ABSTRACT

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Religious conflict has increased in scope and intensity in recent decades. By drawing on new data, theories, and methodologies, this dissertation advances the political science literature on religion and armed conflict in three key ways.

First, the dissertation uses a new dataset on Religious Claims and Recruitment (RCR) to explain variation in civilian targeting during civil wars. It proposes both "Defender of the Faith" and "Religious Revolutionary" pathways linking religion to one-sided violence, and finds strong evidence that religious militants target civilians more extensively than non-religious ones. Further, it also finds strong empirical support for the "Religious Revolutionary" pathway in particular.

Second, the dissertation is the first to apply nonparametric machine learning to the study of foreign fighter recruitment. Why were some countries more likely than others to produce Syrian foreign fighter contingents? By using Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (BART), the dissertation shows that the extent to which a country debated, introduced, or enforced a nationwide restriction on Islamic headdress in the years prior to the onset of the Syrian civil war is an important predictor of subsequent foreign fighter outflows. Case studies from Belgium and Quebec extend

the finding further.

Third, the dissertation develops a novel theory for why some religious organizations resort to violence, while others engage in peaceful protest. The theory holds that an organization's political theology uniquely constrains its political behavior, with organizations that hold exclusionary theologies being most likely to resort to violence. A key advantage of this theory is that it generalizes across religions. Paired case studies from the post-war United States and contemporary Mali and Tunisia confirm the theory's observable implications.

ESSAYS ON MODERN RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

by

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Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1:   Introduction

In June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) proclaimed itself a caliphate. The boldness of that claim, coupled with how quickly the group had seized and consolidated territory, sent shockwaves throughout the world.[1] Yet so too did its violence. In early August, ISIS drew headlines for killing nearly a thousand members of the Sheitat tribe, the vast majority of them civilians.[2] Weeks later, it began filming a foreign fighter named Mohammed Emwazi as he executed Western hostages in the desert outskirts of Raqqa. Dubbed "Jihadi John" due to his thick London accent, Emwazi quickly became the face of ISIS itself – brutal, cruel, and global in reach.[3]

For political scientists, the Islamic State's rise was particularly confounding. Following the attacks in September 2001, the discipline made great progress in understanding terrorism (Chenoweth, 2013), mass violence (Valentino, 2014), and civil war (Walter, 2009), yet it barely advanced its understanding of how religion informs political phenomena (Philpott, 2009; Kettell, 2012). Even as religious violence con-

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[1]Thomas Hegghammer, "Calculated Caliphate," *Lawfare*, July 6, 2014. Retrieved February 13, 2016 from https://www.lawfareblog.com/foreign-policy-essay-calculated-caliphate.

[2]Oliver Holmes and Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Islamic State group 'executes 700' in Syria," *Reuters*, August 16, 2014. Retrieved January 18, 2016 from http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-execution-idUSKBN0GG0H120140816.

[3]Dominic Casciani, "Islamic State: Profile of Mohammed Emwazi aka 'Jihadi John' ," *BBC News*, November 13, 2015. Retrieved January 18, 2016 from http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-31641569.

tinued to rise (Gleditsch & Rudolfsen, 2016), political science learned little about how religion related to violence. As a result, it could offer little insight about the Islamic State beyond generic observations about insurgent behavior. Was the Islamic State's religiosity driving its brutality? Was there a link between its religious appeals and its extraordinary success at attracting recruits? In what way, if any, was religion related to Jihadi John's menacing glare? For the past several years, the political world has hotly debated these and other questions. Yet political scientists have had little to contribute to those debates.

The essays in this dissertation offer a way forward. By harnessing new data, methodologies and theories, they advance the political science of religion as it relates to contemporary conflict. Why do some religious actors protest peacefully, while others resort to violence? What is the relationship between religion and civilian targeting? What explains national variation in religious militant recruitment? Each question bears directly on salient policy debates about religion and politics. Yet to date they are questions political science has left unanswered. By addressing each explicitly, the dissertation as a whole opens important new ground.

Yet the importance of that ground begs a separate question: why was it closed in the first place?

1.1   Why Has Political Science Ignored Religion?

That the discipline has largely ignored religion represents something of a puzzle. Most political scientists are keenly aware that religious actors have played a key

role in shaping recent history. Likewise, most know that omitted variable bias and model mis-specification pose significant risks to causal inference. Political scientists thus know both that the actors they study are often religious, and that their models will be biased if they fail to account for religion. Accordingly, religion should feature prominently across the discipline.

Yet religion rarely appears in leading political science journals. For instance, Philpott (2002, 2001) looked at over sixteen hundred articles published in the four leading journals of international relations between 1980 and 1999, a period that came *after* the Iranian revolution and the emergence of global fundamentalist movements (Marty & Appleby, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995; Juergensmeyer, 2000). Yet Philpott found only six articles that highlighted religion as an important causal variable. When Wald, Silverman, and Fridy (2006) then looked at the field's flagship journal, the *American Political Science Review*, it faired no better. Wald et al. found that, in the entire century between 1906 and 2006, the journal published only five articles in which religion was featured "as a variable to explain empirical phenomenon" (2006, p. 524). Worse, the situation has not improved significantly over time. When Philpott later revisited the issue, he found once again that "religion's place in political science scholarship is vastly under-proportioned relative to its place in headlines around the globe, and to scholarship in political economy, security studies, [and] international institutions" (2009, p. 184). Kettell (2012) then confirmed Philpott's assessment with data compiled from the twenty highest-ranked journals in political science. For the decade between 2000 and 2010, Kettell found that only about 1.3% of all articles in those journals primarily concerned religion.

The figure then rose when Kettell also included articles that at least controlled for religion – but only to 2.5%.

What explains why political science has overlooked religion? To date the answers have focused on two main strands of reasoning. The first concerns secular biases both within the field and among political scientists themselves. The second concerns the field's assumptions about rationality and self-interest, and whether those assumptions can properly accommodate the full variety of religious experiences, motivations, and beliefs. I walk through each explanation below, before outlining an additional critique of my own.

The 'secular bias' explanation comes in three forms. First, as Philpott (2002) argues, international relations in particular struggles with religion because of the secular nature of the Westphalian state system it seeks to describe. In this reading, the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 brought to a close not only a period of prolonged religious conflict, but a longer-term shift away from the model of feudal and medieval governance in which religion played a more conspicuous role (Horowitz, 2009; Blaydes & Chaney, 2013). Building off the Peace of Augsburg a century prior, Westphalia effectively extended Augsburg's famous dictum – *cuius regio, cuius religio*, or "whose realm, whose religion" – beyond the Holy Roman Empire to the state system as a whole. The effect of Westphalia on religion and international relations thus cannot be overstated. Westphalia stipulated that states would not interfere in the domestic politics of other states, and, in line with Augsburg, defined religion as a domestic matter. In so doing it purged religion from inter-state relations and indeed the state system itself. When modern scholars began studying that system, religion

was no longer one of its constituent elements, and thus was not seen as a legitimate object of inquiry. Although Nexon (2009) shows that this reading is far too tidy in its division between secular and religious agency, the argument nonetheless offers a compelling explanation for why modern international relation scholars, particularly in the period from Morgenthau (1948) through Waltz (1979), focused so exclusively on the secular laws and logics that shaped relations between states.

The second 'secular bias' critique concerns the prominence of secularization theory within comparative politics (Gill, 2001; Wald & Wilcox, 2006; Philpott, 2009). Whereas international relations has historically concerned itself with what happens between states, comparative politics has largely focused on how states and political economies develop. When the field started, it took Western governments as the end point of that development – and since those governments had all, by the mid-20th century, purged themselves of direct religious or clerical oversight, that meant the field understood political development to be a fundamentally secularizing process. To the extent that the early comparativists considered religion at all, that meant they followed the lead of Berger (1967) and other sociologists of religion, and assumed that in countries where religion factored heavily in political life, its influence would inevitably fade. As Wald and Wilcox put it, early scholars of political development "treated religion as part of the traditionalist order destined to be swept away (secularized) or compartmentalized (privatized) by the inexorable march of urbanism, science, and the market economy" (2006, p. 526). Further, since they defined political development in part as a "separation of the polity from religious structures" and a "substitution of secular modes of legitimation and extension

of the polity's jurisdiction into areas formerly regulated by religion" (Smith, 1974, p. 4), then religion was by definition not a worthwhile object of inquiry. Instead, the focus should only be on factors that accelerated rather than impeded political development and modernization. As Anthony Gill has argued, that focus explains why historically "most comparative political scientists ... consider[ed] religion to be a peripheral subject matter" (2001, p. 118).

The third 'secular bias' explanation holds that, as Hurd (2007) argues, political scientists ignore religion because they have themselves internalized secular norms and expectations. In this view, the problem is not that political scientists are overlooking religion by necessity, insofar as their job is to analyze systems in which religion has no place. Instead, the argument is that even when religion influences major international events, scholars of international relations will not be able to recognize that influence because they have internalized the belief that politics is a public matter while religion is only ever a private one. As Taylor (2007) notes, such beliefs have become almost universal in the modern era, even among the religious themselves, and there is strong evidence that political scientists ascribe to them as well Wald and Wilcox (2006). Yet as Hurd notes, for international relations the "the unquestioned acceptance of the secularist division between religion and politics" is problematic, because the divide "is not fixed but rather socially and historically constructed" (2007, p. 1). Failing to recognize that contingency makes it difficult to understand state behavior in countries where secularist norms are not widely held and religion plays a significant role shaping and constraining state behavior. In Hurd's view, it is that failure that accounts for why religion has been overlooked

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– indeed, it "explains why students of international relations have been unable to properly recognize the power of religion in world politics" (2007, p. 1).

In addition to secularization arguments, another strain of explanations concerns the widely-held assumption that actors are rational and pursue their preferred outcome. Critics have pointed out two ways in which that assumption may cause political scientists to overlook religion. First, it demands corollary assumptions about what the 'preferred' outcome is. Since an increase in power or wealth is often assumed to be a preferable outcome, political science models tend to converge on materialist explanations for political behavior (Nexon, 2011). As a result, those models will not be able to capture the behavior and logics of religious actors that pursue purely normative or value-based ends. Meanwhile, a second and more encompassing critique argues that the very language of interests and preferences presupposes a secular bias, in the sense that they are invariably concepts purged of the immediacy of religious experience. Thus even when political scientists use a more expansive understanding of preferences, it may not be enough (Thomas, 2000, 2005; Mitchell, 2007). As Mitchell puts it, even "the attempt by well-meaning normative social scientists to bring religion into the public sphere by treating it in terms of 'preference,' 'choice,' 'value,' or 'identity' distorts religious experience, and cannot succeed as a strategy for reintroducing religion into public dialogue, since religion is not what they wish to render it in terms of" (2007, p. 351). Indeed, in Mitchell's reading, all empirical social science is doomed to overlook the role of religion, since it fundamentally misunderstands what religion is and too narrowly circumscribes how it operates in the world.

Both the 'secular bias' and 'rational bias' explanations likely have some truth to them. Prior to the Iranian revolution most states were in fact secular, so it is understandable that scholars seeking to analyze either how those states came about or how they related to each other would not reference religion particularly often. Further, as Wald and Wilcox (2006) note, the vast majority of political scientists identify as secular rather than religious, so it stands to reason that they may not think to look for religious influences, particularly in earlier eras where religious actors were less prevalent in news media. Likewise, Mitchell is correct that political science models cannot account for all forms of religious experience – by definition, no model can account for the full range of experience. In that regard, it is entirely possible that political science is not capturing all the ways in which religion informs political life.

However, those explanations still struggle to explain why political science has continued to overlook religion even after 2001. I argue that it has done so because the few works that have looked at religion are often biased toward null results, and the consistency of that result has discouraged further research. As I show below, the bias takes at least three forms. First, researchers consistently select on religious ideology in a way that excludes religion from their causal analyses and guarantees the appearance of a null finding. Second, researchers consistently use post-treatment mediators to mask the importance of religious treatments. Third, researchers consistently test religion only against antiquated theories that few scholars expect to hold true. These biases may be well-intentioned, and in the latter case often provide a valuable public service. Yet because they are so pervasive in the literature on

religion, they have necessarily left the impression that religion is not an important causal factor in political phenomena.

Where religious ideology is concerned, consider a series of groundbreaking works on religious parties and mobilization. Kalyvas (1996) looks at variation in the emergence and behavior of confessional parties among predominantly Catholic countries in Europe, and argues that religious parties behave in ways consistent with all political parties. Likewise, Warner (2000) looks at when and where the Catholic church allied itself with Christian Democratic parties in Europe, and shows that the Church often sought to maximize its political rather than ideological interests. Finally, Gill (1994, 1998) looks at variation in the Church's relationship with autocratic regimes in Latin America, and finds that the Church allied itself with dictators wherever it experienced greater religious competition. Collectively, these works showed that religious actors will consistently act in their institutional self-interest, and argued that religion was not an important factor in understanding their behavior. Yet each work also selected on Catholic ideology. The correct inference is thus not that Catholic ideology does not matter for Catholic political behavior, but simply that Catholic ideology alone cannot explain the full range of that behavior. As Bellin (2008, p. 328) notes in a review of each work, their "approach does not shed light on the question of when and how religious conviction plays a causal role in politics," since their design itself "discounts the role of religious ideas and convictions in accounting for the religious behavior it studies." This issue is not limited to scholarship on confessional politics in Europe. Tarek Masoud's *Counting Islam*, a major recent work on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, also employs the

same strategy: Masoud selects on Islamist ideology to show that Islamist political parties in Egypt mostly behave like political parties (Masoud, 2014). Likewise, Eli Berman's *Radical, Violent and Religious*, a well-known book on militant Islamist groups, selects on such groups to show that their behavior often varies in response to common features of militant organizations (Berman, 2009). From Catholic politics to Islamist groups, many of the few path-breaking works on religious ideology in political science explicitly exclude it from their causal analysis. As such, they are *structured by design* to show that religion is not a significant causal factor of political behavior.

