – Distribution and comparison of Brewer Codes

Cue Intensity	Current Study	Brewer Study
1 – Brief and bland mention about politics	29 (32%)	17 (22%)
2 – More extensive reference to politics	53 (58%)	52 (67%)
3 – A call for direct action by individuals or a group	9 (10%)	9 (11%)
Total	91	78

Denominational affiliation and the intensity of political cue giving

The data reveals a wide variance in the incidence and intensity of political cue giving by denominational affiliation. However, the researcher notes again that the uneven sampling by denominational affiliation calls the findings into question, at least on the surface level. For example, one should not conclude from the data presented in Table 12 below that Nazarene

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clergy give the most intense type of political cues more than clergy members from any other denomination because only 1 Nazarene clergy member is represented in the sample.

More Presbyterian clergy members gave political cues than clergy members of any other denomination represented in the sample, they gave the most political cues in the sample, and the most political cues per clergy member (3.1). However, more than half (54%) of the political cues given by Presbyterian clergy members were of the Level 1 intensity as brief and bland mentions. This was the highest rate of Level 1 intensity by denominational affiliation in the data sample. Only 7% of political cues given by Presbyterian clergy qualified as Level 3 in intensity.

By contrast, UCC clergy members gave 2.75 cues on average, but the rate of Level 1 cues was just one-third (18%) the rate for Presbyterian clergy members. UCC clergy members were 2.5 times more likely than Presbyterians to give political cues that qualified as Level 3 in intensity (18%). This was the highest rate of Level 3 intensity by denominational affiliation in the data sample.

Table 12 – Denominational affiliation and cue giving intensity

Denomination	Intensity Level of Cues			Total
	1	2	3	
ABC	1	2	0	3
BAPTIST	2	2	0	4
CBF	0	1	0	1
ELCA	5	12	2	19
NAZARENE	0	1	1	2
PCUSA	15	11	2	28
SBC	1	2	0	3
UCC	4	14	4	22
UMC	1	8	0	9
Total	29	53	9	91

Clergy member political leaning and the intensity of political cue giving

As indicated above, Liberal leaning clergy members are more likely to engage in political cue giving than other clergy members. The findings also indicate that they give more intense political cues than other clergy members. As indicated by Table 13 below, one-third of all the Level 3 cues in the data sample were delivered by Liberal leaning clergy members and the remaining Level 3 cues were delivered by clergy members who did not respond to the email survey so that their political leaning is unknown. Political cues given by Liberal leaning clergy were of Level 3 intensity 20% of the time and of Level 1 intensity only 13% of the time. By contrast, Conservative leaning clergy members delivered Level 1 cues 75% of the time, Very Liberal clergy 33%, and Moderate clergy 27%. Conservative, Moderate, and Very Liberal leaning clergy members did not deliver any Level 3 intensity political cues.

Table 13 - Political Leaning and Cue Giving Intensity

		Brewer Code			Total
		1	2	3	
Political Leaning	Unknown	20	32	6	58
	Conservative	3	1	0	4
	Moderate	3	8	0	11
	Liberal	2	10	3	15
	Very Liberal	1	2	0	3
Total		29	53	9	91

The political environment and the intensity of political cue giving

The data indicates that the political environment may have a significant impact on the frequency and intensity of political cue giving by clergy members. The 5 clergy members serving congregations in counties that voted for McCain and gave political cues gave only 7 political cues in total for an average of 1.4 cues per clergy member. By contrast, the 32 clergy

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members serving congregations in counties that voted for Obama and gave political cues gave 84 political cues in total at nearly twice the frequency for an average of 2.625 per clergy member.

Clergy members in McCain voting counties did not deliver any Level 3 political cues. However, 86% of cues delivered in McCain counties were Level 2 and therefore of greater intensity than the brief and bland cues of Level 1, which comprised 33% of the political cues delivered in Obama counties. Moderate leaning clergy members gave the most political cues in McCain counties and Liberal leaning clergy members gave the most political cues in Obama counties. Conservative leaning clergy serving congregations in Obama counties gave only brief and bland political cues of Level 1 intensity.

Table 14 - Political Environment, Political Leaning, and Cue Giving Intensity
Count

County Vote	Brewer Code			Total
	1	2	3	
McCain Political Unknown	0	1	0	1
Leaning Conservative	0	1	0	1
Moderate	1	3	0	4
Liberal	0	1	0	1
Total	1	6	0	7
Obama Political Unknown	20	31	6	57
Leaning Conservative	3	0	0	3
Moderate	2	5	0	7
Liberal	2	9	3	14
Very Liberal	1	2	0	3
Total	28	47	9	84

Clergy member age and political cue giving intensity

The age of clergy members does not appear to affect the intensity of political cues. As revealed in Table 15 below, Level 2 cues were the most prevalent across all age groups. Only clergy members in the 46 - 60 age group delivered Level 3 codes calling for direction action and this represented only 12.5% of all cues from that age group.

