GOD IMAGE AND LEADER SCHEMAS: Do religious values inform our expectations for leaders?

Elizabeth A. Luckman
IAMSR Conference
May 20, 2017
Genesis of an idea....
God image

• “The significance of religion is... a reflection of what God as the object of religion does to our worldview” -Georg Simmel

• God as an object of devotion
• God as a spiritual leader
• God as ruler
• God as powerful

(Bader and Froese, 2005)
Social construction of leadership

Leaders will sacrifice for you and expect nothing in return. – Simon Sinek

A person, who no matter how desperate the situation, gives others hope, is a true leader. – Daisaku Ikeda

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. – John C Maxwell

Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence. – Sheryl Sandberg

(Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich, 1985; Calder 1977)
Research Question

Does God image inform expectations of and preferences for leaders?
Development of God image

• Family and other authority figures influence a child’s religious values
• God image as distinct element of religion
• God image: personal relationship with God

1. Birky and Ball, 1988; Dickie, Eshleman, Merasco, Shepard, Wilt, and Johnson 1997; Eshleman, Dickie, Merasc, Shepard and Johnson, 1999
2. Batson, Schoerade, Larry, 1993
3. Rizzuto, 1970
God Image: Engagement/Judgment

Engagement: social connection, support for others

Judgment: control, authority, dismissive of others ideas

(Froese and Bader, 2008)
God image as prototype for “leader” category

• Prototype theory\(^1\)
  • Prototype: abstract representation that is derived from the “center of the mass” of the features of all the objects in that category

• God is:\(^2\)
  • Leader
  • Powerful
  • Socially and individually constructed

Leadership categorization

• Implicit leadership theories
  • Cognitive schemas that inform expectations for leadership\(^1\)

• ILTs are informed by
  • Authority figures in childhood: parents, teachers, officers, etc.\(^2\)

1. Cronshaw and Lord, 1987; Foti, Fraser, and Lord, 1982; Lord, Foti, and DeVader, 1984
2. Ayman-Nolley and Ayman, 2005
Dimensions of leadership

• Humane-oriented: supportive, considerate leadership
  • High engagement

• Autocratic: control over others, dismissive of input
  • High judgment

GLOBE studies, Hanges and Dickson, 2004, 2007
Hypotheses

• H1: The ideal leader for an individual with a high engagement God image will be supportive and compassionate

- God image: Engaged → Leader schema: Humane Oriented

• H2: The ideal leader for an individual with a high judgment God image will be authoritarian and will maintain control over decision-making

- God image: Judgmental → Leader schema: Autocratic
Religious Involvement

- Religious certainty versus religious practices\(^1\)

- Related to intrinsic religious motivation\(^2\)

1. Bader and Froese, 2005; Froese and Bader, 2006
2. Allport and Ross, 1967
Hypotheses

H3: Religious involvement will moderate the relationship between God image and leader schema such that:

a) A more religiously involved person with an engaged God image will have a stronger preference for a humane-oriented leader as compared to a person who is less religiously involved

b) A more religiously involved person with a judgmental God image will have a stronger preference for an autocratic leader than a person who is less religiously involved
Methods/Measures

God Image
(Baylor University, 2007)
• God Image: Engagement
  • 8 items, ($\alpha$=.92)
  • Concerned with my personal well-being, concerned with well-being of the world
• God Image: Judgment
  • 7 items, ($\alpha$=.86)
  • Distant, Punishing

Religious Involvement
(Baylor University, 2007)
• Religious Involvement
  • 9 items: ($\alpha$=.83)
    • I felt called by God to do something
    • I was protected from harm by a guardian angel
  • Created binary variable
    • Low religious involvement
    • High religious involvement

GLOBE
(Hanges & Dickson, 2004)
• Humane-Oriented
  • 2 items, ($\alpha$=.75)
  • Willing to give time, money, resources to others; has empathy for others
• Autocratic
  • 6 items, ($\alpha$=.77)
  • Tells subordinates what to do in a commanding way, is in charge, does not tolerate disagreement or questioning