Selecting on religious ideology is not the only way to yield that result. Another common move is to define religion as a treatment, but then accord significance only to a more generalized post-treatment mediator. Take the literature that argues "psychology, not theology" is what matters most for radicalization (A. W. Kruglanski, 2014; A. W. Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009; J. J. B. Kruglanski Arie W et al., 2013; A. W. Kruglanski et al., 2014). Recently, Lyons-Padilla, Gelfand, Mirahmadi, Farooq, and van Egmond (2015) used mediation analysis to confirm that religiosity was indeed linked to extremism through a 'personal significance' pathway. Accordingly, two of its authors took to the *New York Times* to argue that "the psychological need for significance, not religion or ideology, is what propels people toward extremism."[4] That inference is incorrect. Far from showing that religion does not play a role in extremism, the

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[4]Sarah Lyons-Padilla and Michele J. Gelfand, "The Social Scientific Case Against a Muslim Ban," *New York Times*, February 18, 2017. Retrieved February 18, 2017 from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/18/opinion/sunday/the-social-scientific-case-against-a-muslim-ban.html.

mediation analysis shows exactly *how* and *when* it plays a role. High-profile scholars have made a similar move with regard to religion and armed conflict. Kalyvas (2015), for example, argues that the behavior of the Islamic State owes to the fact that the group holds a revolutionary ideology at all, not that that ideology is specifically religious. The Islamic State ought to be characterized as a "revolutionary group" rather than a religious one, Kalyvas argues, since "there is nothing particularly Islamic or jihadi about the organization's violence."[5] Kalyvas's basic insight is welcome: he specifies the particular pathway by which religion informs the Islamic State's behavior. The problem is Kalyvas then goes a step further, and implies strongly that the group's "revolutionary ideology" is all that really matters. In effect, Kalyvas holds that the Islamic State's religious beliefs may well constitute a treatment, but because its "revolutionary ideology" is the mediator linking those beliefs to its violence, we need only accord significance to its revolutionary ideology. Yet in the contemporary era, revolutionary ideologies are highly conditional on religious beliefs. As with Lyons-Padilla et al. above, Kalyvas thus shows not that religion doesn't matter, but precisely *how* it matters. Despite that, however, in both cases the impression is that religion has a 'null effect.'

Finally, poor theory also leads the field to disproportionately publish null results for religion. There are three contexts in which this is common. The first concerns perceptions about Islam. Although only a handful of scholars still argue that Islam is innately violent or autocratic (Lewis, 2003; Ben-Dor & Pedahzur, 2003;

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[5]Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The logic of violence in the Islamic State's war," *Washington Post*, July 7, 2014. Retrieved July 18, 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/07/the-logic-of-violence-in-islamic-states-war/.

Gorka, 2016), the view is widely held in the public at large. In response, political scientists have consistently examined the relationship between Islam and politics. Part of this literature has focused on why comparatively few Muslim-majority countries are democracies rather than autocracies (Midlarsky, 1998; Fish, 2002; Karatnycky, 2002; Stepan & Robertson, 2003; Sarkissian, 2012). A more prominent strand, however, has focused on the relationship between Islam and civil conflict. Every several years there is a new study that empirically examines whether Islam and Muslims are innately prone to violence (Fox, 2000, 2003, 2012; de Soysa & Nordas, 2007; Fish, Jensenius, & Michel, 2010; Karakaya, 2015; Gleditsch & Rudolfsen, 2016). The scholarly consensus is that there are strong bivariate relationships between Islam and democracy and also Islam and violence, but in each case the relationship weakens substantially when controlling for potential covariates. This literature provides a necessary public service. But it has come with a significant opportunity cost. If only 1% of articles look at religion primarily, then the resources spent debunking what is essentially a strawman argument constitute a non-trivial proportion of them.

The same could also be said of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis (1993, 1996). Huntington's argument holds that whereas ideological fault lines structured geopolitical competition during the Cold War, religious and cultural distinctions would do so during the post-Soviet era. Few contemporary theories have been tested as rigorously or as often. Although some scholars challenged Huntington on qualitative grounds (Desch, 1998; Wedeen, 2002), many have done so quantitatively. In line with Huntington's initial focus, most of that scholarship focused on interstate implications (Henderson, 1997, 1998; Russett, Oneal, & Cox,

2000; Henderson & Tucker, 2001; Chiozza, 2002; Bolks & Stoll, 2003; Henderson, 2005), but another vein of research extended the theory to intra-state conflict (Fox, 2001, 2004b, 2004a; Roeder, 2003; Tusicisny, 2004). All told, the scholarship offers some evidence that religious and 'civilizational' clashes are associated with greater conflict intensity (Ellingsen, 2005; Pearce, 2005; Ellis, 2010), and one more recent work even found evidence that they may be associated with conflict onset (Charron, 2010). However, the overwhelming consensus is that Huntington's thesis is not sufficient to explain empirical patterns in both inter- and intra-state conflict. Indeed, as Jonathan Fox has put it, the field as a whole has seen "the fall of the civilization paradigm" (Fox, 2007, p. 361). Given how popular Huntington's thesis has proven outside of the academy, the 'clash' literature has, as with the 'Islam' literature, served a valuable public good. But it too has come at considerable cost. From the late 1990s through the late 2000s, it accounts for a great deal of the work on religion in international relations and comparative politics – yet because it was crafted in response to a weak theory, it does not particularly advance our understanding of whether and how religion contributes to conflict.

Poor theory and data also plague many major studies in which religion appears only as a control variable. Consider several landmarks works in the sub-fields of comparative development and civil conflict. First, in their paper on the colonial origins of development, Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2001) reference Weber's century-old argument about the Protestant work ethic, and accordingly control for religion using the percentage of each country that is Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, or "Other." Given that Weber's theory has long since been discredited, it is no surprise

that the authors claim to find "little net effect of religion" on development (2001, p. 1389). Likewise, in *Democracy and Development*, Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi (2000) rehearse and rebut several similarly "essentialist" arguments before including denominational percentages in their analysis of democratic transitions. Not surprisingly, they find that "neither Protestantism nor Islam seems to have an effect on the emergence or the durability of democracy" (2000, p. 126). Two major works in the civil war literature suffer from a similar issue. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) include a measure of religious fractionalization in their analysis of civil war onset because "religious hatreds are widely perceived as a cause of civil conflict" (2004, p. 571). Yet few scholars take the 'religious hatreds' argument seriously, and in any case, religious fractionalization in itself is not likely to lead to conflict – most scholars would argue instead that any effect of religious diversity is conditional on the distribution of political power (Cederman, Wimmer, & Min, 2010; Satana, Inman, & Birnir, 2013). Similarly, Fearon and Laitin (2003), which is the most-cited paper in the *American Political Science Review* to reference religion, also only includes religious fractionalization in its analysis of civil war onset. Not surprisingly, neither Collier and Hoeffler nor Fearon and Laitin find religious fractionalization to be a significant variable. Each of these four works were massively influential in their respective sub-fields. Yet they controlled for religion on the basis of under-theorized arguments, and found little evidence of effect. Coupled with the literatures above, these studies thus confirmed the consensus impression that religion has little effect on political outcomes.

In his analysis of political science's top twenty journals, Kettell (2012) found

that comparative politics and international relations account for only one-fifth of the one- to two-percent of articles in political science that do look at religion. The literatures referenced above comprise a substantial and highly influential portion of that fraction. If they consistently found that religion had no effect on political outcomes, then it is not altogether surprising that other political scientists would ignore religion – even as religious actors themselves continued to dominate the headlines.

1.2   A Way Forward: New Theory, Data and Methods

Religious actors, interests, and beliefs are a legitimate object of inquiry for positivist social science. Contrary to Mitchell (2007) or Jerolmack and Porpora (2004), improving our understanding of religion does not require jettisoning the language and vocabulary of contemporary political science. Nor does it require radically altering the common definition of what religion is. Following Horowitz (2009), who himself drew from Toft (2007) and Stark (1999), we can define religion "as a set of beliefs generally regarding the supernatural and involving practices designed to explain and justify existence" (2009, p. 167). On the basis of those beliefs and practices, religious adherents often – though by no means always – come to develop shared religious ideologies and identities. Just as we can use counterfactual reasoning to make inferences about the effect of ethnic identities (Fearon & Laitin, 2000) and secular ideologies (Sanin & Wood, 2014), so too can we do so with respect to religious identities (Birnir & Satana, 2013) and ideologies (Owen, 2005). The key is ensuring that the research designs used are appropriate to the task, and can

adequately capture an effect if in fact there is one.

Random experiments offer an ideal way of precisely measuring such an effect (McCauley, 2014; P. B.-N. Bloom, Arikan, & Courtemanche, 2015; Albertson, 2011). However, for many questions – particularly those concerning religious violence – experimental designs are not feasible. In these cases, improving our understanding of religion and political violence requires advances in theory (e.g., Hassner, 2003, 2011), the collection of important new data (e.g., Fox & Akbaba, 2014; Fox, 2014), and/or the application of new methodology (e.g., Basedau, Fox, Pierskalla, Strüver, & Vüllers, 2015). Even more, it also requires research designs that pair data with theory appropriately, so that it is possible to draw inferences about how religious actors operate without effacing religion from the causal story (e.g., Piazza, 2009; Hegghammer, 2013).

The essays in this dissertation all follow that model. Each brings new data, theories and/or methodologies to bear on central questions related to religion and conflict. Do religious groups target civilians more extensively? Why do some countries see greater foreign fighter radicalization than others? And why do so many religious actors resort to violence at all, particularly in cases where they could mobilize peacefully along sectarian lines?

With regard to first question, chapter two offers the first direct investigation of whether – and why – religious actors engage in civilian targeting during civil wars. The work extends and builds off both the literature on indiscriminate violence and civilian victimization (Balcells, 2010; Downes, 2008; Wood, 2010), and also the literature on religion and conflict. Significantly, because the universe of cases are all

non-state actors in civil wars between 1989-2009, the design does not select on religious groups. Further, it also proposes two distinct mechanisms by which religious actors might engage in greater civilian targeting. The first is a 'Defender of the Faith' pathway based on insights about the role of religious identity (Seul, 1999). Civil wars in particular are often characterized by individual and communal precarity. In such contexts, religious militants may engage in extensive civilian targeting against religious out-group members as a way of securing in-group loyalty against a perceived common existential threat. By contrast, another pathway is the 'Religious Revolutionary' pathway. In this case, religious militants seeking to implement a theocratic order will first need to secure and exert territorial control. Following Kalyvas (1999, 2006), they may therefore be more likely than other militants to engage in civilian targeting. To test these pathways, the chapter introduces the Religious Claims and Recruitment (RCR) dataset, which codes the rebel actors in the Armed Conflict Dataset (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2010) for religious claims about identity and revolutionary ideology. The results show that religious actors that make identity and revolutionary claims significantly increase the extent of civilian targeting, although neither does so more than the other. By coupling better theory with new data, the design thus sheds new light on the role of religion in a key conflict process – without removing religion from the causal story altogether.

The third chapter, on variation in Syrian foreign fighter mobilization, offers two competing breakthroughs. The first is methodological. Although we have reliable data on which countries sent foreign fighter contingents to Syria, there are few strong priors about how national-level factors relate to transnational militant

recruitment and mobilization. Rather than risk model misspecification, the chapter introduces Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (Chipman, George, & McCulloch, 2010; Kapelner & Bleich, 2016), a nonparametric form of machine learning that can identify key variables and interactive relationships in the data. The second advance concerns the specific variable that the BART algorithm flagged: namely, the extent to which a country debated, introduced, or passed restrictions on the wearing of Islamic headdress. In the years prior to the onset of the Syrian civil war, several dozen countries – including Syria itself – had heated debates about whether to impose restrictions on Islamic headdress. Those countries were all far more likely to send foreign fighters to Syria. The finding thus has important policy implications, and also adds to a small but growing body of evidence that restrictions targeting a particular religious group are associated with greater violent mobilization from that religious group (Akbaba & Taydas, 2011; Satana et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, chapter four incorporates religion into the emerging literature on strategic choice (Pearlman, 2011; Asal, Legault, Szekely, & Wilkenfeld, 2013; D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, & Salehyan, 2013). The chapter responds to a singular puzzle: why do majority religious organizations, or those whose co-religionists comprise a majority of the population, resort to violence? After all, violence is more costly than protest, and such groups could, in theory, mobilize mass support along sectarian lines. One possibility has to do with state repression, but even when the state does not repress religious organizations, some still resort to violence. Why? How does majority religious organizations choose between violence on the one hand, and non-violent contention on the other? To answer this, the chapter offers

a new theory linking political theology to political behaviors. It draws a distinction between inclusionary, hybrid, and exclusionary theologies, exclusionary theologies specifying not just how power should be distributed, but to whom. As a result, mass non-violence will not be a viable option to organizations with exclusionary theologies – since they cannot not hope to control the *ex post* distribution of power following a successful non-violent campaign – and they will therefore be more likely to resort to violence. To demonstrate this theory, the chapter walks through three rare contexts (the post-war United States, and contemporary Tunisia and Mali) where organizations belonging to the same faith and facing low repression costs exhibit markedly different contentious behaviors. By illustrating how variations in religious belief can lead to variation in political outcomes, the chapter uniquely advances the theoretical understanding of religion within political science.

Collectively, the chapters in this dissertation make a significant contribution to the field. By bringing new theories, datasets, and methodologies to bear on key questions of religion and politics, they chart a clear path forward. Rather than depart from the guiding assumptions of contemporary political science, the dissertation demonstrates it is possible to hold those assumptions and still generate valuable insight into how religion shapes and constrains important political phenomena – including even the many dynamics and processes that lead to political violence.

Chapter 2:   Religion and Civilian Targeting in Civil Wars

Do religious militants target civilians more often than other militants during civil wars? Judging by the headlines of the past decade, that may well seem to be the case. Media outlets from the New York *Times* to the *BBC* document in rich detail each new mass atrocity committed by groups like the Islamic State or Boko Haram.[1] The resulting impression is that there is a strong relationship between religious rebel groups, particularly Islamic ones, and the brutal violence they perpetrate.[2]

However, at present the empirical relationship between religion and civilian targeting, also known as one-sided violence, is not well understood. Although the examples above make clear that some religious militants engage in extensive intentional and direct violence against civilians, it also true that other religious militants, such as Hizbul Islam in Somalia, or God's Army, a Christian militia in Burma, have not. Likewise, it is true as well that rebel organizations motivated by ethnic or ideological concerns do engage in civilian targeting. For example, the Congolese Rally

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[1]*BBC*, "Syria: Islamic State group 'kills 12' in Palmyra," January 19, 2017. Retrieved February 28, 2017 from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38678189. Dionne Searcey, "'They Told Us They Were Here to Help Us.' Then Came Slaughter," *New York Times*, February 28, 2017. Retrieved February 28, 2017 from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/28/world/africa/nigeria-civilian-massacre.html.

