Weapon of the strong? Government support for religion and majoritarian terrorism

Henne, Peter S.; Saiya, Nilay; Hand, Ashlyn W.

2020

Henne, P. S., Saiya, N., & Hand, A. W. (2020). Weapon of the strong? Government support for religion and majoritarian terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(10), 1943-1967.
doi:10.1177/0022002720916854

<https://hdl.handle.net/10356/145549>

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720916854>

© 2020 The Author(s) (Published by SAGE Publications). All rights reserved. This paper was published in *Journal of Conflict Resolution* and is made available with permission of The Author(s) (Published by SAGE Publications).

Downloaded on 26 Apr 2023 21:01:15 SGT

Weapon of the Strong? Government Support for Religion and Majoritarian Terrorism

Peter S. Henne¹ , Nilay Saiya², and Ashlyn W. Hand³

Abstract

This article addresses a puzzle in terrorism studies. That terrorism functions as a “weapon of the weak” is conventional wisdom among terrorism researchers. When it comes to religious communities, however, often it is those groups favored by the state—rather than repressed minority communities—that commit acts of terrorism. We argue that this is because official religious favoritism can empower and radicalize majority communities, leading them to commit more and more destructive terrorist attacks. We test this claim using a statistical analysis of Muslim-majority countries. Our findings support the idea that the combination of state support of religion and discrimination against minorities encourages terrorism from majority religious groups.

Keywords

terrorism, human rights, conflict, domestic politics, Islam, repression

¹Department of Political Science/Global and Regional Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, USA

²Program in Public Policy and Global Affairs, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

³Program in Public Policy, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin, TX, USA

Corresponding Author:

Peter S. Henne, Department of Political Science/Global and Regional Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Vermont, 516 Old Mill, 94 University Place, Burlington, VT 05403, USA.

Email: peter.henne@uvm.edu

On January 27, 2018, terrorists blew up an ambulance packed with explosives near an interior ministry building in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing 103 people and injuring another 235.¹ In May of that same year, two suicide bombers detonated bombs at a mosque and a market in the town of Mubi in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least 86 people and injuring 58 others. On July 13, 2018, twelve days before general elections in Pakistan, terrorists detonated a bomb in the city of Bannu, while a suicide bomber blew himself up in the city of Mastung—coordinated attacks resulting in 377 casualties. These attacks in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, respectively, were the three deadliest attacks in the Muslim world in 2018. Ironically, in all three cases, the attackers did not hail from disaffected or marginalized communities but rather from majoritarian religious populations that enjoyed special prerogatives from the state.

Why would individuals from privileged religious populations turn to the gun? Does religious favoritism explain attacks by favored groups? Some believe that government policies favoring a dominant religious group can satisfy powerful interest groups and ensure stability. On the other hand, others worry this will foment religious tensions and promote violence. This is a particular concern in Muslim-majority countries where governments often favor one group at the expense of others. Sometimes this is Muslims at the expense of non-Muslims, as seen in Egypt's restrictions on Coptic Christians. Other times favoritism involves restrictions on one group of Muslims at the expense of other Muslims, such as the favoring of Sunni Muslims in Iraq under Saddam Hussein and Shia Muslims after his fall. Muslim countries also experience very high levels of terrorism, with more Muslims killed by terrorist attacks in recent decades than any other religious community (Hayden 2017). As a result, understanding the relationship between religious favoritism and terrorism in Muslim-majority countries will help greatly in securing these countries against terrorist violence.

We argue that government support for religion is more likely to encourage the share of terrorism from those identifying with dominant faith traditions compared with marginalized or suppressed religious communities. States actively advancing the cause of a particular religious tradition and discriminating against minority faiths paradoxically encourages terrorism emanating from those of that very tradition.

Through a quantitative analysis of terrorist attacks and fatalities by majority and minority religious groups, we find that states with extensive religious favoritism do not necessarily experience more terrorist violence, but the terrorism they do experience tends to be carried out by *majority* religious groups. We explain this finding by arguing that favoritism intensifies the salience of religious issues in political disputes and emboldens majority religious communities to commit acts of political violence.

Before proceeding, a word about our definitions is in order. Following the literature, we define terrorism as political violence committed by subnational actors against noncombatants. We define state favoritism of religion as a condition that exists when the government actively favors adherents of a certain religion over

believers of different faiths in its laws and policies. The partiality shown to favored religions in these countries results in situations where the state promotes the objectives of the favored religion through legislation and judicial powers or the favored group holds special prerogatives in the government. In this article, we examine the terrorist activities of majority and minority religious groups in Muslim-majority states. As mentioned previously, we chose to focus on Muslim-majority states because they experience the highest rates of terrorism and often show partiality to a specific religious group. We divide these groups at the level of the sect (Sunni, Shia, etc.). We define majority religious groups as those groups that comprise more than 50 percent of a state's population. Minority religious groups, in turn, are groups that comprise less than 50 percent of a state's population. It should also be noted that while this article analyzes terrorism at the group level, we recognize that there is considerable variation and that these acts of violence are perpetrated by individuals or groups of individuals.

This article proceeds as follows. In the following section, we highlight the literature that argues and shows terrorism to largely be a product of minority discrimination and thus committed primarily by minority groups. In the next section, we explain why the minority discrimination thesis fails to fully capture the dynamics at work in contemporary religious terrorism. We argue here that discrimination against religious minorities actually encourages attacks from *majority* religious traditions. The two sections thereafter discuss our research design and present the results of our analysis, respectively. A concluding section situates our argument and findings in the context of public policy.

Discrimination and Terrorism: A Survey of the Literature

Over the past forty years, it has become almost conventional wisdom that discrimination against minority groups produces terrorism. Such a framework has been used to understand some of the world's deadliest terrorist campaigns, from Sri Lanka to Northern Ireland. In this view, governments that discriminate against minorities generate sympathy for terrorist groups, provoke people to turn to these groups for protection, and increase the costs of *remaining peaceful* for ordinary citizens. This understanding of the connection between minority discrimination and terrorism undergirds many of the pioneering works on the causes of terrorism (Crenshaw 1981; Laqueur 1999; Whittaker 2001; McCormick 2003). This framework suggests that those who are most suppressed in society—particularly ethnic, political, or religious minorities—should be the most likely to employ terrorism.