Table 15 - Age and Cue Giving Intensity

		Brewer Code			Total
		1	2	3	
Age Group	Unknown	20	31	6	57
	31-45 years	0	3	0	3
	46-60 years	6	15	3	24
	61 years and older	3	4	0	7
Total		29	53	9	91

Conclusion

The methodology employed in the current research project represents a new development in the study of political cue giving by clergy members by combining established survey and observation methodology with the vast resources and convenience of the Internet. Rather than relying solely on the self-reporting of cue giving by clergy members in response to surveys or engaging in the time consuming nature of observation, this methodology facilitates content analysis of a large number of sermon texts in digital format for particular keywords that may indicate a political cue.

The current study went beyond previous studies in terms of examining possible affects of the political environment on the incidence and intensity of cue giving. The findings from this exploratory study indicate that liberal leaning clergy members serving congregations in a

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conservative political environment may be inhibited from giving political cues. In addition, while conservative learning clergy members serving congregations in a liberal political environment engage in political cue giving, the cues are of the brief and bland nature of the least intense of cues.

Improvements of the methodology for future use include an adjustment in data collection to all for the consistent sampling of numbers of sermon texts from individual clergy members. The disparity in the number of sermon texts by clergy member ranged from one to five texts, which raises concerns about the accuracy of the incidence of cue giving measures. A second improvement relates to the survey used to gather demographic data from clergy members to include a question asking the clergy member his or her perception as to how the majority of the congregation voted.

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Appendix 1: Distribution of sermon sample by denomination and number of clergy

DENOMINATION	SERMON COUNT	CLERGY COUNT
Baptist	36	10
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	42	21
Church of the Nazarene	11	3
Presbyterian USA	49	20
United Church of Christ	50	19
United Methodist Church	47	15
TOTALS	235	88

Appendix 2: Distribution of sample sermon texts over time

DATE OF SERMON DELIVERY	SERMON COUNT
October 5, 2008	49
October 12, 2008	46
October 19, 2008	46
October 26, 2008	46
November 2, 2008	48

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Appendix 3 – Data regarding clergy member informants

Denomination	Age	Gender	Degree	Political Leaning	County Vote	Cues? Y/N	# of Sermons	Sermons w/ Cues
ABC	55	Male	PhD	Liberal	Obama	Y	4	1
ABC	69	Female	Mdiv	Very Liberal	Obama	Y	4	2
CBF	36	Male	Dmin	Liberal	Obama	Y	2	1
CBF	55	Male	PhD	Moderate	Obama	N	1	0
ELCA	33	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	N	4	0
ELCA	53	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	N	3	0
ELCA	52	Male	Mdiv	Conservative	Obama	Y	3	1
ELCA	52	Male	Mdiv	Moderate	Obama	Y	2	1
ELCA	39	Female	Mdiv	Very Liberal	Obama	Y	2	1
ELCA	55	Female	Mdiv	Moderate	Obama	N	1	0
ELCA	59	Male	PhD	Moderate	Obama	N	1	0
ELCA	62	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	N	1	0
ELCA	45	Male	PhD	Moderate	Obama	N	1	0
PCUSA	62	Male	Dmin	Moderate	Obama	Y	5	1
PCUSA	56	Male	Dmin	Liberal	Obama	N	4	0
PCUSA	61	Male	PhD	Liberal	Obama	Y	4	1
PCUSA	35	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	Y	3	1
PCUSA	54	Male	Mdiv	Conservative	Obama	N	2	0
PCUSA	56	Female	Mdiv	Conservative	Obama	Y	2	1
PCUSA	54	Male	PhD	Very Liberal	McCain	N	1	0
SBC	57	Male	Dmin	Moderate	McCain	N	5	0
SBC	57	Male	Dmin	Moderate	McCain	Y	5	2
SBC	59	Male	Dmin	Conservative	McCain	Y	5	1
UCC	51	Male	Dmin	Very Liberal	Obama	N	5	0
UCC	52	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	Y	5	3
UCC	62	Male	PhD	Very Liberal	Obama	N	2	0
UCC	49	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	Y	1	1
UCC	53	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	Obama	Y	1	1
UMC	36	Male	Mdiv	Liberal	McCain	N	4	0
UMC	63	Male	Dmin	Moderate	McCain	Y	4	2
UMC	56	Male	MTh	Moderate	Obama	Y	4	1
UMC	60	Male	Dmin	Moderate	Obama	Y	4	1
UMC	47	Male	Mdiv	Moderate	McCain	N	3	0

Appendix 4 – Years in the ministry and cue giving

		Cues		Total
		No	Yes	
Years Ordained	5 years and less	2	1	3
	6-10 years	3	2	5
	11-20 years	0	5	5
	20 years and over	10	10	20
Total		15	18	33

Appendix 5 – Years with a congregation and cue giving

		Cues		Total
		No	Yes	
Years with Congregation	5 years and less	7	10	17
	6-10 years	5	3	8
	11-20 years	2	3	5
	21 years and over	1	2	3
Total		15	18	33