[2]Michael Lipka, "Muslims and Islam: Key findings in the U.S. and around the world", Pew Research Center: Fact Tank, February 27, 2017.   Retrieved February 28, 2017 from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/27/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/.

for Democracy, which appealed to and recruited from Tutsi co-ethnics, engaged in mass violence against civilians in the 1990s and early 2000s,[3] while the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) killed several hundred civilians in Nepal in 2004. Religious militants may engage in direct violence against civilians, but they clearly do not have an exclusive purchase over the behavior. Indeed, over the past quarter century, the single worst campaign of one-sided violence by a non-state actor was perpetrated by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Kinshasa (AFDL), a loose coalition of dissidents and ethnic militias in eastern Congo that made no religious claims at all.[4]

In light of that variation, this chapter seeks to systematically examine the relationship between religion and mass civilian targeting within civil wars. Popular conceptions of religious violence tend to stress either its irrational character (Hitchens, 2007), or its inevitability as the natural result of an "innately violent" religion.[5] By contrast, this chapter instead argues that religious militants behave rationally, and that the mechanisms driving them to target civilians apply equally across religious denominations. The mechanisms proposed are twofold. First, the "Defenders of the Faith" mechanism holds that appeals to religious "in-group" solidarity, particularly in the context of an imminent "out-group" threat, will weaken the moral sanctions normally associated with the deliberate killing of "out-group"

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[3]*BBC*, "Congo rebels 'massacre 300'," May 21, 2000. Retrieved February 18, 2015 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/756859.stm.

[4]Unless otherwise specified, all references to rebel-led civilian targeting in this paragraph are taken from (Eck & Hultman, 2007).

[5]Fareed Zakaria, "Let's be honest, Islam has a problem right now," *Washington Post*, September 10, 2014. Retrieved August 6, 2015 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/fareed-zakaria-islam-has-a-problem-right-now-but-heres-why-bill-maher-is-wrong/2014/10/09/b6302a14-4fe6-11e4-aa5e-7153e466a02d_story.html.

civilians. As a result, such appeals will also lower the threshold at which the organizational benefits of civilian targeting exceed its costs. Alternately, the "Religious Revolutionaries" mechanism borrows from prior literature on the relationship between one-sided violence and territorial control. In this pathway, rebel groups that seek to establish a religious state will have a greater need to demonstrate territorial control – and thus will engage in greater civilian targeting in a bid to establish that control.

The empirical findings of this chapter broadly support each mechanism. Based on a novel dataset of religious claims and recruitment, the results show that religious militants engage in roughly twice as much one-sided violence on average as other militants, all else equal. Further, this effect is not driven by Islam, since Muslim rebels actually engage in less civilian targeting, all else equal, than religious militants from other faith groups for the 1989-2009 period.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, it lays out the current research on both civilian targeting and the role of religion in civil war. Second, it offers theoretical pathways for how religion might influence the extent of one-sided violence. Third, it introduces the Religious Claims and Recruitment (RCR) dataset, which is compatible with the ethnic claims and recruitment data in the ACD2EPR dataset of Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch (2012). Fourth, the chapter tests the theories in section two empirically. Fifth, it concludes.

2.1 Motivations

In the post-war era interstate conflicts have declined significantly, while intrastate or civil wars have become the predominant form of armed conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). At the same time, the percentage of civil wars involving a religiously-motivated actor has increased rapidly. Indeed, as Figure 2.1 shows, the share of non-state civil war actors seeking a religious state more than doubled in the post-Soviet era alone, from just above 15% in the late 1980s to just below 40% twenty years later. Given that rise, understanding how religion shapes civil war dynamics and processes has taken on new urgency.

One key process concerns one-sided violence. Also known as civilian targeting, one-sided violence occurs when militants deliberately inflict armed violence against individuals known to be noncombatants. Far from being "collateral damage" or unintended victims, individuals subject to one-sided violence are knowingly targeted despite their civilian status. Although the violence may target a specific demographic group, such as adult-age males (Ziolkowski, 1993), victims of civilian targeting often also include children as well as adults, and women as well as men.

Regrettably, civilian targeting is a common feature of civil wars (Eck & Hultman, 2007). Yet to date no scholars of religion and civil war have focused on civilian targeting specifically. The work that comes closest, Toft (2007), documents a correlation between Islamic rebels and civilian mortality in civil wars, but it focuses primarily on Islam and does not examine civilian targeting in particular. Meanwhile, other recent empirical research on religion and civil war – such as Basedau,

Figure 2.1:   Pct. of Ideological Non-State Actors in Civil Wars, 1989-2009
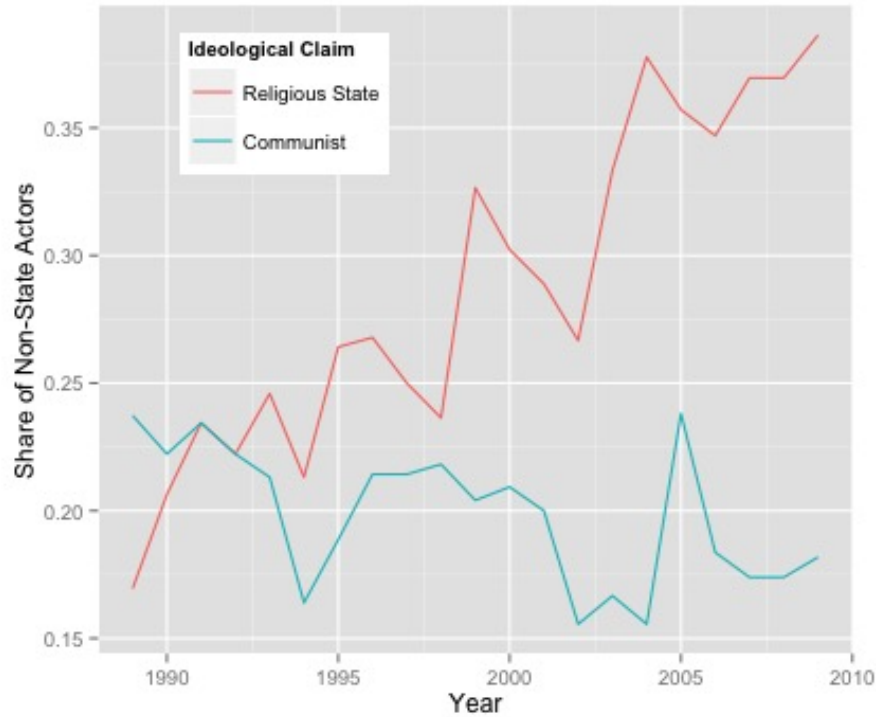
Pfeiffer, and Vüllers (2016) on religion and civil war onset, Svensson (2007, 2012) on religion and civil war termination, or Fox (2004a) on ethno-religious conflict – either touch only briefly on civilian targeting or do not address it all.

Fortunately, while scholars of religion and civil war have yet to examine civilian targeting, conflict researchers more generally have developed a robust literature on the subject. In particular, there is now a rich body of empirical work on the determinants of civilian targeting. Following the pathbreaking research of Kalyvas (1999, 2006), this work has shed much-needed light on both state-led civilian victimization (Valentino, Huth, & Balch-Lindsay, 2004; Downes, 2007; Lyall, 2009; Kocher, Pepinsky, & Kalyvas, 2011), and, increasingly, rebel-led violence against civilians. Weinstein (2007), for example, explores the role of rebel organizational structure

on one-sided violence; Wood (2010, 2014) examines the role of rebel capability on civilian victimization; Wood, Kathman, and Gent (2012) explores the role of armed intervention; and Hultman (2012), Balcells (2010), and Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood (2014) all look at the effect of political institutions on rebel-led civilian targeting. Notably, this body of work has convincingly demonstrated the rational character of rebel-led civilian targeting within civil wars. Yet in so doing it has primarily focused on the structural determinants of one-sided violence, while leaving cultural or ideological factors comparatively unexplored.

By focusing on religion, this chapter seeks to extend rationalist accounts of civilian targeting in civil wars in an important new direction. Likewise, by focusing on civilian targeting, it seeks to do the same for the burgeoning empirical literature on religion and civil war. Accordingly, I lay out competing theories of religion and civilian violence below, before testing the proposed mechanisms empirically.

2.2   Religion and the Strategic Logic of Civilian Targeting

The empirical literature on civilian targeting has matured rapidly over the past decade. A common stress of this literature is the importance of territorial control (Kalyvas, 1999, 2006). In this account, territory that is only weakly controlled represents an acute challenge for rebels. Lacking the resources and capacity of a state, rebels in weakly held territory must rely on local populations to mobilize resources and to conceal from the state the identity and location of rebel fighters and resources. If that support does not come willingly, then the rebels must deter-

mine whether the benefits of one-sided violence exceed its costs. On the one hand, targeting the civilian population should deter the population's collaboration with the state and incentivize compliance with themselves. On the other, it also exposes rebels to significant risk. For one, moral norms against civilian targeting, especially if it is extensive or lacks a clear strategic logic, could cost the rebels both in terms of both material support and recruitment. A recent defector from the Islamic State, for example, cited the mass execution of Sheitat tribesmen as his reason for leaving the group.[6] Further, rebel-led one-sided violence may be perceived as a signal of rebel weakness relative to the state, and thus render the population even less likely to support the rebels.

Crucially, the threshold at which civilian targeting "makes sense" is not fixed in this model. Rather, insurgents' use of civilian targeting will be sensitive to factors that increase or decrease its expected benefits and costs. The presence of oil fields or mineral deposits within contested areas, for example, will incentivize greater civilian targeting by increasing the benefits associated with territorial control (Kaldor, 1999; Weinstein, 2007). Similarly, rebels that receive foreign support will be less likely to rely on the local population, and therefore will engage in more one-sided violence in the expectation that they will incur fewer costs for civilian targeting (Salehyan et al., 2014).

Religion also informs the strategic calculus of civilian targeting. Where benefits are concerned, "Religious Revolutionaries", or rebels seeking to establish a

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[6]Deborah Amos, "Islamic State Defector: 'If You Turn Against ISIS, They Will Kill You'," *National Public Radio*, September 25, 2014. Retrieved August 6, 2015 from http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/09/25/351436894/islamic-state-defector-if-you-turn-against-isis-they-will-kill-you.

religious state, will derive greater utility from territorial control than other actors. Such rebels resolve their collective action problems by appealing to a religious ideology that dictates clerical control over the state. As a result, the credibility of that appeal rests in large part on the rebels' ability to control territory and implement their ideology. Since the utility of territorial control will be less elastic for such rebels, they will be more likely to assume risk in pursuit of it. For example, in a bid to consolidate its control over Afghan territory, the Taleban perpetrated at least 15 distinct massacres in the late 1990s.[7] Likewise, the Islamic State executed the roughly 700 Sheitat tribespeople mentioned above only one month after it had declared a caliphate, a point in time at which it especially needed to demonstrate that it could secure control over a restive local population.[8] As each example illustrates, militants seeking to establish a religious state face strong incentives to engage in extensive civilian targeting, despite the potential risks.

In addition, religion also informs the costs associated with civilian targeting. There are two competing arguments in this regard. First, the emphasis on altruistic behavior in many religions may push the cost-curve upward, thus disincentivizing one-sided violence by increasing the moral sanctions it produces. A rebel leader in Liberia tacitly acknowledged this line of thinking when he claimed that his Baptist faith stopped him "from personally killing people."[9] However, this argument is un-

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[7]Edward A. Gargan, "Taliban massacres outlined for UN," *Chicago Tribune*, October 12, 2001. Retrieved August 9, 2015 from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-10-12/news/0110120312_1_taliban-fighters-massacres-in-recent-years-mullah-mohammed-omar.

[8]Oliver Holmes and Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Islamic State group 'executes 700' in Syria," *Reuters*, August 16, 2014. Retrieved January 18, 2016 from http://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-execution-idUSKBN0GG0H120140816.

[9]Nicholas Kotch, "Taylor's Rebels Hard to Dislodge in Rural Liberia," October 22, 1990. Retrieved July 9, 2015 from http://www.factiva.com.

convincing. Since civil war actors self-select for a propensity to violence, religious actors within civil wars by definition have already overcome religious prohibitions against violence and killing.

By contrast, a more compelling argument is that militants who can appeal to co-religionists will face lower moral sanctions for civilian targeting. In particular, rebels that cohere around a religious identity or belief system can position themselves as "defenders of the faith." Within the conditions of precarity and insecurity that are characteristic of civil wars, rebel groups that can credibly appeal to defend in-group members against out-group threats will gain a significant advantage. Particularly within contested territory, where the out-group threats are more likely to be perceived as both imminent and credible, religious militants can justify out-group civilian targeting as a necessary evil for the preservation of the faith community. A good example of this concerns the fighting in Bosnia in the 1990s. At conflict onset the mass one-sided violence that occurred during and after the second World War was still well within living memory (Midlarsky, 2011, p. 228). As a result claims of out-group threats were imminently credible, and rebel militias had strong incentives to demonstrate their credibility as in-group defenders. One tragic result was the Serbian massacre perpetrated at Srebrenica, which constitutes the worst incidence of civilian targeting by a religious actor in the Eck and Hultman (2007) data.

In light of each mechanism, the following hypothesis should hold:

H1a: *Religious militants will engage in more one-sided violence than other militants.*

A related question concerns whether the "Religious Revolutionaries" or "Defenders of the Faith" pathways will lead to greater civilian targeting. In that regard, I argue that rebel groups seeking to establish a state should be more likely than those defending an identity to try to establish such control. Given the demonstrated link between civilian targeting and territorial control, the following hypothesis should also be true:

H1b: *Religious militants that seek to establish religious states will inflict more one-sided violence than militants that appeal to religious identity alone.*

Finally, in marked contrast to strategic explanations for one-sided violence, another class of argument links religion and one-sided violence in terms of perceived characteristics of specific religions. Based in part on scriptural or theological traditions, such "essentialist" arguments about religion and violence hold that certain religions are innately more prone to violence than others. A common modern variant of this argument concerns Islam. Popular critics of Islam often point to verses in the Quran such as Surah 33:26, which describes the Prophet Muhammad's treatment of Jewish noncombatants in terms of indiscriminate violence, contemporary Islamic militancy (Spector, 2009, p. 84) owes to Islam itself. Although the inherent link between Islam and violence generally has been debunked (Fish et al., 2010; Fish, 2011; Karakaya, 2015; Gleditsch & Rudolfsen, 2016), the argument is nonetheless intuitive enough to remain popular. For instance, when a *CNN* anchor recently

asked on air, non-rhetorically, "Is Islam a more violent religion than other faiths?", all but one of the panelists responded in the affirmative.[10]

The problem with the essentialist argument is twofold. First, no one faith has a monopoly over scriptural examples of religious violence against civilians. The Jewish scriptures, for example, report widespread ethnic cleansing during the establishment of Israel (e.g., see Joshua 6). If the argument about Islam and violence is true, then Jewish rebel actors ought to engage in violence against civilians with similar frequency. Second, essentialist arguments ignore the strategic concerns that confront all religious militants, regardless of sect or denomination. If those strategic considerations are accurate, as a robust body of research now suggests they are, then they will guide rebel behavior irrespective of rebel identity and beliefs. Consequently, with regard to Islam in particular, the following hypothesis should hold:

H2: *Islamic militants will not engage in more one-sided violence than other religious militants.*

2.3 Data on Religious Claims and Recruitment

The civil war literature has made extraordinary progress in recent years in both extending and standardizing data on rebel actors. Following the work of D. E. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009), which disaggregated the civil war actors in the UCPD/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) to dyads between the state and

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[10] *CNN*, "Transcripts: CNN Tonight," September 3, 2014. Retrieved August 6, 2015 from http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1409/03/cnnt.01.html.

distinct rebel organizations, the availability of data on rebel-organizations has proliferated rapidly. One particularly noteworthy example is the ACD2EPR dataset of Wucherpfennig et al. (2012), which links the disaggregated rebel actors in the ACD data to the ethnic groups identified in the popular Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset of Cederman et al. (2010). Whereas D. E. Cunningham et al. (2009) captures structural variables such as rebel capacity, the ACD2EPR dataset is unique insofar as it records whether rebel actors appealed to and recruited from specific ethnic groups, and thus makes it possible to examine identity-based arguments about rebel behavior.