The logic linking minority discrimination to violence has a long pedigree in the contentious politics literature, dating back to Ted Gurr's (1970) seminal work *Why Men Rebel*. Since then, a number of studies have indeed demonstrated a link between minority discrimination and various forms of political violence including terrorism (Crenshaw 1981; Lichbach 1987; Ross 1993; Moore 1998; Gurr 2000; Regan and Norton 2005; Piazza 2011, 2012). The logic linking minority discrimination to

terrorism is as follows. Selective discrimination against minorities produces what Gurr terms “relative deprivation” for these groups when compared to similar groups in society. Relative deprivation both engenders grievances and reinforces a sense of in-group solidarity among marginalized communities. If these communities are able to overcome their collective action problems, they will attempt to mobilize. Other scholars have contended that the relationship between discrimination and violence is not so straightforward. It has been argued that the relationship is conditional, determined by the intensity and effectiveness of the repressive efforts themselves (Schmid 1992; Pape 2005; Lai 2007; Piazza 2007; Chenoweth 2010; Dalacoura 2011; Hamid 2014). Nevertheless, if discrimination is palpable and peaceful means are unavailable or untenable for the channeling of grievances, the use of political violence to change the status quo becomes more likely.

This logic can also be applied to repressed religious communities. Just as with violent nonreligious groups, repression of religious communities and limits on faith practices can intensify grievances and exacerbate existing sectarian tensions, leading to more terrorism and civil unrest by religious movements. Akbaba and Taydas (2011, 277) explain that “[r]ebels who feel subordinate stop perceiving the state as a neutral entity but rather identify the state as an agent responsible for promoting the identity of the dominant group.” Similarly, Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011, 132) argue that “repression of religion” leaves “religious actors feeling oppressed and resentful.”

Numerous studies have demonstrated a connection between religious repression, grievance formation, and political violence. Fox (1999) applies Gurr’s basic argument to the case of ethnoreligious minorities, finding that, under certain conditions, “religious legitimacy” influences the formation of grievances among these minorities. In a follow-up article, he finds that religious discrimination and grievances over that discrimination contribute to rebellion and some types of protest (Fox 2000). He indicates that mobilization in defense of a group’s social or political interests serves as a mediating factor between discrimination and violence. If nationalist tensions precede discrimination, violence is more likely to occur. Grim and Finke (2011) and Finke (2013) reveal that the restriction of religious freedoms is associated with higher levels of violent persecution. Kolbe and Henne (2014) find that discrimination against religious minorities contributed to forced migration. Basedau, Pfiesser, and Vüllers (2016) show that the grievances held by religious groups fuel armed conflict in the developing world. Other studies found that past religious conflict can increase later religious repression, and government interference in religious institutions can promote terrorism (Henne and Kloczek 2019; Henne 2019). Several qualitative studies also suggest that discrimination against particular religious groups can engender terrorism (O’Hearn 1983; Rapoport 1991; Juergensmeyer 1993; Hafez 2003, 2004; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011), though very limited empirical work examines the connections between minority religious discrimination and terrorism specifically. One recent example is Saiya (2018) who shows that when

religious minorities find the practice of their faith stifled by the state, they are more likely to turn to terrorism.

Several real-world cases also anecdotally demonstrate the connection between minority religious discrimination and terrorism. In Northern Ireland, systematic discrimination against Catholics directly fed the activities of the Irish Republican Army throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In India, the militant wing of the Sikh resistance movement arose in response to brutal repression over centuries by successive national governments stemming back to the time of the Mughal Empire. In Sri Lanka, discrimination against Hindu Tamils led to the rise of the Tamil Tigers and paved the way for a sanguinary civil war between the country's Hindu and Buddhist communities. More recent cases come from Europe and China. In the former, widespread religious profiling of nonviolent Muslims has been used by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to gain sympathy for its cause. In the latter, the state's crackdown on Muslims in the western Xinjiang province, ranging from bans on fasting during Ramadan to prohibitions on the wearing of religious garb, have contributed to Uighur terrorism. These cases show that discrimination against religious minorities raises the costs of remaining peaceful for ordinary citizens, generates sympathy for terrorism, and leads people to turn to terrorist groups for protection.

Nevertheless, these studies and cases notwithstanding, we are still left with an important question. Because the studies above tend to aggregate attacks by minority and majority groups, it is difficult to assess whether the terrorism fomented by repressive governments is being carried out by marginalized religious groups as the minority discrimination thesis suggests. Those studies that do specifically analyze violence by religious minorities find conflicting results. For example, Basedau et al. (2017) find that while religious discrimination results in increased grievances among disadvantaged groups, it does not lead to heightened levels of violence by them. Other work finds that discrimination among minority groups does engender religious violence (Fox 2000; Gurr 2000; Akbaba and Taydas 2011).

Indeed, with respect to the most prevalent form of terrorism today—Islamist terrorism—most terrorist incidents are not carried out by religious minorities but by dominant religious groups who often enjoy a *favoured* relationship with the state. Anecdotally, we see numerous contemporary examples of terrorism being used largely by those of dominant religious groups in society. While some radical elements from disenfranchised Muslim communities have employed terrorism in places like France, China, India, and Burma, the vast majority of Islamist terrorist attacks have been carried out by Muslims within the Islamic world itself. This means that religious majorities and not minorities are responsible for most of the faith-based terrorism that occurs in the world. The following section explains why.

Government Support for Religion and Majoritarian Terrorism

Government support for religion is a form of religious corporatism that has existed across time, space, and religious traditions. Prominent examples include ancient Israel, Medieval Christendom, and the Ottoman Empire ruled by a Sultan-Caliph. Most common in the Islamic world today, states that feature a selective support of religion afford religious actors the capability to regulate political life to varying extents (Ayubi 2003; Roy and Volk 1994; Durham 1996; Eickelman and Piscatori 1996; Brown 2000; Linz 2004; Grim and Finke 2011). In these settings, the state extends special legal privileges to a particular religious community, which, in turn, legitimates the authority of the government, further obfuscating the boundaries between religion and state (Berger 2011; Martin 1978; Philpott 2007).