MTurk (n=110; 57.3% Female; mean age = 42.4 years)
Christianity (n=101); Judaism (n=6), Islam (n=3)
God image responses

God Engagement

God Judgment
Hypothesis 1 and 3a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Image: Engagement</td>
<td>0.30 **</td>
<td>0.26 *</td>
<td>0.43 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Image: Judgment</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Image: Engagement x Religious Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.37 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.28 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>6.43 **</td>
<td>4.42 **</td>
<td>7.32 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standardized coefficients are reported + p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01;
## Hypothesis 2 and 3b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Image: Judgment</td>
<td>0.27 **</td>
<td>0.27 **</td>
<td>0.24 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Image: Engagement</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Image: Engagement x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>3.95 *</td>
<td>2.61 +</td>
<td>2.99 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Standardized coefficients are reported + p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01;
Study Summary

• God image informs ideal leader expectations
  • God engagement $\rightarrow$ Humane-oriented leader ($H1$)
  • God judgment $\rightarrow$ Autocratic leader ($H2$)

• Religious involvement moderates the relationship between god engagement and ideal humane-oriented leader, but not the relationship between god judgment and ideal autocratic leader (partial support for $H3$)
General discussion

• God image, in part, informs expectations of and preferences for leaders
  • Faith-base assumptions influence organizational experience

• Followership
  • Attributions – god image as an attribution puts the leader in a role that he/she may not be able to fill
  • Relationship to social construction of leadership
Contributions and Implications

• Academic
  • Implicit Leadership Theories: formation
  • God image/personal experience with God
  • Spirituality in the workplace

• Practical
  • Understanding what informs followers expectations for leaders
  • Opportunity for discussion in education
    • Challenging assumptions
    • Teaching leadership
Future directions

• Other methods: quantitative and qualitative

• Consider moving beyond God image construct – other ways to conceptualize “God”, expanding beyond monotheism

• Testing the effects of the potential cognitive effect on interpersonal relationships
Thank you!

Elizabeth A. Luckman
eluckman@wustl.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>-0.53</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.44</strong></td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td><strong>-0.24</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.14</strong></td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td><strong>-0.28</strong></td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td><strong>-0.24</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.26</strong></td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td><strong>-0.26</strong></td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td><strong>0.31</strong></td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td><strong>-0.10</strong></td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td><strong>-0.12</strong></td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note**: +p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.001; Gender coding (0=male, 1=female)
### Study 2: Methods/Measures

**God Image**
- God Image - Benevolence
  - 1 items, ($\alpha=.9$)
  - Loving, forgiving, just, accepting, understanding, generous, warm
- Reverse scored: Punishing, Severe, Wrathful, Vindictive, Disapproving, Judgmental, Critical

**Preference for leader**
- Leader number 1 has a very positive reputation for being an effective leader. Members of the team say that leader number 1 is oriented toward following rules and regulations, decides what work will be done and how it will be done, and delegates responsibility in a clear and effective way.
- Leader number 2 has a very positive reputation for being a generous leader. Members of the team say that their leader is concerned about their personal welfare, is friendly and approachable, and perceives all members of the team as equal contributors.

**Personal Leadership Style**
- Consideration
  - 6 items, ($\alpha=.76$)
  - Treat all group members as equals, look out for personal welfare of team

---

MTurk (N=80; 55% female; mean age = 35years)
Regression results

Consideration Leadership Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God image</td>
<td>0.32 **</td>
<td>0.31 **</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference: Authoritative Leader</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference: Benevolent Leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.60 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1=Female)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic</td>
<td>3.81 **</td>
<td>3.29 **</td>
<td>12.85 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standardized coefficients are reported + p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01;
Mediation

God Image: Benevolence → Preference for socially engaged leader

Preference for socially engaged leader → Personal leadership consideration style

CI=95% [0.07, 0.34]

Selig and Preacher, 2008
God Image by Religious Affiliation

God Engagement

God Judgment

Washington University in St. Louis
OLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL
Creating knowledge...Inspiring individuals...Transforming business.