This chapter extends the data on rebel identities even further. It introduces the Religious Claims and Recruitment dataset (RCR), which codes for the 1989-2009 period[11] the same civil war actors and employs the same structure as the ACD2EPR dataset of Wucherpfennig et al. (2012). The RCR data thus makes it possible to better understand the role of identity and culture in civil war dynamics. Further, it also makes it possible to directly compare the effects of ethnicity and religion on the strategic behavior of rebel actors.

In line with the ACD2EPR dataset, the RCR data employs a "many-to-many" approach, in which a single rebel actor can appeal to and recruit from multiple religions and ideologies. For example, the Karen National Union (KNU) includes Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim recruits, while the PKK in Turkey has both Communist and Muslim recruits. Likewise, multiple actors can claim to identify with

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[11]Future versions of the dataset will cover the entire period of the UCDP data, which currently runs from 1946 to 2014.

or recruit from a single religion or ideology. As Table 2.1 shows, there are over 100 rebel actors with Muslim recruits, and over 75 with Christian recruits.

Rebel actors were coded as making a claim, or appealing to a given religion, under the following criteria. First, the claim had to be either officially sanctioned by the organization, as in a press release, manifesto, or the actor's name. Alternately, an appeal could also be made in a public speech or interview of a rebel commander or spokesman.[12] Note that within these criteria, appeals made by rank-and-file soldiers, as when FLRN rebels in Haiti sang that "our blood is that of Jesus Christ,"[13] do not constitute official claims of the rebel actor at large. (Though as shown below, they do count toward religious recruitment). Second, claims must only identify the rebel group with a specific religion. While some appeals may be embedded within a political claim, as when an FDN commander combating the leftist Sandanista regime claimed to be fighting "against Communism and for the Church,"[14] or when Abdulkadr Abdulle, an AIAI spokesman in Somalia, claimed that "we want people to obey Sharia,"[15] political claims and demands are not part of the coding criteria. In order to be consistent with the ACD2EPR criteria and also to capture the "Defenders of the Faith" mechanism described above, appeals need

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[12]Where the primary document containing an appeal is not available, secondary descriptions are cited instead. For example, the Associated Press reported in 1997 that the ADF in Uganda "say they want to oust President Yoweri Museveni and establish Muslim fundamentalist rule." Although the AP does not provide the explicit text of the ADF's claim, the phrasing used implies that the AP was paraphrasing an official ADF statement. As a result, the claim is included in the RCR data.

[13]*BBC Monitoring*, "Guy Philippe, Chamblain reinforce rebel Front in Gonaives," February 17, 2004. Retrieved July 14, 2015 from http://www.factiva.com.

[14]Robert J. McCartney, "Armies Seek Support of Poor Peasants Are Focus Of Nicaraguan War," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1985. Retrieved December 26, 2014 from http://www.factiva.com.

[15]Keith B. Richburg, "Somali Muslims Warily Eye GIs; Group Seeks Fundamentalist Islamic State," *Washington Post*, December 21, 1992. Retrieved July 10, 2014 from http://www.factiva.com.

only explicitly link the rebel actor with a religious identity. For example, the RCR data records a claim when Colonel Honasan, one of the leaders of the military faction that fought the Philippine government in the late 1980s, defended his rebellion by claiming that President Aquino had "destroyed the tradition of political civility and the most basic norms of Christian and national solidarity."[16] Similarly, the dataset also records claims when Akbar Turajanzade, a leader of the United Tajik Opposition, claimed the UTO sought a "revival of Islam."[17] Finally, it also recorded a claim when Radovan Karadic, a Serb leader, claimed in 1994 that "our clergy are present at all our deliberations and in the decision-making processes; the voice of the church is respected as the voice of highest authority" (Radic, 2000, p. 268). In each case, while the claim did not reference a specific political or religious demand, it did identify the organization with co-religionists.[18] Following the ACD2EPR conventions, *Claim* is coded as "0" if there is no claim, "1" if there is a claim, and "2" if the claim occurs only in a rebel group's name.

Meanwhile, there were four ways in which a rebel actor could be coded as containing religious recruits. First, a source might describe the rebel actor itself in religious terms, such as when the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was described as a "Sunni Islamist group" (Casey-Maslen, 2013, p. 144). Second, a source might describe a specific leader or member of the organization in religious terms. For example, the PFLP is coded for Christian recruitment in part because a news source

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[16]*Reuters*, "Rebels Accuse Aquino of Making Philippines 'A Beggar'," December 4, 1989. Retrieved July 20, 2014 from http://www.factiva.com.

[17]Dilip Hiro, "Appointment of Islamists Clear Way for Tajik Peace Process," *Inter Press Service*, March 13, 1998. Retrieved August 20, 2014 from http://www.factiva.com.

[18]One exception to this claims cannot consist solely of common deistic references. Leaders that publicly utter "God bless you" or "insha'allah", for example, are not recorded as making claims.

identified its founder, George Habash, as a Christian.[19] Third, recruits might self-identify as religious, as when WNBF fighters in Uganda told journalists that "we have come as Muslims to fight."[20] Finally, religious recruitment can also be inferred by indications of religious practice, as when half the documents found at an ALiR encampment contained Christian hymns and prayers (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Again following the ACD2EPR codebook, *Recruitment* is coded as a "1" if a rebel-country-year contains recruits from a given religion, and "2" if both the rebels and the state contain recruits from that religion.

The RCR data are compiled from news reports in the Factiva database, as well as conflict-specific summaries and reports such as those for the UCDP website, academic monographs, and memoirs by conflict actors. The multiple sources allow for far greater depth of coverage across conflicts, and thus for greater confidence in the findings. For each instance of a claim or recruitment, the dataset provides both the original source and a note explaining the coding. While some religious organizations may have had religious recruits that were not recorded in the dataset, the extent of religious recruitment that was captured suggests this missing recruitment was not a widespread problem. Further, since press accounts in particular have strong commercial incentives to report on religious claims, it is unlikely that many rebel organizations made religious claims that went unreported.

The RCR data reveal that religious claims and recruitment are a common feature of contemporary conflict. As shown in Table 2.1, of 242 civil war rebels

[19]Scott MacLeod, "Terrorism's Christian Godfather," *Time*, January 28, 2008. Retrieved August 20, 2014 from http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1707366,00.html.

[20]*Agence France Presse*, "Rebel numbers dropping: army," February 10, 1997. Retrieved June 30, 2015 from http://www.factiva.com.

active between 1989-2009, 188 of them, or over 75%, contained religious recruits. Muslims comprised the most common recruits, with 115 rebel groups drawing on Muslim soldiers. Even more, the claims data also indicate that rebel actors make frequent appeals to co-religionists. Roughly 40% of rebel actors overall made an explicit religious claim, with one-third of rebels with Christian recruits (26 of 77) and Buddhist recruits (3 of 9), and over half of rebel actors with Muslim recruits (66 of 115), doing so. All told, the RCR data thus indicate that religious appeals and recruitment are a frequent factor in modern armed conflict, with the overwhelming majority of each concerning Islam and Christianity.

2.4   Research Design

The theoretical mechanisms proposed above concern the role of religion on the extent of civilian targeting in civil war. The empirical design here attempts to test those mechanisms using data on the civil war actors for 1989-2009. Although the data for the dependent variable come from Eck and Hultman (2007), which has subsequently been extended to cover the period through 2009, the sample of cases is defined by the Non-State Actor data provided in D. E. Cunningham et al. (2009).[21]   In contrast to prior work on civil war and religion, much of which examines aggregate data on religious cleavages, the organizational level data provided by the RCR, ACD2EPR and D. E. Cunningham et al. datasets allow for hypothesis testing at the organizational level.

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[21]Future version of this paper will extend the sample through 2011, using the update to the NSA data in D. E. Cunningham et al. (2013).

The dependent variable consists of count data for intentional civilian deaths, taken from Eck and Hultman (2007). For rebel organizations that deliberately kill 25 or fewer civilians in a given year, this variable is recorded as "0." For those that are explicitly identified as killing 25 or more civilians, the most reliable count of fatalities attributable to civilian targeting is given. By design this data is coded conservatively. Civilian fatalities that may be the incidental or negligent result of crossfire or conventional artillery attacks and airstrikes are left out; likewise, the dataset does not record civilian deaths of targeted killing that cannot be attributed to a specific rebel group. Although the data thus likely represent an undercount of actual civilian fatalities due to one-sided violence, the conservative coding rules make it well suited for testing hypotheses about purposeful attacks against noncombatants.

The data for the main independent variables draw on the RCR dataset. Following Wucherpfennig et al. (2012), which codes a rebel actor as an ethnic organization only when it both appeals to a given ethnic group and also recruits from that group, I code rebel actors as a *Religious Organization* only when the rebel both appeals to a given religion and also recruits from that religion. Since many rebel organizations will include religious recruits by happenstance, as a byproduct of recruiting from local communities, the criteria that an organization also make a religious claim ensures that the religious identity of the organization is deliberate rather than incidental. Joint descriptive statistics for *Religious Organization* and civilian targeting are found in Table 2.2.

Meanwhile, a second variable also builds on the RCR data. For rebel groups

Table 2.1: Religious Claims and Recruitment by Denomination

Religion	Claim	Recruit
Muslim	67	115
Sunni	52	68
Shiite	5	8
Christian	26	77
Protestant	7	17
Catholic	6	27
Christian Orth	4	6
Buddhist	3	9
Hindu	0	4
Sikh	1	1
Relother	1	3

Table 2.2: Civilian Targeting by Religious Identity

Religion	Obs	Min.	Median	Mean	Max.	sds
Christian Org	140	0	0	167.1	8360	781.8
Muslim Org	340	0	0	48.32	1991	142
Sunni Org	276	0	0	53.09	1991	153.2
Shiite Org	34	0	0	3.441	63	14
Buddhist Org	20	0	0	19.85	397	88.8
Sikh Org	5	34	296	269.6	445	180.6
Relother Org	2	0	0	0	0	0
Hindu Org	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jewish Org	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
EthnicOrg	692	0	0	115.4	27440	n/a

that make religious claims, *Religious State* is a binary variable that captures whether or not it seeks to establish a religious state. This variable corresponds to the "Religious Revolutionaries" described above – religious militants that are concerned not simply with the defense of co-religionists, but with actively reshaping the structure and distribution of political power, either by instituting clerical oversight or reshaping legal codes in line with religious law. Prominent examples of organizations seeking a religious state include both the Islamic State in Iraq and the Lord's Resistance Army, which has publicly declared it seeks to impose a Christian theocracy in Uganda. Crucially, while less than a quarter of rebel actors publicly sought a religious state during the 1989-2009 period, that percentage grew steadily over those two decades. As shown in Figure 2.1, by 2009 the share of civil war actors seeking a religious state was approaching 40%. To assess the impact of the "Defenders of the Faith" mechanism, meanwhile, I also code *Religious Identity*, a binary variable that is coded as "1" only if *Religious Organization* is "1" but *Religious State* is "0".

To test the second hypothesis, I also construct the binary variable *Muslim Organization*. This variable indicates whether a given rebel group both appeals to Muslim co-religionists and also contains Muslim recruits. Although the RCR codes to the sect level when sectarian information is provided, the variable is aggregated to the religious family here, since the prevailing "essentialist" argument concerns Islam generally rather than Sunnism or Shi'ism in particular. Meanwhile, *Non-Muslim Religious Organization* is a binary variable that records whether the actor was coded as religious but was not coded as Muslim.

The literature on religion and conflict has also theorized that three other fac-

tors might influence the conflict behaviors of religious actors. First, several scholars have hypothesized that the presence of multiple religious actors, and the competitive pressures each will face to mobilize resources, will lead to increasingly extreme political behaviors (e.g. M. M. Bloom, 2004; Toft, 2007, 2013; Whitmeyer, 2015). In this case, the logic of "religious outbidding" should lead to greater civilian targeting wherever rebels must compete with co-religionists. To capture this dynamic, *Co-Religionists* records the number of actors that are coded as a religious organization, belong to the same religion, and also are active in the same country in the same year. Second, religious demographics are also commonly theorized as informing conflict processes (Reynal-Querol, 2002; Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Accordingly, *Majority Percent* controls for the possibility that greater religious homogeneity will constrain religious actors, in the theory that religious actors will be unlikely to target civilians if they are co-religionists. The data for *Majority Percent* is taken from the World Religion Dataset compiled by Maoz and Henderson (2013). Finally, another argument concerns state repression (Grim & Finke, 2009). In this argument, religious actors will be more likely to use violence when the state actively represses their co-religionists. To capture this dynamic, I rely on the Religion and State-Minorities dataset of Fox and Akbaba (2014), which codes several types of state repression at the country-year-religious minority level for the 1990-2008 period. Where the Fox data records that a state restricted a religious minority from forming formal organizations, or that it targeted the minority's leaders and members for detention, I code *Religious Repression* as a "1" for all rebel groups that are coded as religious orga-

nizations and identify with the same minority religion in the same country-year.[22] Otherwise, I code *Religious Repression* as "0."