One important form of state support of religion is found in Islamic states that gain their legitimacy by propagating a particular religious ideology in virtually every aspect of social and political life. These states suppress religious minorities and heterodox believers in the majority faith who depart from the official religious doctrine (Finke and Harris 2012). For example, Article 2 of Pakistan's constitution establishes Islam as the official religion of the country and permits no law "repugnant to Islam." Similarly, the Islamic Republic of Iran, according to Article 2 of its constitution, is a system based on the beliefs in "the One God . . . His exclusive sovereignty and the right to legislate, and the necessity of submission to His commands." Iran—a state where the religious Council of Guardians has the power to vet parliamentary candidates and veto legislation and where another religious body, the Council of Experts, directly selects the Supreme Leader, the highest political office in the land—epitomizes an arrangement of state support for a particular religion. The constitutional and legal partiality shown to Islam in these countries results in situations where the state either promotes the objectives of the favored religion through legislation and judicial powers or, as in the case of Iran, allows certain religious groups to hold special prerogatives in the government such as standing titles, offices, or legal privileges in appointing state officials or vetoing government decisions (Philpott 2007, 507; Philpott 2019, 114-48).

State favoritism of religion can also exist in ostensibly secular states where political elites believe that the best way to keep religion's public power in check is to support a moderate strain of the predominant faith tradition, making it dependent on or beholden to the government. Fox (2015) finds, for example, that "no state regulates, controls, or restricts religion without also supporting it in at least some small way" (p. 105). Such is the pattern in Muslim-majority states governed by ideologies of secular nationalism like Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan (Philpott 2019, 77-113). In sum, in countries having a high level of favoritism between religious and state institutions—whether religious or secular states—the authority of the dominant religion and the authority of the state are profoundly intertwined, often to the

detriment of religious minorities, thus resulting in an unbalanced religious economy (Grim and Finke 2011, 22-24).

State leaders may justify their support for majority religions on the grounds that such patronage is necessary for fostering a common identity, ensuring social stability, and protecting national security, which they believe are under threat from religious outsiders (Sarkissian 2015; Fox, Finke, and Eisenstein 2019). These leaders may also believe that through their support for religion, they can bolster their domestic standing among their religious constituencies by claiming to be defenders of the majority faith traditions within their states (Fox 2016a). Political elites thus seek out alliances with dominant religious communities because they hope to mobilize it to their advantage and squelch dissidents who may attempt to challenge their rule. As explained by Fox (2015, 2), “supporting religion is among the most effective strategies to make religious institutions dependent on the government, and thereby more subject to its control.” The religious majority, in turn, legitimates the authority of the government.

It is easy to see how states practicing religious favoritism create a fertile ground for terrorism as marginalized, suppressed, and weaker *minority* religious communities seek to alter the political status quo. But why would *majority* groups that enjoy special prerogatives from the state turn to terrorism? Would not a state favoring a religious tradition important to the majority of its citizens decrease grievances among members of that majority and promote stability, as suggested by Driessen (2010), Bhargava (2012), and Cesari (2013)? Cesari notes that Muslim countries are experiencing a move toward political openness alongside the acceptance of Islam’s importance in politics. Likewise, Bhargava points to the desirability of states including religious institutions in politics rather than enforcing a strict separation. Driessen reveals in a cross-national study of religion–state arrangements that strict separation is not always required. Various political elites, particularly in the Muslim world, seem to believe that favoritism toward a dominant religion can help decrease religious grievances and avoid violence.

Yet state favoritism of religion may also have drawbacks, as we argue in this article. For example, Sarkissian (2015, 27) notes the uncertainty around government favoritism and repression and calls for more work focused on “disentangling these relationships.” Likewise, Grim and Finke (2011) claim “there are still many mysteries” about the relationship between government favoritism and terrorism (p. 209).

We argue that government favoritism of religion can, in fact, have negative security implications—stemming not just from aggrieved religious minorities but empowered religious majorities—owing to the interaction between religious favoritism’s impacts on both the nature of religious contention in a country and the institutional conditions and political incentives that arise from favoritism. Close ties between religion and the state in the form of religious favoritism *intensify the salience* of religious contention within countries. The politicization of religion naturally bleeds over into political debates, which tend to be framed in religious terms

(Henne 2017). For example, Fox and Sandler (2004) argue that states with an official religion depend on religious legitimacy, so “political opposition” easily morphs into “religious opposition.” Sandal and Fox (2013) argue that for officially religious states, religious issues become “more significant,” and “religious ideology” becomes a more defining factor (Sandal and Fox 2013). Grim and Finke (2011) similarly reason that religious favoritism can lead to otherwise political struggles becoming religious as religious groups battle for the state’s favor.

This intensification alone, however, would not necessarily lead to violence by favored religious groups. It interacts with three institutional and political mechanisms that arise from religious favoritism. The first mechanism is known as *outbidding* (Toft 2007, 2013). States that attempt to ally with dominant religious communities risk alienation on both sides. First, religious minorities will decry the unfair religious landscape. Alternatively, religious majorities may believe that the state does not go *far enough* in its support of religion.

Extremists in these states contend that the state needs to be overthrown by violence in order to establish a more sacred regime since the present regime has compromised its purity and, consequently, forfeited its legitimacy. They may then try to “outbid” the regime in its claim to be the faith’s legitimate vanguard and attempt to overthrow the political leadership through violence in order to establish a more sacred regime. Thus, states extend patronage to certain religious communities in the belief that this support increases regime security, but in doing so end up empowering terrorists from those very communities. The dynamic of outbidding has underpinned the assassinations of various political leaders including Sri Lanka’s S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Egypt’s Anwar Sadat, India’s Indira Gandhi, Israel’s Yitzhak Rabin, and Pakistan’s Benazir Bhutto. In short, in the dynamic of outbidding, terrorists direct their wrath at a sullied state they believe has compromised its religious purity.

A second logic links state support of religion to majoritarian terrorism perpetrated against those of other faiths in society via a *climate of impunity* created by official laws and policies. When states institutionalize religious favoritism, their beneficiaries may arrive at the reasonable conclusion that the state implicitly approves discrimination, harassment, and even violence against nonprivileged faiths. Take laws prohibiting religious defamation, for example. In the Islamic world, the so-called blasphemy laws are enforced in about half of Muslim-majority states (Marshall and Shea 2011). Such laws, enforced for the seemingly principled goal of preventing “hate speech,” criminalize words or actions considered to be in some way disrespectful of Islam. The enforcement of blasphemy codes, however, tends to be carried out by social actors instead of governmental officials. At times, extremists have violently attacked those they accuse of defamation, using the very laws enacted by their governments as legal cover to justify their violence (Khan 2014; Saiya 2017). In Pakistan, for instance, terrorists have killed hundreds of people they believed to be guilty of blasphemy, including prominent politicians (Uddin 2011; Thames 2014).

Closely related is the third mechanism linking state support of religion to terrorism by those hailing from favored religious groups: *the removal of the deterrence effects* typically associated with judicial accountability (Bauman and Leech 2012). Terrorists may be emboldened when states effectively remove the threat of government-levied punitive action in the wake of terrorist attacks. Examples include the protection of Pakistani militants in Kashmir and the terrorizing of Muslims at the hands of ultra-nationalist Hindus in India who are emboldened by judicial passivity. In both cases, terrorists commit acts of violence without a subsequent investigation (of any credibility) or serious threat of punishment from the government. The key difference between the second and third causal mechanisms—a climate of impunity and the removal of deterrence effects—concerns timing. A climate of impunity is the general environment created by state laws and policies that exists *a priori*. The removal of deterrence effects, by contrast, concerns the context in which the response to terrorism takes place.

In summary, states that favor certain religions and discriminate against others encourage terrorism not only by those bearing the brunt of their inequitable laws and policies; more commonly they also, for different reasons, empower extremists from the very religious communities favored by the state. These states increase the political salience of religion and embolden majoritarian terrorism via three different pathways. In the first, terrorists from favored religious communities attack government officials they accuse of insufficient piety via the pathway of outbidding. In the second, the unbalanced religious economy results in the emboldening of religious extremists who use the official laws and policies of the state as a legal justification to attack religious nonconformists. Finally, the removal of government accountability may further embolden terrorists from the majority faith, who need not fear legal consequences. These pathways to terrorism are especially prevalent in Muslim-majority countries—the focus of the present analysis—where, as one scholar of Islam has argued, state support for religion ultimately set the stage for the politicization of Islam. This politicization lend legitimacy to radical interpretations of Islam and ultimately calls for violence (Cesari 2018). The following tests the hypothesis that state support for religion results in more terrorism and more lethal terrorism emanating from majority rather than minority religious communities in Muslim-majority states. We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: The share of terrorist attacks committed by those from majoritarian religious communities will increase in contexts of religious favoritism.

Hypothesis 2: The share of fatalities from terrorist attacks committed by those from majoritarian religious communities will increase in contexts of religious favoritism.

Research Design

We test this theory using a quantitative study, analyzing the relationship between government favoritism of religion and terrorist violence by both majority and minority religious groups in Muslim-majority countries. The data set is organized with country-year observations, with detailed variables for each country specifying the number of terrorist attacks committed by religious organizations and corresponding fatalities. We use a country-level data set despite the group focus of our theory because it allows for a more direct test of our theory. A country-level data set allows for separate dependent variables for majority and minority fatalities and attacks, with an interaction variable measuring religious favoritism (which we discuss below). A group-level data set, by contrast, would require interactions between the majority or minority status and the component variables of the religious favoritism measure; this three-way interaction would be much more difficult to interpret. Finally, a country-year format also guards against potential issues concerning selection bias, since it accounts for both the presence and absence of terrorism within states.

As we discussed above, the focus on Muslim-majority countries is due partly to the nature of the question of religious favoritism and terrorism and the prevalence of Islamist ideology in modern terrorism. Yet, there are also methodological reasons for this focus. First, as the charts below reveal, these countries display significantly higher levels of state support for religion and minority discrimination than the global average. Second, Muslim-majority countries also experience higher rates of terrorism than the rest of the world. As a result, the potential impact of government religious favoritism will be most noticeable in these countries. At the same time, there is significant variation in both values, allowing for a meaningful comparison across cases and mitigating concerns over censoring either independent or dependent variables (see Figures 1 and 2).

Dependent Variables

Our argument is that official religious favoritism increases terrorism by the favored—often majority—religious community. There are several ways to measure this, and we address each of them to avoid giving the impression of choosing only the measures that provide favorable results. Two common ways to measure terrorist violence are the number of deaths from terrorist attacks and the number of attacks themselves. These measure distinct things—the *frequency* of terrorist attacks versus their *impact*—and studies have used both.² We use both measures here. In terms of the impact of religious favoritism, there are two aspects of this question: whether it increases overall terrorism by majority religious communities and as a share of terrorism in the country. As we discuss above, our theory focuses on the latter. As a result, our dependent variables are (1) the difference in attacks by majority and minority groups and (2) the difference in deaths by majority and minority groups.

Figure 1. State support for religion, 1990 to 2014.

Figure 2. Discrimination against religious minorities, 1990 to 2014.

We do include the former in robustness checks, however; in these, the dependent variable is the deaths and attacks by majority groups, with the deaths and attacks by minority groups in a separate model. Using multiple dependent variables raises concerns about multiple comparisons—which we address below—but the alternative would be to pick one narrow aspect of this question raising additional concerns.

Data for the dependent variables come from the Global Terrorism Database (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2018). This widely used resource has information on the perpetrators, location, and impact of terrorist attacks. We used the variables for the number of deaths from an attack (*nkill*) and the perpetrator (*gname*). For each identified perpetrator in a country, we coded whether they were from the majority or minority religious groups. We excluded unknown groups or groups for which we could not get sufficient information from the analysis. This may lead to some issues with missing data, but there is no reason to assume a lack of information on a group—indicating it was a small or short-lived organization—would correlate with its majority status as there is just as likely to be sporadic terrorism by both religious majorities and minorities. After coding this information, we calculated the number of attacks and the number of deaths from these attacks for each perpetrator per year. We then took the difference in the number of deaths by majority and minority groups as one dependent variable (*Difference_deaths*) and the difference in the number of attacks by the two as the other (*Difference_attacks*). We use the log plus one of the number of deaths and attacks to mitigate skew in the data.

Explanatory Variables

Our explanatory variables measure the extent of religious favoritism in a state. Religious favoritism is a condition involving two components: religious support for a favored—often majority—community and discrimination against those communities not favored (often minorities). Neither condition is sufficient on its own. Moreover, religious favoritism is not a single set of policies or even several such policies favoring one group; it is the *interaction* between and combination of these two conditions creating a legal framework favoring a religious community.

We measure this using ordinal variables for each component and an interaction for the overall presence of favoritism. We use data from Round 3 of the Religion and State Dataset (Fox 2016b). We use *LXX*, a continuous scale measuring overall support for religion, and *MXX*, a continuous scale measuring the extent of government restrictions on religious minorities. Both variables are a sum of the various policies that fall under these categories; *LXX* includes fifty-two types of religious support, while *MXX* includes thirty-six types of minority discrimination.