In order to compare the effect of religion with other social and ideological factors, I also include data on ethnic and ideological claims and recruitment. Following Wucherpfennig et al. (2012), *Ethnic Organization* is a binary variable that captures whether an organization both makes an appeal to a given ethnic group and also recruits from that ethnic group. Data for claims and recruitment are taken from the ACD2EPR dataset. To compare religion with an ideological baseline, meanwhile, I also compiled the binary variable *Communist Organization*. This variable was coded alongside the RCR data and follows the same structure and coding practices. Actors are coded as communist only if they both make communist claims and also contain communist recruits. Importantly, this variable does *not* capture whether an actor made leftist, socialist or 'marxist' claims; the appeals had to be specifically related to communist, Marxist-Leninist or Maoist ideology, with a focus on seizing the state in order to implement a new economic order. Further details on this variable can be found in the supplemental materials.

As prior literature has demonstrated, structural factors also inform conflict behavior. For instance, Wood (2010) argues that rebels with greater capacity will be more likely to incentive compliance and mobilize recruitment and support without resorting to violence. To control for military capacity, I thus include *Rebel Capacity*, a binary variable taken from the NSA data. Since Kalyvas (2006) has convincingly

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[22] More specifically, I take the "MM06X" and "MM10X" variables from the Fox data, each of which are categorical variables with three levels, and code *Religious Repression* as a "1" if either variable is greater than "0."

argued that territorial control is a key determinant of violence against civilians, I also include *Territorial Control*, a binary variable indicating whether the group held at least moderate control over territory that is also taken from the NSA data. Meanwhile, both Weinstein (2007) and Salehyan et al. (2014) argue that principal-agent problems inform rebel behavior. In particular, rebels that enjoy foreign support or control natural resource wealth are less likely to be dependent on local populations and thus more likely to target them. However, since democracies are less likely to condone gross rights violations, rebels receiving democratic foreign support will be more sensitive to such violations and engage in less extensive targeting as a result. To control for these factors, I thus include *Foreign Support*, *Lootable Resources*, and *Democratic Support*, all taken from Salehyan et al. (2014).

Finally, I also include data on the conflict context. Since rebel-led civilian targeting is likely a response to ongoing conflict dynamics, I include both *Government OSV*, which records the log of state-led one-sided violence in a given year, and also *Prior Rebel OSV*, a lag of the dependent variable. Each is taken from Eck and Hultman (2007). Since the intensity of conventional fighting will also influence the likelihood of civilian targeting, I also include *War*, a binary indicator that records whether conventional military deaths, as recorded by the UCDP data, exceeded 1,000 in a given year. Further, since democracies are more responsive to citizen preferences than autocracies, rebel groups within them may be more likely to commit violence against civilians in order to manipulate state behavior and policies (Hultman, 2012). Accordingly, *Democracy* captures whether the state has a score of six or higher in Polity IV. Finally, since greater population size increases the po-

tential opportunities for civilian targeting, I also include a log of population, again taken from Salehyan et al. (2014).

2.5 Models and Results

The dependent variable, *Civilian Deaths*, is a count variable that demonstrates significant overdispersion. Accordingly I estimate each model below using a negative binomial regression. Further, since the unit of analysis is the dyad-year, the observations in state-rebel dyads active for more than one year are unlikely to be independent from one another. As a result, I estimate each model with cluster-robust standard errors, clustered by dyad. All model results are found in Table 2.3. Although the prior literature on civilian targeting typically computes effects by setting covariates to mean or modal values, I instead follow the "observed values" approach of Hanmer and Ozan Kalkan (2013). For models with several binary covariates, the "means and modes" approach is problematic insofar as it computes effects only for a specific subset of cases. In this instance, for example, the conventional method of computing effects would only compute the average effect of religion for rebels in non-democracies that lack significant military capacity. By contrast, my theory applies to all religious militants, including those in democracies and those with significant military capabilities. Accordingly I instead set covariates to observed values, with two exceptions. Since I am most interested in the effect of religion independent of concurrent or prior civilian targeting, the effects described below are computed with the values for *Government OSV* and *Prior Rebel OSV* set

Table 2.3: Multivariate Regression Results

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Religious Org	0.71**				
	(0.34)				
Religious Identity		0.66			
		(0.45)			
Religious State		0.77**			
		(0.37)			
Muslim Org			0.35		
			(0.41)		
Non-Muslim Rel Org			1.05**		
			(0.47)		
Ethnic Org				0.72**	
				(0.33)	
Communist Org					−0.14
					(0.33)
Majority Pct	0.05	−0.00	1.11		
	(1.03)	(1.07)	(1.25)		
N. Co-Religionists	0.09	0.07	0.29		
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.30)		
Rel. Repression	0.01	0.00	0.35		
	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.66)		
War	1.89***	1.88***	2.03***	1.82***	1.83***
	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.43)	(0.38)	(0.39)
Foreign Support	0.88***	0.87***	0.87***	0.76***	0.73***
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.28)
Democ. Support	−0.53	−0.51	−0.69**	−0.76**	−0.54*
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.30)	(0.28)
Loot	0.50*	0.50*	0.54**	0.44	0.26
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.28)	(0.25)
State OSV (Log)	0.18***	0.19***	0.19***	0.13**	0.17***
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Territorial Control	−0.42	−0.40	−0.55*	−0.49*	−0.45*
	(0.28)	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.27)
Rebel Capability	1.57***	1.54***	1.60***	1.60***	1.64***
	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.45)	(0.42)	(0.44)
Population (Log)	0.15*	0.14	0.15*	0.12	0.13
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
AIC	4616.89	4618.85	4617.76	4618.11	4622.24
Num. obs.	960	960	960	978	978

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$

Note: *Intercept*, *Democracy*, *Duration*, and *Rebel OSV (Lag)* not shown. Each are included in all models, but their coefficients are never significant.

to "0."

The results are consistent with the arguments above. Model 1 in particular supports the hypothesis that religious militants will engage in greater civilian targeting. The estimated coefficient is positive and achieves substantive significance. In this case, the median count of predicted civilian deaths is 55 for religious militants and 27 for non-religious militants, meaning the median effect of *Religious Organization* is to roughly double the extent of civilian targeting. Figure 2.2 shows a density plot for the middle 95th percentile of predicted additional counts of civilian deaths for religious actors. Since the density plot does not cross zero we can have a high degree of confidence that the effect of religion is positive. The dotted vertical line represents the median predicted count of civilian deaths for non-religious groups, while the solid line indicates the median predicted effect of religious groups. That the two are tightly clustered illustrates the doubling discussed above. Meanwhile, in keeping with the negative binomial distribution, the uncertainty around the effect of *Religious Organization* is significantly overdispersed. At the low end of the 95th percentile range, religious militants are predicted to inflict 1.1 times the median predicted amount of civilian targeting as non-religious rebels, but at the high end that figure is 3.9. (More specifically, the expected additional deaths ranges from 2 to 107 additional deaths, against a baseline of 27).

The results of Model 2 offer little support for H1b. As expected, the coefficient estimate for *Religious State* is greater than that for *Religious Identity*. However, the difference in substantive effects, again calculated using observed values, is negligible. The median effect for both variables is 27, with 90% of predicted mean effects ranging

44

Figure 2.2: Predicted Effect of Religious Rebels on Civilian Targeting
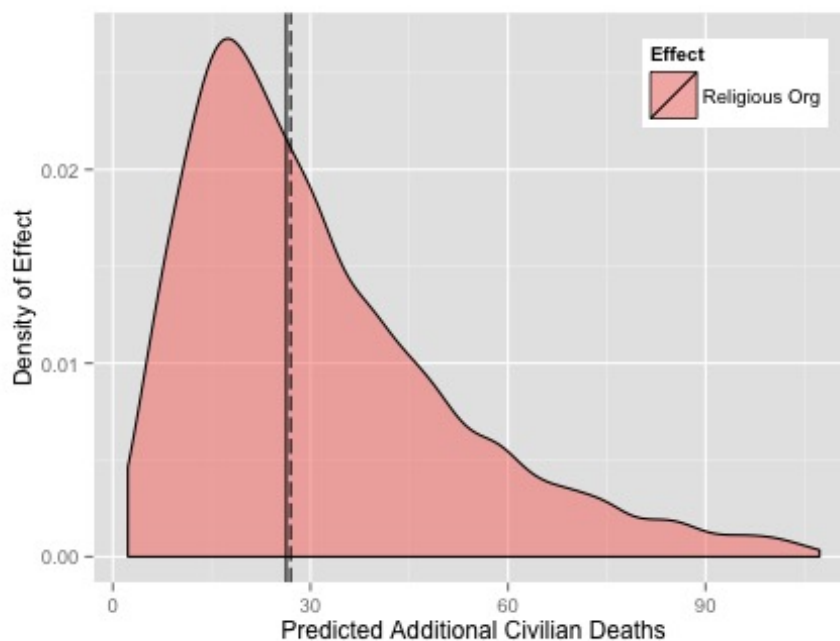
Figure 2.2 shows the predicted effect of *Religious Org* on civilian deaths across the middle 95% of 10,000 simulations. The dotted line shows the expected number of civilian deaths when *Religious Org* = 0 (roughly 27). The solid line shows the median number of additional deaths when *Religious Org* = 1. That the two nearly overlap indicates that the religious rebel organizations produce roughly double the median number of civilian deaths.

between 6 and 112 additional civilian deaths for *Religious State* and between -3 and 175 deaths for *Religious Identity*. As Figure 2.3 illustrates, the distribution of the two effects overlap significantly, and are distinguishable primarily by the greater uncertainty within the effect of *Religious Identity*.

The results are much clearer about the effect of Islam. Model 3 reveals that while Islamic rebels engage in more civilian targeting than other rebels in general, they engage in less targeting than other religious rebels. Figure 2.4 shows density plots for the middle 90th percentile of predicted mean effects on the extent of civilian targeting, with one plot each for Muslim and non-Muslim religious rebels. Although there is a marked difference between the two, that difference runs counter to popular intuition. The median effect for Muslim actors is 13 more civilian deaths per year, while for non-Muslim religious actors, it is 68, or over five times greater. In line with the negative binomial distribution, while the density plots overlap at moderate levels of civilian targeting, the difference in effects becomes most pronounced at the highest percentiles, with non-Muslim religious rebels being much more likely to engage in mass civilian targeting. Although part of the difference in effects may owe to historical anomalies – the period of this study includes the Christian-led massacres in the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s, but not the most recent mass one-sided violence of Boko Haram or the Islamic State – it is unlikely that including recent instances of Islamic mass one-sided violence would push the density plot for Muslim effects beyond that of non-Muslim effects. As Table 2.2 illustrates, Christian rebel groups alone have both a mean and max level of civilian targeting about four times greater than that of Muslim militants. Including recent instances of mass

46

Figure 2.3:   Predicted Effects of Religious Rebels, By Ideology
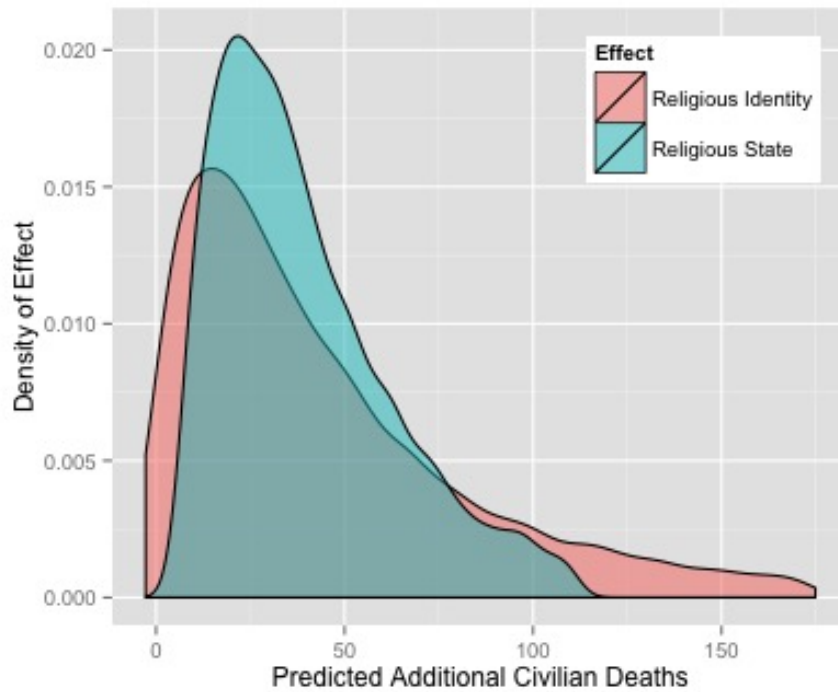
Figure 2.3 shows the predicted effect of *Religious Identity* and *Religious State* on civilian deaths across the middle 95% of 10,000 simulations. According to Table 2.3, *Religious State* registers as significant, while *Religious Identity* does not. However, this plot shows there is not a significance difference between the two effects of the two variables themselves – the main difference between the two distributions is the greater variance for *Religious Identity*, which is largely driven by the mass civilian targeting by Orthodox Christian militants during the Bosnian war.

Islamic violence would cause the density plots in Figure 2.4 to at least converge, but it would not cause the plot for Muslim groups to meaningfully diverge to the right of non-Muslims groups.

There are several other interesting patterns in the data. As Models 4 and 5 show, the effect of religious organizations is only slightly greater than that of ethnic organizations, though each are far greater than communist actors. More specifically, the coefficient of *Ethnic Actor* is positive and statistically significant at conventional levels. Further, ethnic militants have a median effect of 24 more civilian deaths per year than non-ethnic militants, identical to the effect of non-ideological religious actors. Although the ethnic effect may be biased upward somewhat by the effect of religion – several ethnic groups in the EPR data, such as "Sunni Arabs" and "Shiite Arabs", are really distinct religious groups within an ethnicity, rather than distinct ethnicities themselves – the similarity nonetheless warrants further examination. In Model 5, meanwhile, *Communist Actor* is weakly negative and statistically insignificant. This suggests secular revolutionaries have a different strategic calculus in terms of civilian targeting than religious ones do, at least in the post-Soviet era.