We rescale these variables in order to make them appropriate for this study. We do this because using the continuous variables would assume that, for example, twelve policies providing support for religious groups create a substantively higher level of favoritism than ten policies. As we discuss above, however, religious favoritism is a complex situation, produced by a combination of policies and legal frameworks. Measuring the difference between twelve and ten favorable policies would not measure the concept we hope to study in this article. Instead, we are interested in the difference with countries having *extensive favoritism* and *minimal favoritism*. As Goertz (2006) discusses in his work on measuring concepts, additive measures are

often inappropriate for concepts that do not posit an additive relationship among components (chap. 4). As a result, a different measure is needed. More pragmatically, using continuous variables would complicate interpretation of our interaction variable, which we discuss below.

Thus, we use an ordinal version of each of these variables (*religious support* and *minority discrimination*). Both are coded as 0 if the value is less than one standard deviation below the mean, 1 if the value is from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean, and 2 if it is greater than one standard deviation above the mean. Scaling in this way provides some distinction between levels of these variables while resulting in more substantively significant values.

We can gain greater insight into the impacts of favoritism, however, using an interaction variable. For that we use an interaction between the two, multiplying the variables for religious support and minority discrimination together, thus creating the interaction variable (*favoritism*). Interacting the two variables provides information on the extent to which religious majorities are favored at the expense of religious minorities. Higher values on this variable indicate a state has both extensive support for religious groups *and* extensive discrimination against religious minorities, thus indicating the support favors religious majorities. We realize the complications that can arise from using interaction variables and thus rely on the guidance offered by Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006); specifically, we include both the interaction term and constitutive terms and avoid interpreting the effects of constitutive terms as unconditional.

Control Variables

We use several standard control variables commonly included in studies of terrorism. We include the natural log of the total land area of the country and the natural log of the population, both of which make terrorism more likely (World Bank 2018). We take into account a country's level of institutional democracy by including countries' Polity scores to measure the impact of regime type on terrorist activity (Marshall and Jaggers 2007). Additionally, we include the natural log of the gross domestic product (GDP) to measure economic development and state strength (World Bank 2018). In order to assess whether terrorism is actually related to broader civil conflict in a country, we include a measure of conflict intensity from the Uppsala Conflict Database.³ Finally, we include measures of religious and ethnic diversity (Alesina et al. 2003). These variables assess whether the level of terrorist activity is explained better by conventional factors than by the extent of religious favoritism.

Models

We run four models. Using a random effects regression, we run two models with *Difference_attacks* as the dependent variable; one with the interaction variable and

the other without. We then run two equivalent models using *Difference_Deaths* as the dependent variables.

We also run numerous robustness checks. There may be some methodological concerns with these models. *Conflict intensity* may overlap with the dependent variable; yet, the former is a rather broad measure while the latter measures specific attacks, so they are not completely redundant. Additionally, while there may be some issues with collinearity, there may be more with omitted variable bias if we remove *conflict intensity*. In order to allay concerns, however, we run the models without *conflict intensity* in a robustness check. We also use the number of deaths and attacks by majority and minority groups as separate dependent variables. We reran the models with alternate measures of regime type, using data from the Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited data set (Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland 2009) and Political Terror Scores (Gibney et al. 2015). Additionally, we ran them with measures of free and fair elections and independent judiciary from the BTI Transformation Index.⁴ We also ran the analysis without potentially influential observations, particularly Iraq and Afghanistan, and observations with minority rule—as this complicates measuring religious favoritism—specifically Bahrain and Syria. And we ran alternate estimators, particularly fixed effects and random coefficients instead of random effects.

Results

The analysis finds that religious favoritism by the state increases the majority group's share of terrorism that occurs within countries, as predicted by our theory. *Favoritism* has a statistically significant and positive effect on the difference between majority and minority religious groups' attacks and deaths from those attacks. That is, higher levels of favoritism corresponded to greater violence by majority religious groups when compared to minority groups (see Table 1 and Figure 3).

Our models demonstrate that religious favoritism has a noticeable substantive impact on terrorist violence. As the number of deaths is presented using logs, we cannot interpret them directly, but the exponentiated forms of the coefficients can indicate the percent increase in deaths. The coefficient of .6 for deaths corresponds to about an 80 percent increase in deaths by majority groups relative to minority groups. Likewise, the coefficient of .48 for attacks indicates a 63 percent increase. It may be more useful to think of significant changes in *favoritism*, however. If *favoritism* moves from one standard deviation below the mean to one above, deaths by majority groups compared to minority groups would increase by 300 percent, while attacks would increase by 200 percent⁵ (see Figure 4).

These results held up under the robustness checks. The results remained the same using alternate estimators, indicating they were not dependent on the specific model used. They also remained the same when influential observations or potentially complicating ones—cases of minority rule—were removed, and ethnic

Table 1. Relationship between Religious Favoritism and Difference in Majority and Minority Terrorism.

Variables	Models			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Difference_ deaths	Difference_ deaths	Difference_ attacks	Difference_ attacks
Religious favoritism		0.57** (0.23)		0.48*** (0.16)
Religious support	0.47** (0.22)	−0.04 (0.30)	0.10 (0.15)	−0.33 (0.20)
Minority religious discrimination	−0.25 (0.20)	−0.62** (0.25)	−0.07 (0.13)	−0.38** (0.17)
Population (logged)	0.31 (0.22)	0.29 (0.22)	0.29* (0.16)	0.29* (0.16)
Land (logged)	0.08 (0.21)	0.05 (0.22)	−0.00 (0.17)	−0.03 (0.17)
Gross domestic product (logged)	0.18* (0.09)	0.20** (0.09)	0.15** (0.06)	0.16** (0.06)
Polity	0.07*** (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Religious diversity	−1.74 (1.25)	−1.79 (1.27)	−1.86* (1.05)	−1.89* (1.07)
Conflict intensity	0.32 (0.38)	0.31 (0.39)	0.34 (0.32)	0.33 (0.32)
Constant	−6.62** (2.87)	−5.85** (2.94)	5.14** (2.28)	−4.51* (2.32)
Observations	772	772	772	772

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < .1$.

** $p < .05$.

*** $p < .01$.

Figure 3. Effects of religious favoritism on difference in attacks and deaths.

Figure 4. Substantive effect of favoritism on differences in deaths and attacks. (A) Difference in deaths. (B) Difference in attacks.

fractionalization was taken into account. *Favoritism* was weakly significant in the test using Political Terror Scores. It remained significant with the Democracy and Dictatorship revisited alternate measure of regime type, however, so the results were not completely dependent on the Polity scores. Additionally, the Political Terror Scores measure similar conditions as the Religion and State data set—particularly the minority religious discrimination—so that may be complicating the results. Finally, the separate minority and majority deaths and attacks provided inconsistent results. In these, *favoritism* decreased violence by minority groups, while minority religious discrimination corresponded to an increase in attacks by minority groups but not deaths by those attacks. Due to the inconsistency of these results, it is

difficult to interpret them. Even so, our argument focuses on the share of terrorism between majority and minority groups, not their overall level of violence. But it may be worth further exploration.

Implications

These findings strongly support our theory. We argued that religious favoritism emboldens majority religious groups to commit acts of violence, which the findings support. Additionally, religious favoritism's less significant effect on violence by minority groups further validates our theory, as it suggests that even though religious favoritism may increase the grievances of minority groups, it does not lead to greater violence by these groups.⁶

The nuances of the findings validate our argument. The primary effect of religious favoritism is to embolden majority religious groups to conduct acts of violence rather than aggrieving minority groups and inspiring their own violence. This is especially apparent in the nature of the results including the interaction variable. If only *religious support* or *minority discrimination* were consistently significant, this might cast doubt on whether it is these policies—rather than their combination as religious favoritism—that matters. The significance of their interaction, however, indicates the increase in majority terrorism comes from states that discriminate against minority religious groups, while supporting the favored majority groups.

The fact that religious favoritism had a significant effect on the difference between majority and minority terrorism further validates our theory. Religious favoritism does not cause an overall increase in the number of terrorist attacks and deaths in a country. Instead, it affects the *balance* of terrorist violence, with majority religious groups conducting more attacks and causing more deaths than minority religious groups. This may appear to attenuate the impact of religious favoritism, but it is actually in line with our theory. The effect of religious favoritism is not to create or expand grievances; it provides the favored groups—specifically majority religious groups—with the capabilities and opportunities to conduct attacks.

The substantive significance of the variables highlights the importance of religious favoritism. A 300 percent increase in deaths from terrorist attacks is significant. For example, consider the cases of Indonesia and Malaysia. Indonesia is a majority Muslim country with significant Christian and Buddhist minorities. There are tense, but generally stable, relations between the religious communities, with some terrorism; the difference in average deaths between the religious majority and religious minorities was about eight deaths per year. For most of the time period, Malaysia had a *favoritism* score of 2 (out of 4). If it had increased its favoritism, the difference in deaths by attacks from majority versus minority groups would have increased to twenty-four, representing a dramatic broadening of terrorist activity by the Muslim majority with potentially destabilizing results.

Some of the results for control variables may lead to questions. Specifically, both GDP and Polity had a positive and significant relationship with terrorist violence.

This may be due to our focus on majority-Muslim states. Few of these states are fully democratic, so higher values on Polity would correspond to mixed or anocratic regimes. Studies have found that the greatest religious violence occurs in states with relatively unstable authoritarian governments, while fully authoritarian states are more stable (Muchlinski 2014). This may be the case here. While more research is needed to empirically tease out the relationship between religious favoritism and GDP, we expect that states with higher GDP may also have more religious favoritism. Alternatively, states with lower GDP often have less intrusive government policies and thus less religious favoritism. This relationship likely explains the statistical significance of GDP.

This suggests a few important areas for future research on religious terrorism. First, it calls into question the idea that terrorism is usually the product of minority groups who experience discrimination at the hands of the state. While aggrieved groups certainly do turn to terrorism if they are unable to directly confront their oppressors, much of the religious violence the world is experiencing may be the result of favored religious groups emboldened by state support. Some studies have noted this dynamic, but further work would be useful (Saiya 2017, 2018, 2019). Additionally, it highlights the important role political institutions play in shaping religious violence and religious politics more broadly. While religious beliefs matter, it is their political context that determines religion's impact on society and its form, whether violent or peaceful (Philpott 2007; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011; Saiya 2015, 2018; Saiya and Scime 2015; Henne 2017; Saiya and Fidler 2017).

There are some caveats to this finding. First, it is worth noting that even if terrorism tends to arise from majoritarian religious communities in contexts of favoritism, it is always employed by those of a minority opinion within that majority. Second, while we found evidence that religious favoritism led to greater violence by religious majority groups, in line with our theory, we did not specifically test the mechanisms we suggested explain this finding. This is a common limitation of quantitative studies, however, and hopefully, future work can address this. A third issue may be that we do not analyze the targets of attacks. Some may suspect, for example, that emboldened religious majorities may be more likely to target minority groups. That is possible, but there is an insufficient amount of detail in the data to determine the targets of attacks in terms of religious communities. Moreover, it is possible that emboldened religious majorities may attack others in their community that they deem as insufficiently loyal or pious, as has occurred in Afghanistan with the Taliban. Finally, one may argue the large number of tests raises concerns of a multiple comparisons issue or "p-hacking." However, this problem only arises when researchers fail to conduct or report all the possible model specifications (Gelman and Loken 2013). We do run and report the various models, however, either in the text or in the online appendix, so this is not a concern.

Conclusion

In this article, we find that states with higher levels of religious favoritism experienced more prevalent and lethal attacks by majority religious groups, compared to the prevalence and lethality of attacks by minority faiths. The justifications for religious favoritism vary widely. States may seek to maintain a national identity or bolster their own positional security. Regardless of the motivation for favoring one faith, in doing so, states also increase the political salience of religiosity and heighten the tensions that surround the relationship between the religion and state. We argue that this increased salience intersects with three mechanisms to encourage violence from the majority group: (1) the process of “outbidding,” (2) the climate of impunity created by religious favoritism, and (3) the removal of deterrence effects. Future work could further explore these theoretical explanations through case studies and offer other causal links that may connect favoritism and majority violence.

This article carries important consequences for the study of terrorism as well as the study of religious violence. It challenges the claim that terrorism is primarily a weapon used by marginalized groups. While such groups do certainly use terrorism as a means to equalize the playing field, there are many instances in which powerful groups use terrorism to maintain their dominance. Future studies should address this reality. Moreover, this article expands on a growing research program in religious politics that highlights the significance of the political conditions in which religious groups operate. In this case, we find that clashes between religious groups—driven by the majority religious community’s persecution of others—are not inherent elements of religious diversity; they arise from state policies toward religion.