In addition, the results are striking insofar as they are not consistent with common arguments in the religious conflict literature. First, in none of the models is the number of co-religionists in a country statistically or substantively significant. The logic of outbidding may drive religious actors to engage in civilian targeting at a lower level of conflict, but there is no empirical evidence that it holds during civil wars. Second, the indicator of religious homogeneity, *Majority Pct*, is similarly insignificant across all models. Third, the coefficient for *Religious Repression* never

Figure 2.4:   Predicted Effects of Muslim and Non-Muslim Religious Rebels
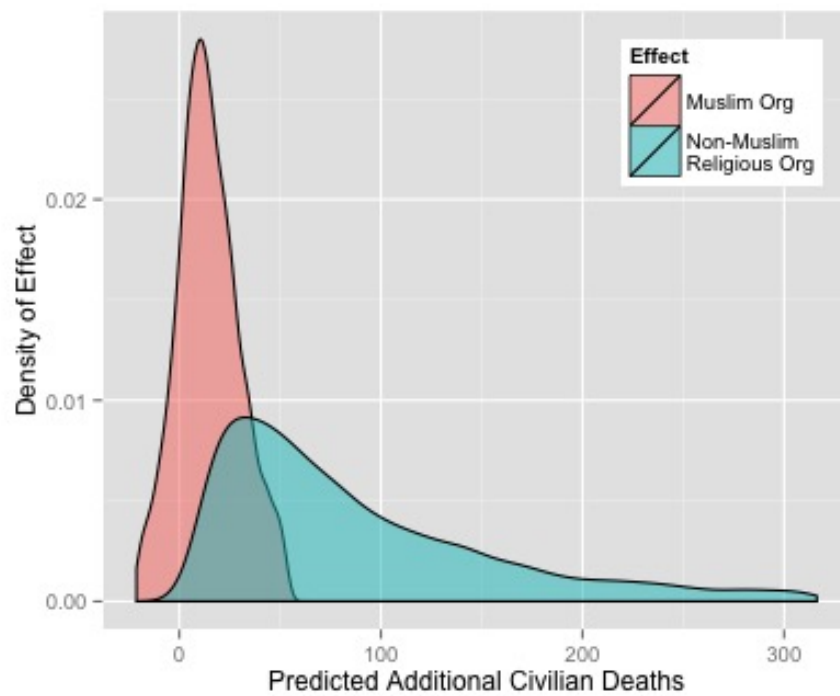
Figure 2.4 shows the predicted increase in civilian deaths for *Muslim* and *Non-Muslim Religious Orgs* across the middle 95% of 10,000 simulations. *Muslim* organizations do not generate significantly greater levels of civilian deaths – in fact, the reverse is true.

attains substantive or statistical significance either. The lack of support for the religious outbidding, fractionalization and repression arguments indicates that the effect of religion on civilian targeting is thus tied exclusively to the identity and ideology of individual actors themselves, and not to the role of external religious factors within the conflict environment.

Finally, the results broadly confirm prior literature on civilian targeting in civil wars. The coefficients for *War*, *Government OSV* and *Lagged Rebel OSV* are all positive and significant, confirming prior findings that civilian targeting increases with conflict intensity. Similarly, as expected *Territorial Control* is associated with a decrease in civilian targeting, while *Loot* and *Foreign Support* have a positive effect. Interestingly, the results also confirm the finding of Salehyan et al. (2014) that rebel capability increases, rather than decreases, one-sided violence.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter confirms that religion matters for civilian targeting. However, the mechanisms and data presented here suggest that the way it matters differs from popular understandings of religion and violence. Contrary to the common view that certain faiths, and Islam in particular, are more likely to lead adherents to engage in civilian targeting, I argue that there is no theoretical reason to suspect that rebels from one faith group are more likely to perpetrate one-sided violence than another. Instead, drawing from prior work on the strategic calculus of civil war actors, I argue that the strategic incentives of both "Defenders of the Faith" and "Religious

Revolutionaries" will guide rebel behavior irrespective of denomination. Consistent with my theory, the data reveal that religious rebels inflict roughly twice as much one-sided violence as non-religious rebels, all else equal, but that Islamic rebels do not engage in more civilian targeting than other religious rebels.

The chapter is significant for the broader conflict literature in several ways. First, it confirms prior work on the rationality and strategic logic underlying one-sided violence. Second, even as the results confirm the influence of structural factors on civilian targeting, it also demonstrates that non-structural factors such as identity and ideology inform the incidence of one-sided behavior too. Third, it introduces new data that will make it possible to test further theories about the role of religious identity and ideology on conflict behaviors.

The findings also suggest potential avenues for future research. In particular, the similar effects of both religious identity and religious ideology call out for further disaggregation of data on one-sided violence. With the data currently available it is not possible to link the religious identity of rebel actors with the religious identity of the civilians they target. Since a key factor for the one-sided violence of non-ideological religious militants is the credible threat of a religious out-group, one corollary of my argument is that "Defenders of the Faith" will be extremely sensitive to the religious identity of their civilian targets, whereas religious revolutionaries, given their more inelastic demand for exercising control, should be less sensitive to civilian identities. Further detail on the civilian targeting data would make it possible both to test these implications and gain greater insight into the contexts in which each mechanism holds. Similarly, the results of this chapter also highlight

the need for more work on variation in religiously-affiliated one-sided violence. As the supplemental tables show, while many religious rebels do engage in one-sided violence, there are numerous others who do not. Subsequent research should focus on the sources of that variation.

Finally, my research also has important implications for the ongoing debate about the nature and extent of contemporary conflict. Both Pinker (2011) and J. S. Goldstein (2011) have documented a recent decline in violence and war. Although their conclusions about mortality rates have been called into question (Fazal, 2014), there is little debate that interstate war has declined markedly over the past half-century. My research points to a counter-veiling trend. As this chapter shows, the share of civil wars that involve religious militants has risen sharply in the post-Soviet era, and those militants engage in more extensive civilian targeting than other militants. This points to the troubling possibility that even if inter-state war itself is in decline, the incidence and extent of rebel-led one-sided violence may actually begin to rise – an intuition consistent with more recent cases of mass civilian targeting in Nigeria and the Middle East. On that basis alone, a better understanding of the relationship between religion, civil war, and one-sided violence should be a key goal of future research.

Table 2.4: Christian Organizations

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
Serbian Rep. of B.H.	Bosnia	0	1992	1995	3113.50	8360
LRA	Uganda	1	1989	2009	324.48	1220
RUF	Sierra Leone	0	1991	2000	135.70	367
SPLM/A	Sudan	0	1989	2004	85.12	460
Palipehutu-FNL	Burundi	0	2001	2008	47.62	209
CNDP	DR Congo	0	2006	2008	38.33	86
NSCN-IM	India	0	1992	2000	35.33	194
NLFT	India	1	1995	2006	27.75	63
Ntsiloulous	Congo	0	1998	2002	23.20	58
ELN	Colombia	0	1989	2003	9.93	88
AFRC	Sierra Leone	0	1997	1999	0.00	0
CSNPD	Chad	0	1992	1994	0.00	0
PIRA	UK	0	1989	1991	0.00	0
Contras/FDN	Nicaragua	0	1989	1990	0.00	0
Nat. Guard-Mkhedrioni	Georgia	0	1991	1992	0.00	0
Republic of Croatia	Serbia	0	1991	1991	0.00	0
Zviadists	Georgia	0	1993	1993	0.00	0
KIO	Myanmar	0	1989	1992	0.00	0
God's Army	Myanmar	0	2000	2000	0.00	0
Fretilin	Indonesia	0	1989	1998	0.00	0
Parliamentary Forces	Russia	0	1993	1993	0.00	0
Ninjas	Congo	0	1993	1999	0.00	0
Lebanese Forces	Lebanon	0	1989	1989	0.00	0
Mil. faction-Rodriguez	Paraguay	0	1989	1989	0.00	0
NSCN-K	Myanmar	0	2005	2007	0.00	0

Table 2.5: Muslim Organizations

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
ISIS	Iraq	1	2004	2009	671.00	1991
TTP	Pakistan	1	2008	2009	219.50	239
Patani insurgents	Thailand	1	2003	2009	196.57	326
Kashmir insurgents	India	1	1989	2009	142.71	436
RUF	Sierra Leone	0	1991	2000	135.70	367
MPCI	Ivory Coast	0	2002	2002	103.00	103
GIA	Algeria	1	1993	2003	100.82	355
FIAA	Mali	0	1994	1994	96.00	96
ADF	Uganda	1	1996	2007	86.62	245
SPLM/A	Sudan	0	1989	2004	85.12	460
Taleban	Afghanistan	1	1995	2009	59.33	133
AMB	Israel	0	2002	2004	41.33	85
UIFSA	Afghanistan	1	1996	2001	33.33	200
Hamas	Israel	1	1993	2009	32.64	135
al-Gama'a al-Islam.	Egypt	1	1993	1998	30.17	77
Ansar al-Islam	Iraq	1	2004	2007	29.50	76
GAM	Indonesia	1	1990	2005	25.56	124
Al-Mahdi Army	Iraq	1	2004	2008	23.40	63
Al-Shabaab	Somalia	1	2008	2009	21.50	43
Chech. Rep. Ichkeria	Russia	0	1994	2007	18.25	108
Chech. Rep. Ichkeria	Russia	1	1994	2007	18.25	108
ASG	Philippines	1	1994	2009	15.69	122
MILF	Philippines	1	1990	2009	13.15	150
JEM	Sudan	0	2003	2009	9.86	69
AQIM	Algeria	1	1999	2009	9.27	65
PIJ	Israel	1	1995	2009	6.78	31
WNBF	Uganda	0	1996	1996	0.00	0
USC/SNA	Somalia	0	1991	1996	0.00	0
MNLF - NM	Philippines	0	2001	2002	0.00	0
APWB	Bosnia	0	1993	1995	0.00	0
UTO	Tajikistan	0	1992	1998	0.00	0
Junbish-i Milli-yi	Afghanistan	0	1993	1995	0.00	0
PFLP-GC	Israel	0	1989	1989	0.00	0
FRCI	Ivory Coast	0	2004	2004	0.00	0
RJF	Iraq	0	2005	2007	0.00	0
UFDR	CAR	0	2006	2006	0.00	0
Jondullah	Iran	0	2006	2009	0.00	0
Mahaz-i Milli-yi	Afghanistan	0	1989	1989	0.00	0
AIS	Algeria	1	1992	1997	0.00	0

Table 2.6: Muslim Organizations (Cont'd)

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
Takfir wa'l Hijra	Algeria	1	1991	1991	0.00	0
Islamic Legion	Chad	1	1989	1990	0.00	0
Jamaat al-Muslimeen	Trin. & Tobago	1	1990	1990	0.00	0
FNT	Chad	1	1992	1994	0.00	0
MEK	Iran	1	1991	2001	0.00	0
MNLF	Philippines	1	1989	1993	0.00	0
AIAI	Somalia	1	1995	1999	0.00	0
SCIRI	Iraq	1	1991	1996	0.00	0
RSO	Myanmar	1	1991	1994	0.00	0
IMU	Uzbekistan	1	2000	2000	0.00	0
Wahhabi - Buinaksk	Russia	1	1999	1999	0.00	0
Jam'iyyat-i Islami	Afghanistan	1	1989	1996	0.00	0
Hizb-i Islami-yi	Afghanistan	1	1989	2009	0.00	0
Hizb-i Wahdat	Afghanistan	1	1989	1992	0.00	0
EIJM - AS	Eritrea	1	1997	2003	0.00	0
JIG	Uzbekistan	1	2004	2004	0.00	0
Ahlul Sunnah Jamaa	Nigeria	1	2004	2004	0.00	0
PRC	Israel	1	2006	2006	0.00	0
ARS/UIC	Somalia	1	2006	2008	0.00	0
Hezbollah	Israel	1	1990	2006	0.00	0
MNLF - HM	Philippines	1	2007	2007	0.00	0
Hizbi Islami-Khalis	Afghanistan	1	1989	1991	0.00	0
PULF	India	1	2008	2008	0.00	0
Caucasus Emirate	Russia	1	2007	2009	0.00	0
AQAP	Yemen	1	2009	2009	0.00	0
Boko Haram	Nigeria	1	2009	2009	0.00	0
Hizbul Islam	Somalia	1	2009	2009	0.00	0
POLISARIO	Morocco	1	1989	1989	0.00	0

Table 2.7: Communist Organizations

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
LTTE	Sri Lanka	0	1989	1991	338.00	711
JVP	Sri Lanka	0	1989	1990	198.50	397
CPI-Maoist	India	0	2005	2009	157.00	237
CPN-M	Nepal	0	1996	2006	110.64	400
PKK	Turkey	0	1989	1992	100.00	216
KR	Cambodia	0	1989	1998	66.70	187
Sendero Luminoso	Peru	0	1989	2009	51.00	171
FARC	Colombia	0	1989	2009	47.67	182
NSCN-IM	India	0	1992	2000	35.33	194
ELN	Colombia	0	1989	2003	9.93	88
MCC	India	0	1992	2004	5.92	42
CPP	Philippines	0	1989	2009	5.48	64
PWG	India	0	1990	2004	3.13	47
FMLN	El Salvador	0	1989	1991	0.00	0
PUK	Iraq	0	1989	1991	0.00	0
EPR	Mexico	0	1996	1996	0.00	0
MRTA	Peru	0	1989	1993	0.00	0
PLA	India	0	1992	2006	0.00	0
Devrimci Sol	Turkey	0	1991	1992	0.00	0
EPL	Colombia	0	1989	1989	0.00	0
Parliamentary Forces	Russia	0	1993	1993	0.00	0
ETA	Spain	0	1991	1991	0.00	0
PFLP	Israel	0	1989	2001	0.00	0
MKP	Turkey	0	2005	2005	0.00	0
PJAK	Iran	0	2005	2009	0.00	0
EPRDF	Ethiopia	0	1989	1990	0.00	0
KCP	India	0	2008	2009	0.00	0
PREPAK	India	0	2008	2009	0.00	0
NSCN-K	Myanmar	0	2005	2007	0.00	0
MEK	Iran	1	1991	2001	0.00	0
ULFA	India	0	1990	2009		

Table 2.8: Buddhist Organizations

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
JVP	Sri Lanka	0	1989	1990	198.50	397
RCSS	Myanmar	0	1996	2009	0.00	0
FUNCINPEC	Cambodia	0	1989	1997	0.00	0

Table 2.9: Sikh Organizations

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
Sikh insurgents	India	1	1989	1993	269.60	445

Table 2.10: Other Religious Organizations

NameData	Location	relState	From	To	Mean	Max
BDK	DR Congo	0	2007	2008	0.00	0

Chapter 3:   Veil Bans and Machine Learning: Exploratory Analysis

of Syrian Foreign Fighters

In September 2011, U.S. military officials noticed a sharp drop-off in foreign fighters entering into Iraq.[1] Although feted as a success of improved interdiction along the Iraq-Syria border, the celebration soon proved short-lived.[2] Rather than representing an absolute decline, it quickly became clear that the drop-off instead owed to the newfound popularity of Syria as a destination, rather than transit point, for foreign fighters. By the end of summer 2012 there were an estimated 2,000-3,000 foreign fighters in Syria; two years later, that figure had grown tenfold.[3] By 2015, foreign fighter recruitment to Syria had grown extensive enough that it even began inviting comparisons to the Spanish civil war.[4]

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[1]Greg Miller, "Unrest in Syria has an upside next door," *Washington Post*, October 10, 2011. Retrieved August 25, 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/pb/blogs/checkpoint-washington/post/unrest-in-syria-has-an-upside-next-door/2011/10/10/gIQAvfA9ZL_blog.html.