Our findings have significant implications for policy makers. Each year since September 11, 2001, Americans have listed combating terrorism as a top priority for congressional and executive branch action (Bialik 2019), and it remains at the forefront of American policy-making. Of course, the fight against terrorism is global, and the threat against the Muslim world remains particularly acute, with states worldwide grappling with determining the best way forward. Recognition of terrorism as a “weapon of the strong” could have profound implications for the way the international community counters violent extremism. It could alter the way that resources for monitoring and intervention are appropriated. If conventional wisdom implies that minority groups are more likely to commit acts of terror, it follows that policy makers may disproportionately devote resources to prevent and detect radicalization in minority communities. While discrimination of minority groups remains predictive of terror activity, the origin of the subsequent violence needs to be reconsidered. Overall, the dynamics presented in this statistical analysis reveal an important relationship between religious favoritism and terrorist activity, exposing a link previously ignored in the literature. A more complete understanding of the factors involved in the fomenting of violent extremism is critical as policy makers attempt to find innovative strategies to combat terrorism.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Peter S. Henne <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0887-2255>

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank conference participants at the 2019 meeting of the International Studies Association, and the editors and reviewers of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* for their feedback on this article. Replication data are available at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/SBQNH5>.
2. See Li (2005) for the former and Asal and Rethemeyer (2008) and Henne (2012) for the latter.
3. Data are available at <https://ucdp.uu.se/>.
4. The data are available at <https://www.bti-project.org/en/about/>.
5. As Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) note, there are some complications with interpreting the marginal effects of constitutive terms in models using interactions. However, we are focusing on the marginal effects of the interaction term itself.
6. For more work on this point, see Basedau et al. (2017).

References

- Akbaba, Yasemin, and Zeynep Taydas. 2011. "Does Religious Discrimination Promote Dissent? A Quantitative Analysis." *Ethnopolitics* 10 (3–4): 271–95.
- Alesina, Alberto, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat, and Romain Wacziarg. 2003. "Fractionalization." *Journal of Economic Growth* 8 (2): 155–94.
- Asal, Victor, and R. Karl Rethemeyer. 2008. "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks." *Journal of Politics* 70 (2): 437–49.
- Ayubi, Nazih. 2003. *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. New York: Routledge. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781134849703>.
- Basedau, Matthias, Jonathan Fox, Jan Pierskalla, Georg Strüver, and Johannes Vüllers. 2017. "Does Discrimination Breed Grievances—and Do Grievances Breed Violence? New Evidence from an Analysis of Religious Minorities in Developing Countries." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 34 (3): 217–39.

- Basedau, Matthias, Birte Pfeiffer, and Johannes Vüllers. 2016. "Bad Religion? Religion, Collective Action, and the Onset of Armed Conflict in Developing Countries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60 (2): 226-55.
- Bauman, Chad, and Tamara Leech. 2012. "Political Competition, Relative Deprivation, and Perceived Threat: A Research Note on Anti-Christian Violence in India." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (12): 2195-2216.
- Berger, Peter L. 2011. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Open Road Media.
- Bhargava, Rajeev. 2012. "How Should States Deal with Deep Religious Diversity? Can Anything Be Learnt from the Indian Model of Secularism?" In *Rethinking Religion in World Affairs*, edited by Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, 73-84. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bialik, Kristin. 2019. "State of the Union 2019: How Americans See Major National Issues." *Fact Tank: News in Numbers*. Accessed March 8, 2019. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/04/state-of-the-union-2019-how-americans-see-major-national-issues/>.
- Brambor, Thomas, William R. Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analysis." *Political Analysis* 14 (1): 63-82.
- Brown, L. Carl. 2000. *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cesari, Jocelyne. 2013. *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: Religion, Modernity, and the State*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Cesari, Jocelyne. 2018. *What Is Political Islam?* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Cheibub, J. A., J. Gandhi, and J. R. V. Vreeland. 2009. "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited." *Public Choice* 143 (1-2): 67-101. Accessed March 27, 2020. <https://sites.google.com/site/joseantoniocheibub/datasets/democracy-and-dictatorship-revisited>.
- Chenoweth, Erica. 2010. "Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity." *Journal of Politics* 72 (1): 16-30.
- Crenshaw, Martha. 1981. "The Causes of Terrorism." *Comparative Politics* 13 (4): 379-99.
- Dalacoura, Katerina. 2011. *Islamist Terrorism and Democracy in the Middle East*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Driessen, Michael D. 2010. "Religion, State, and Democracy: Analyzing Two Dimensions of Church-state Arrangements." *Politics and Religion* 3 (1): 55-80.
- Durham, W. Cole. 1996. "Perspectives on Religious Liberty: A Comparative Framework." In *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Religious Perspectives*, edited by J. D. Van der Vyver and J. Witte Jr., 1-19. London, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Eickelman, Dale F., and James Piscatori. 1996. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Finke, Roger. 2013. "Origins and Consequences of Religious Freedoms: A Global Overview." *Sociology of Religion* 74 (3): 297-313.
- Finke, Roger, and Jamie D. Harris. 2012. "Wars and Rumors of Wars: Explaining Religiously Motivated Violence." In *Religion, Politics, Society, and the State*, edited by Jonathan Fox, 53-71. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Fox, Jonathan. 1999. "The Influence of Religious Legitimacy on Grievance Formation by Ethno-religious Minorities." *Journal of Peace Research* 36 (3): 289-307.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2000. "The Effects of Religious Discrimination on Ethno-religious Protest and Rebellion." *Journal of Conflict Studies* 20 (2): 16-43.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2015. *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State: A Time Series Analysis of Worldwide Data*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2016a. *The Unfree Exercise of Religion: A World Survey of Discrimination against Religious Minorities*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Fox, Jonathan. 2016b. *Religion and State Project, Main Dataset and Societal Module*. Round 3. Distributed by the Association of Religious Data Archives. Accessed May 2, 2019. <http://www.thearda.com/ras/>.
- Fox, Jonathan, Roger Finke, and Marie Ann Eisenstein. 2019. "Examining the Causes of Government-based Discrimination against Religious Minorities in Western Democracies: Societal-level Discrimination and Securitization." *Comparative European Politics* 17 (6): 885-909.
- Fox, Jonathan, and Shemu'el Sandler. 2004. *Bringing Religion into International Relations*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gelman, Andrew, and Erik Loken. 2013. "The Garden of Forking Paths: Why Multiple Comparisons Can Be a Problem, Even When There Is No "Fishing Expedition" or "p-hacking" and the Research Hypothesis was Posited Ahead of Time." Unpublished manuscript. Accessed December 11, 2019. http://www.stat.columbia.edu/~gelman/research/unpublished/p_hacking.pdf.
- Gibney, M., L. Cornett, R. Wood, and P. Haschke. 2015. Political Terror Scale 1976-2015. Accessed March 27, 2020. <http://www.politicalterror scale.org/Data/Download.html>.
- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Grim, Brian J., and Roger Finke. 2011. *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the 21st Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Published for the Center of International Studies, Princeton University Press.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. 2000. *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press.
- Hafez, Mohammed M. 2003. *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Hafez, Mohammed M. 2004. "From Marginalization to Massacres: A Political Process Explanation of GIA Violence in Algeria." In *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, edited by Quintan Wiktorowicz, 37-60. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hamid, Shadi. 2014. *Temptations of Power: Islamists and Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hayden, Michael Edison. 2017. "Muslims 'Absolutely' the Group Most Victimized by Global Terrorism, Researchers Say." *ABC News*. June 20. Accessed March 27, 2020. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/muslims-absolutely-group-victimized-global-terrorism-researchers/story?id=48131273>.

- Henne, Peter S. 2012. "The Ancient Fire: Religion and Suicide Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24 (1): 38-60.
- Henne, Peter S. 2017. *Islamic Politics, Muslim States and Counterterrorism Tensions*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Henne, Peter S. 2019. "Government Interference in Religious Institutions and Terrorism." *Religion, State and Society* 47 (1): 67-87.
- Henne, Peter S., and Jason Klocek. 2019. "Taming the Gods: How Religious Conflict Shapes Religious Repression." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63 (1): 112-38.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 1993. *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Khan, Amjad Mahmood. 2014. "Pakistan's Dark Days." *Foreign Affairs*. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2014-12-21/pakistans-dark-days>.
- Kolbe, Melanie, and Peter S. Henne. 2014. "The Effect of Religious Restrictions on Forced Migration." *Politics and Religion* 7 (4): 665-83.
- Lai, Brian. 2007. "Draining the Swamp: An Empirical Examination of the Production of International Terrorism." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24 (4): 297-310.
- Laqueur, Walter. 1999. *The New Terrorism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Li, Quan. 2005. "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (2): 278-97.
- Lichbach, Mark Irving. 1987. "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31 (2): 266-97.
- Linz, Juan. 2004. "The Religious Use of Politics and/or the Political Use of Religion: Ersatz Ideology versus Ersatz Religion." In *Totalitarianism and Political Religions, Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, edited by Hans Maier, 102-119. London, UK: Routledge.
- Marshall, M. G., and K. Jagers. 2007. "Polity IV Project: Dataset Users' Manual." Accessed March 27, 2020. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>.
- Marshall, Paul, and Nina Shea. 2011. *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes Are Choking Freedom Worldwide*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, David. 1978. *A General Theory of Secularization*. New York: Harper & Row.
- McCormick, Gordon H. 2003. "Terrorist Decision Making." *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (1): 473-507.
- Moore, Will H. 1998. "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (3): 851-73.
- Muchlinski, David. 2014. "Grievance and Opportunities: Religious Violence across Political Regimes." *Politics and Religion* 7 (4): 684-705.
- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. 2018. "Global Terrorism Database." Accessed March 27, 2020. <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.
- O'Hearn, Denis. 1983. "Catholic Grievances, Catholic Nationalism: A Comment." *The British Journal of Sociology* 34 (3): 438.
- Pape, Robert Anthony. 2005. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*. New York: Random House Trade.

- Philpott, Daniel. 2007. "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion." *American Political Science Review* 101 (3): 505-25.
- Philpott, Daniel. 2019. *Religious Freedom in Islam: The Fate of a Universal Human Right in the Muslim World Today*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Piazza, James A. 2007. "Draining the Swamp: Democracy Promotion, State Failure and Terrorism in 19 Middle Eastern Countries." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30 (6): 521-39.
- Piazza, James A. 2011. "Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism." *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (3): 339-53.
- Piazza, James A. 2012. "Types of Minority Discrimination and Terrorism." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29 (5): 521-46.
- Rapoport, David C. 1991. "Some General Observations on Religion and Violence." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 3 (3): 118-40.
- Regan, Patrick M., and Daniel Norton. 2005. "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (3): 319-36.
- Ross, Jeffrey Ian. 1993. "Structural Causes of Oppositional Political Terrorism: Towards a Causal Model." *Journal of Peace Research* 30 (3): 317-29.
- Roy, Olivier, and Carol Volk. 1994. *The Failure of Political Islam*. London, UK: I. B. Tauris.
- Saiya, Nilay. 2015. "The Religious Freedom Peace." *International Journal of Human Rights* 19 (3): 369-82.
- Saiya, Nilay. 2017. "Blasphemy and Terrorism in the Muslim World." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29 (6): 1087-1105.
- Saiya, Nilay. 2018. *Weapon of Peace: How Religious Liberty Combats Terrorism*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Saiya, Nilay. 2019. "Religion, State, and Terrorism: A Global Analysis." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31 (2): 204-23.
- Saiya, Nilay, and Joshua Fidler. 2017. "Taking God Seriously: The Struggle against Extremism." *Middle East Policy* 25 (1): 80-95.
- Saiya, Nilay, and Anthony Scime. 2015. "Explaining Religious Terrorism: A Data-mined Analysis." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32 (5): 487-512.
- Sandal, Nukhet A., and Jonathan Fox. 2013. *Religion in International Relations Theory: Interactions and Possibilities*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Sarkissian, Ani. 2015. *The Varieties of Religious Repression: Why Governments Restrict Religion*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Schmid, Alex P. 1992. "Terrorism and Democracy." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4 (1): 14-25.
- Thames, Knox. 2014. "Pakistan's Dangerous Game with Religious Extremism." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 12 (4): 40-48.
- Toft, Monica D. 2013. "The Politics of Religious Outbidding." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 11 (3): 10-19.
- Toft, Monica Duffy. 2007. "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War." *International Security* 31 (4): 97-131.

- Toft, Monica Duffy, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah. 2011. *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*. London, UK: W. W. Norton.
- Uddin, Asma. 2011. *Blasphemy Laws in Muslim Majority Countries*. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. SSRN Scholarly Article. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://articles.ssrn.com/abstract=1885757>.
- Whittaker, David J. 2001. *The Terrorism Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- World Bank. 2018. *World Development Indicators*. Accessed March 27, 2020. <https://data.bank.worldbank.org/data/source/world-development-indicators>.