[2]United States Department of Defense, "DOD News Briefing with Maj. Gen. Perkins via Teleconference from Iraq," September 29, 2011. Retrieved August 20, 2016 from http://archive.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4889.

[3]Nick P. Walsh and James Foley, "Libyan fighting in Syria symbolizes fears," *CNN Wire*, September 20, 2012. Retrieved August 25, 2016 from http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/20/world/meast/syria-libya-fighter/. Jim Sciutto, Jamie Crawford and Chelsea J. Carter, "ISIS can 'muster' between 20,000 and 31,500 fighters, CIA says," *CNN*, September 12, 2014. Retrieved September 14, 2016 from http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/11/world/meast/isis-syria-iraq/.

[4]See, e.g., Scott Savitz, "Will Syria's civil war turn out like Spain's did?", *Washington Post*, December 2, 2015. Retrieved September 14, 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/12/02/will-syrias-civil-war-turn-out-like-spains-did/.

The extent and scale of Syrian foreign fighter recruitment presents several empirical puzzles. Arguably the most urgent concerns nation-level variation of foreign fighter outflows: put simply, why do Syrian foreign fighter cells come from some countries and not others? What explains why countries such as Tunisia and Turkey have robust foreign fighter contingents, while others did not produce any foreign fighters at all? The variation across countries is dramatic enough that Syrian rebel groups themselves view it as a puzzle, with the Islamic State even expressing consternation at its inability to recruit as successfully in some countries as others.[5] Further, the demonstrated threat that Syrian foreign fighter networks pose, both to their host countries and their host regions, makes understanding their emergence a top concern of policy-makers around the globe.

As urgent as these questions are, however, we have little theoretical or empirical understanding of global foreign fighter mobilizations. While we have reliable data on both Syrian foreign fighter contingents and many possible "drivers" of foreign foreign recruitment, we have no prior information to guide model specification. Accordingly, this chapter takes advantage of Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (BART), a relatively new form of machine learning that can detect the complex latent structure of high-dimensional datasets while also allowing for full Bayesian inference (Chipman et al., 2010). The flexibility and predictive performance of BART make it an ideal estimator in situations where there is little a priori knowledge: the latent structure it uncovers can be used to generate richer and better

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[5]Rukmini Callimachi, "How a Secretive Branch of ISIS Built a Global Network of Killers," *New York Times*, August 4, 2016. Retrieved September 14, 2016 from http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/04/world/middleeast/isis-german-recruit-interview.html.

theory, which can then be tested using more conventional inferential designs.

Two of the main results from BART are not particularly surprising. First, there is a strong relationship between the size of a country's domestic Muslim population and its foreign fighter recruitment. Countries with fewer Muslims are less likely to produce foreign fighter cells. Second, there is also a strong relationship between recruitment and proximity to Syria. Although many countries far from Syria have contributed fighters, the likelihood that a country will produce foreign fighter contingents decreases markedly when its capital is more than 3,000 to 6,000 kilometers from Damascus.

The most substantively interesting finding, however, concerns veil bans. In the five years prior to the onset of the Syrian civil war, there were over forty countries that either debated or implemented nationwide prohibitions on Islamic headdress. The countries that did so were not clustered in a particular region, but instead spread throughout Europe, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East. The BART models identified the consideration of national veil bans as a leading predictor of cross-national variation in the likelihood of Syrian foreign fighter contingents. On the basis of that identification, the chapter develops direct and indirect mechanisms linking veil ban rhetoric and enforcement with Syrian foreign fighter mobilization. Case studies from Belgium and Quebec are offered in support of the direct mechanism.

The central contributions of the chapter are twofold. First, it contributes to a growing literature on causal inference and machine learning in general (Athey & Imbens, 2016b, 2016a), as well as causal inference and Bayesian Additive Regression

Trees in particular (J. L. Hill, 2011; J. Hill & Su, 2013; Green & Kern, 2012). In that regard, the chapter also builds on Jones and Linder (2015) to offer a new template for research in fields with little consensus about theoretical and empirical priors. Second, the chapter also provides preliminary quantitative and qualitative evidence that prohibitions against Islamic headdress are associated with Syrian foreign fighter outflows. The finding is thus highly relevant to contemporary policy debates over whether and how secular states ought to regulate Muslim identity and practice.

3.1 Motivations

Understanding the social processes that have led to Syrian foreign fighter recruitment is important for several reasons. First, the Syrian civil war, which has seen over 450,000 killed[6] and millions more wounded or displaced[7], currently ranks among the most pressing political and humanitarian crises in the world. Foreign fighters have played an integral role in expanding and sustaining the conflict underlying that crisis: some foreign fighters participate directly in armed fighting; others perform key administrative and professional tasks; and still others are used for peace-keeping and dispute arbitration.[8] It is not possible to understand the dynamics of the Syrian civil war – much less formulate an effective policy response – without understanding foreign fighters themselves. Second, foreign fighters also pose a threat to their

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[6]Priyanka Boghani, "A Staggering New Death Toll for Syria's War — 470,000," *PBS*, February 11, 2016. Retrieved September 15, 2016 from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/a-staggering-new-death-toll-for-syrias-war-470000/.

[7]Phillip Connor and Jens Manuel Krogstad, "About six-in-ten Syrians are now displaced from their homes," *Pew Research Center*, June 13, 2016. Retrieved September 15, 2016 from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/13/about-six-in-ten-syrians-are-now-displaced-from-their-homes/.

[8]For more on the role of foreign fighters, see (McCants, 2015) and (Weiss & Hassan, 2015).

home countries. The primary facilitation and foreign fighter recruitment network in France and Brussels, for instance, also played a key role in the Paris attacks of November 2015 and the Brussels attacks of March 2016.[9] Finally, Syrian foreign fighter recruitment is the latest in a long wave of foreign fighter recruitment efforts. Inquiry into Syrian foreign fighter recruitment should yield insights into foreign fighter mobilization more generally.

Despite the current importance of foreign fighter recruitment, however, there are only a handful of works that explicitly address the issue. Prior to the onset of the Syrian civil war, Hegghammer (2010) offered the most comprehensive account of Salafi-jihadist foreign fighter mobilization, arguing that the modern wave of Salafi-jihadist recruitment first emerged as a product of inter-elite competition within Saudi Arabia. More recently, Hegghammer (2013) explored variation in theater selection among Salafi-jihadist recruits, while Bakke (2014) examined the influence of foreign fighters on conflict processes and outcomes, drawing on the insurgency in Chechnya to illustrate the ways in which foreign fighters can both resolve insurgent collection action problems (by providing greater resources, technical ability and funding) as well as restore them (by fragmenting insurgent cohesion). Beyond this research, there are several recent case studies of recruitment networks in specific home countries (e.g., Holman, 2015; Weggemans, Bakker, & Grol, 2014), and a handful of statistically descriptive works on foreign fighters in specific conflicts (e.g., Stenersen, 2011; Hewitt & Kelley-Moore, 2009). However, there are no other works

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[9]Mitch Prothero, "Why Europe Can't Find The Jihadis In Its Midst," *Buzzfeed*, August 22, 2016. Retrieved August 22, 2016 from https://www.buzzfeed.com/mitchprothero/why-europe-cant-find-the-jihadis-in-its-midst.

that offer a robust theory of foreign fighter recruitment specifically, or that test orthogonal theories of recruitment across a global sample of countries.

By contrast, there is a robust and growing literature on militant domestic recruitment. From Gurr (1970) on, an entire subfield of political science has focused on the individual- (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008; Tezcur, 2016), organizational- (Gates, 2002; Weinstein, 2005), and group-level (Kalyvas, 2008; Cederman et al., 2010) determinants of recruitment, as well as the national determinants of civil war onset (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Further, there has also been a more recent focus on the role of external support for domestic insurgencies (Salehyan, 2009), with co-religious and co-ethnic ties being a leading predictor of external support (Salehyan, Gleditsch, & Cunningham, 2011). However, it is unclear how well the literature on militant recruitment translates to foreign fighter recruitment. In particular, an individual's utility function is likely to be much different for foreign rather than domestic recruitment: foreign recruitment both includes costs that domestic recruitment does not (e.g., the risk of interdiction, and the material resources necessary to travel abroad), and excludes costs that potential domestic recruits face (e.g., the potential repression costs for non-recruitment). Similarly, the utility function for supporting an insurgency from abroad is also likely to be much different than one for joining an insurgency from abroad.

Inquiry into Syrian foreign fighters thus faces a unique challenge. Conventional parametric research designs rely on established theoretical and empirical priors to guide model specification. Yet in this case there are no such priors: there is scant empirical work on the issue, and what theoretical work exists is largely orthogonal

to the specific question at hand. Accordingly, I do not use a conventional research design here. Rather than introducing a novel theory and then "testing" its implications by estimating a conventional parametric model, I instead fit a nonparametric Bayesian model first and then use its out-of-sample results as the basis for further developing my theory.

I implement the design as follows. First, I introduce Bayesian Additive Regression Trees, a nonparametric learning algorithm that allows for full Bayesian inference. Second, I introduce the data on foreign fighters and relevant covariates, including a new global dataset on national veil ban debates in the September 2006-September 2011 period. Third, using BART I fit a series of binary classification models on half the available data, with each model estimated using a different size threshold for Syrian foreign fighter contingents. Fourth, I validate the BART models both by applying them to the remaining "test" data and comparing them to conventional generalized linear models. Fifth, I then propose direct and indirect causal mechanisms that can account for the relationships BART uncovers. Finally, I validate the direct mechanism qualitatively.

3.2   Methodology

A central assumption of conventional parametric models is that the model specification exactly reflects the "true" data generating process of interest. One advantage of this assumption is that it makes the models easy to interpret: in the simplest case of an ordinary least squares model with no interactions, the point estimate for

each variable's coefficient represents that variable's average marginal effect. However, this advantage comes with two risks. First, if a variable that is part of the true data generating process is not included, then its exclusion will bias the results. Second, if a model includes all "true" variables but not does not properly account for non-linear and/or interactive effects, then its results will also be biased. As Achen (2005) notes, this is true even in cases where those effects are very modest.

The potential for each bias poses a significant challenge whenever the true data generating process is not fully known. However, the challenge is especially acute when there is no prior information about that process at all. In such cases, researchers face several options. One is to include all potentially relevant variables in a single model, on the grounds that including "false" variables will not introduce bias but excluding "true" ones will. However, so-called "garbage can regressions" are grossly inefficient, and moreover, introduce interpretative challenges of their own (Ray, 2003). As a result, a more common strategy is to fit multiple models as a series of "robustness checks", with each model containing an additional unique covariate or set of covariates. While this approach may be preferable to a single garbage can regression, the individual models do not accurately capture the joint uncertainty across all models. A third strategy is to use an ensemble that averages across all constituent models (Montgomery & Nyhan, 2010). However, while ensembling is preferable to the "robustness checks" approach, it does nothing to guard against the misspecification of non-linear or interactive effects. Finally, a fourth strategy is what Achen (2002) refers to as the "rule of three": namely, to carefully examine covariate relationships prior to model estimation, and strictly limit the structure of

the covariate space based on that inspection. However, Achen's approach is difficult to implement in cases with no prior beliefs about how to limit a high-dimensional covariate space.

In light of the above drawbacks, nonparametric machine learning offers a better strategy for dealing with the challenges of model misspecification. "Ensemble-of-tree" algorithms in particular are well suited for guiding model specification in the absence of prior information. For one, tree-based algorithms can force covariates to compete for entry into the final model. For another, because of the unique way in which decision trees split the covariate space, they can also detect nonlinear and interactive relationships even when they are unspecified in advance (Armstrong & Andress, 1970). Further, the way in which trees partition the covariate space also enable them to perform well even when the number of covariates approaches and exceeds the number of observations – an important consideration given the small size of the foreign fighter datasets.

Although the advantages of decision-tree algorithms have long been widely known (Breiman, Friedman, Olshen, & Stone, 1984), two drawbacks have prevented their widespread use. The first is that decision trees can easily overfit the data, even when ensembles are used rather than single trees. The second drawback – and the more significant impediment for tree-based algorithms in social science – is that early "ensemble-of-tree" algorithms were not based on an underlying probability model. As a result, it has not been possible to generate credible intervals for common quantities of interest, such as marginal effects, using popular decision-tree algorithms

such as random forests (Breiman, 2001).[10]

By contrast, Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (BART) retain the core flexibility and performance of tree ensembles while also addressing each of the drawbacks above. First introduced by Chipman et al. (2010), BART adds regularization priors that sharply constrain the contribution of each individual tree to the overall model fit, thereby reducing the problem of overfitting. Morever, because BART is based on an underlying Bayesian probability model, it can also be used to make credible inferences about quantities of interest.

3.2.1 Bayesian Additive Regression Trees

Below I follow Chipman et al. (2010) and Kapelner and Bleich (2016) to show how BART can be used to detect nonlinear and interactive effects, as well as how it can be used for variable selection and inference.

BART is similar to conventional estimators in the sense that it aims to evaluate an unknown function f. However, given a $1 \times n$ response vector Y and an $n \times p$ covariate matrix X, BART, like all sum-of-trees models, approximates f in a much different fashion:

$$Y = f(X) + \varepsilon \approx g(X; \mathcal{T}_1, \mathcal{M}_1) + ... + g(X; \mathcal{T}_j, \mathcal{M}_j) + \varepsilon, \qquad \varepsilon \sim N(0, \sigma^2) \quad (3.1)$$

Here each $\mathcal{T}_j$ refers to the structure of a given tree (out of m possible trees),

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[10]That said, Jones and Linder (2015) have recently shown it is possible to bootstrap uncertainty estimates.

$\mathcal{M}_j$ refers to the set of terminal node parameters of that tree, ε is a $1 \times n$ vector of noise assumed to be normally distributed, and σ^2 is the residual variance. Finally, $g(X)$ refers to the function that assigns each terminal node parameter $\mu_{ij} \in \mathcal{M}_j$ to X. Thus for each observation in X, Y is the sum of each leaf node value assigned by each tree for that observation (i.e., $y_i = \sum_{j=1}^{m} g(x_i; \mathcal{T}_j, \mathcal{M}_j) + \varepsilon_i$).

Illustrating how BART detects nonlinear and interactive relationships requires walking through BART's basic tree structure. In BART each tree $\mathcal{T}$ consists of internal (or "nonterminal") nodes that have a "splitting rule." Each rule consists of a "splitting variable," x_p, drawn from of all covariates in X, and a "splitting value", c, drawn from the observed values of x_p. As an observation x_i passes through a given tree $\mathcal{T}$, then if x_{ip} satisfies the splitting rule $x_p <= c$, the observation proceeds to the left child node, and if not, to the right child. Observations continue passing through internal nodes until a terminal node is reached, at which point the observation takes on the parameter value of that node. The set of terminal nodes can then be defined as $\mathcal{M} = \{\mu_1, \mu_2, ..., \mu_b\}$, where b is the number of all terminal nodes.

Intuitively, imagine predicting civil war onset from country-level data using a single decision tree. Suppose one branch has three internal nodes: the first splits on GDP per capita at $20,000 per capita, the second on democracy (at $democracy = 1$), and the third on GDP per capita at $5,000 per capita. In a naive decision tree, then for an observation in the dataset representing a democracy with $3,000 GPD per capita, the predicted probability of civil war onset for that observation would be the mean rate of onset for all democracies with a GDP per capita of less than $5,000. By contrast, for an observation representing a democracy with a GDP per capita of

$15,000, the predicted probability of civil war onset would be the mean rate of onset for all democracies with a GDP per capita of between $5,000 and $20,000.[11] What the example illustrates is that any time a single tree has more than one covariate, the predictions are effectively capturing an interaction: in the example just given, the "effect" of GDP per capita is conditional on the "effect" of democracy. Similarly, as the two GDP per capita nodes demonstrate, any time the same covariate occurs at multiple nodes of a tree, the "effect" of the covariate becomes conditional on where the covariate's value lies within its range – which is what allows even a single tree to capture nonlinear associations between a given covariate and an outcome of interest. Not surprisingly, ensemble-of-trees are able to capture nonlinear and interactive effects even more extensively than single trees; since a given covariate might appear at multiple nodes of multiple trees with multiple splitting values, ensembles are able to build a far more granular understanding of how that covariate relates to the outcome of interest.

As noted above, however, what makes BART unique is not just that it is flexible enough to detect complex latent structure in the data. it is also that it relies on an underlying probability model to do so. In particular, BART assumes prior independence for each tree $\mathcal{T}_j$, for each of the terminal node parameters $\mu_{ij} \in \mathcal{M}_j$,

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[11]In that regard, the single-tree case effectively acts like a set of stacked cross-tabs, where the predicted value of Y for any observation is the mean of all observations in its corresponding cross-tab cell.

and for σ, and defines the posterior distribution as:

$$p(\mathcal{T}, \mathcal{M}, \sigma | X, Y) \propto p(Y | X, \mathcal{T}, \mathcal{M}, \sigma) = \left[\prod_j \prod_i p(\mu_{ij} | \mathcal{T}_j) p(\mathcal{T}_j) \right] p(\sigma) \qquad (3.2)$$

Here $p(\mu_{ij} | \mathcal{T}_j)$ is the prior distribution of terminal node parameters, $p(\mathcal{T}_j)$ is the prior distribution placed on each tree, and $p(\sigma)$ is the prior on σ. How BART specifies these priors is beyond the scope of this paper, except to note that the specifications are deliberately chosen to regularize the fit so that no one tree dominates the model. For example, the default specification for the hyperparameters governing $p(\mathcal{T}_j)$ constrain each tree's depth and size, which helps to prevent trees from overfitting their portion of f.

BART models are then fit using a variant of "Bayesian backfitting" (Hastie & Tibshirani, 2000). In the case of BART, the backfitting algorithm iterates through each tree at each MCMC step, fitting the tree on the residuals of the sum of all other trees. The options for each tree are to PRUNE (delete a pair of terminal nodes), GROW (propose a new terminal node), CHANGE (replace a nonterminal rule) or SWAP (switch a parent and child node). BART starts the initial iteration with one node for each tree, with the splitting variables and cutpoints drawn at random. As the MCMC algorithm converges on the posterior distribution, the trees thus consistently evolve, with new rules and nodes being proposed, but only accepted under specific conditions. Significantly, since each variable is equally likely to be proposed, the variables that are included most frequently across post-convergence

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draws can be assumed to be more predictive. Indeed, this is the core insight of Bleich, Kapelner, George, and Jensen, which proposes a "feature selection" algorithm that operates by sampling from the MCMC realizations and computing variable inclusion proportions. Significantly, in cases where there is little prior knowledge of the true data generating process, the ability of BART to discriminate between variables is an important part of its appeal: assuming that "true" variables will do more to improve residual fit than "false" ones, researchers can include many plausibly relevant variables in the covariate space, and allow BART to identify those with the strongest relationship with the dependent variable. Further, because the inclusion proportions are computed by sampling from the posterior draws, it is even possible to place credible intervals around those proportions.

Once BART has identified key variables, it is also possible to estimate quantities of interest for those variables with corresponding credible intervals. In particular, the partial dependence function makes it possible to compute a statistic analogous to marginal effects in parametric analyses. First developed by Friedman (2001), the partial dependence function holds that if $f(x) = f(x_s, x_c)$, such that x_s are the covariates of interest and x_c are their compliment, then:

$$f(x_s) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} f(x_s, x_{ic}), \tag{3.3}$$

where x_{ic} is the ith observation of x_c in the data. For any given draw $f^*(x)$ from the BART posterior, we can drop a specified value of x_s into the sum-of-trees and average across all observations: $\frac{1}{n} \sum_i f_k^*(x_s, x_{ic})$. In turn, if we sample K draws

of the posterior, then the mean partial dependence is simply the average of $f_1^*(x_s)$ to $f_K^*(x_s)$. Likewise, upper and lower bounds of a credible interval can be estimated from specified quantiles of $f_1^*(x_s)$ to $f_K^*(x_s)$. Crucially, if we compute $f(x_s)$ for either the full range of values in x_s or for repeated intervals of them, we can then visualize the partial effect of x_s over the range of x_s. By plotting the partial dependence function for a given covariate, we can then identify whether its relationship to the dependent variable is nonlinear.

BART also makes it possible both to precisely locate the presence of interactions and identify the most interactive variables. As Friedman (2001) notes, the partial dependence function averages over any conditional dependence of x_s on x_c. Detecting whether any covariates in x_s interact with those in x_c requires disaggregating that average. In particular, A. Goldstein, Kapelner, Bleich, and Pitkin (2015) propose estimating the conditional relationship between x_s and f at fixed values of x_c; for each observation i, $f_s^{(i)}$ is estimated by iterating through all n observations, holding x_c constant at x_{ci} but letting $x_s = x_{sj}$. When $f_s^{(i)}$ is plotted as an Individual Conditional Expectation curve for multiple values of i, non-parallel separation in the curves indicate that a given covariate's effect is conditional on other covariates. If PDP plots are a way to identify the nonlinear relationships that BART detects, ICE plots are a key way to identify if and where interactions are occurring. Identifying the covariates in x_c that x_s is conditional on can be done by coloring ICE plots according to the values of the conditioning covariate. Alternately, a more systemic approach to identifying interactions is to sample from the posterior draws and rank each of p^2 possible interactions according to how often two variables co-occur in the

same downward tree branches (Kapelner & Bleich, 2016, p. 26).

3.3 Data

Estimating a BART model requires reliable data on the outcome of interest, key explanatory variables, and relevant covariates. Below I discuss each in detail.

3.3.1 Foreign Fighter Data

The foreign fighter data for this project are taken from two separate datasets. The first is a dataset produced by the Soufan Group, which recorded aggregate counts of foreign fighter inflows into Syria between 2011 and 2015 for 65 separate countries (Soufan Group, 2015). The second dataset is taken from the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (ICSR), which estimated similar counts for 50 countries in the 2011-2014 period (Neumann, 2015). Although models are separately fitted on each dataset as robust checks, the main dataset is based on the national estimates in the Soufan Group data, plus ICSR estimates for four countries that are in the ICSR data but not the Soufan Group data. Point estimates for each country in the main dataset are then computed by averaging the high and low estimates in the Soufan Group report (or, in the case of the four ICSR countries, in the ICSR report). Taken together, the two datasets provide point estimates for foreign fighters from 69 countries. Summary statistics of the can be found in Table 3.1.

Two concerns about this data need to be addressed. The first concerns accu-

racy. On the one hand, the data are reliable indicators of whether foreign fighter outflows occurred. Rebel actors in Syria actively compete for recruits and funding, and have strong incentives to publicize the strength and composition of their foreign fighter contingents. Likewise, given the prominence of the Syrian civil war, home country media are strongly incented to report on the presence and activity of expatriate networks operating in Syria. The incentives of both the rebels themselves and the journalists that report on them are aligned in that regard. However, on the other hand the point estimates themselves may not be reliable. Rebels and journalists have incentive to disclose the presence of foreign fighter outflows, but there are often competing incentives to over- and under-report the size of those outflows; not surprisingly, this has led to variance across the size of point estimates, with the high and low estimates for many counries varying by well over 100%. As a result, rather than use the point estimates themselves, I take a conservative approach and bin the data into three separate binary variables at varying thresholds – namely, 10, 100, or 250 foreign fighters. Although binning the point estimates discards information, it also reduces the noisiness of the data and increases the validity of the results. Further, collapsing the estimates to binary variables also makes it possible to more directly answer at hand – which is not why some countries produce more fighters than others, but why some countries are more likely to send foreign fighter contingents at all. By estimating BART models across multiple minimal size thresholds, any variables that BART consistently identifies as significant across all three models can be assumed to be robust to measurement error in the foreign fighter data. Descriptive statistics for the binary threshold variables can be found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1: Summary Statistics for Foreign Fighter Data

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	Obs.
1.00	45.00	123.00	441.70	360.00	6500.00	69.00

Table 3.2: Foreign Fighter Threshold Summaries

	10+ Fighters	100+ Fighters	250+ Fighters
Countries Above Threshold	60	39	24
Countries Below Threshold	133	154	169

Table 3.1 shows foreign fighter summary statistics for countries known to have sent fighters to Syria. Table 3.2 shows the number of countries that meet a particular threshold of foreign fighters. 60 countries had 10 or more foreign fighters, 39 had 100 or more, and 24 had 250 or more fighters. Since estimates of foreign fighters can vary significantly for a given country, particularly when the overall number is very low or very large, binary threshold variables are used for all model estimation.

The second issue concerns selection effects. In prior conflicts, potential foreign fighters may not have even attempted to enter the conflict if they perceived the border to be closed. American occupation forces, for instance, actively monitored Iraq's borders during the height of the insurgency there, such that only foreign fighters from countries with pre-existing networks within Iraq were likely to try to enter the country. With Syria, however, selection effects are far less concerning. Turkey openly and publicly refused to close its Syrian border for the early years of the war, and as a result getting to Syria was open to anyone who can travel to Turkey – an option available to nearly anyone from any country, given the multiple land, air, and sea entry points into Turkey.

3.3.2 Veil Ban Data

Initial analysis of the Syrian foreign fighter data revealed that the two countries in Europe with the highest population-adjusted foreign fighters rates, France and

Belgium, also passed national prohibitions against wearing the niqab in public in 2010. The bans were then implemented in the spring and summer of 2011, concurrent with the onset of the Syrian civil war. Further, outside Europe, the country with the largest foreign fighter contingent in absolute terms, Tunisia, also experienced a crackdown on Islamic headdress in the immediate pre-war period.

Accordingly, I compiled a cross-national dataset on veil ban legislation. The data captures the extent to which the state regulated, or debated regulating, Muslim headdress in the September 2006-September 2011 period.[12] The dataset focuses only on veil bans that affect women as they go about their daily lives in public, and for which there exists little public purpose apart from the regulation of religious identity. The dataset thus does *not* record regulations that prohibit wearing the veil in official identity photographs. Likewise, the dataset also does not capture national bans against wearing veils or headscarves in uniformed occupations such as the police, military, or hospital staff.

Instead, the dataset captures regulation that applies to headdress worn in public spaces, such as parks and roads; public transportation facilities and vehicles; and public institutions, such as schools and government offices, where uniforms either are not conventionally required or serve no specific professional purpose. Since most women cannot readily avoid public places such as these, regulations about what religious clothing can and cannot be worn within them touch directly on the question of identity. In particular, such regulation forces women who typically wear Muslim

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[12]In light with the timeline established in the introduction, the period is backdated from September 2011, which is the first month analysts began noticing possible Syrian foreign fighter inflows.

Table 3.3: Veil Ban Legislation

Value	Label	No. Countries
4	National Ban Enforced	7
3	National Ban Introduced	19
2	National Ban Debated	14
1	Local Ban	13
0	No Ban	140

Table 3.3 shows that 7 countries passed and enforced nationwide restrictions on Islamic headdress in the September 2006 to September 2011 period. Another 19 countries formally introduced such legislation in that period, but it was not passed or enforced. Meanwhile, a national political official at least called for such legislation to be introduced in another 14 countries. Finally, in 13 countries, there were disputes over the local implementation of a veil ban, but no national discussion about restricting Islamic headdress.

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headdress to choose between compliance with the state (and thus giving up a part of their religious identity), or withdrawing from public (and thus giving up part of their civic identity).

The data was coded according to the schema outlined in Table 3.3. "Ban Enforced" refers either to democracies which passed a national veil ban in the pre-war period, or enforced a prior veil ban in that period. "Ban Proposed" refers either to democracies in which a national veil ban was submitted in parliament in the pre-war period, or to non-democracies in which the regime announced a veil ban that it did not enforce. Meanwhile, "Ban Debated" refers to countries in which either a national politician spoke favorably of a veil ban, or a major sub-national region implemented a ban. "Local Ban" refers to countries in which there was no national discussion of a veil ban, but there was a local-level incident involving the regulation of Islamic headdress in public offices or schools. Finally, "No Ban" refers to countries which had no recorded discourse or incidents related to prohibitions

on Islamic headdress. For countries whose veil ban regulations changed, the value of *Veil Ban* represents the highest value achieved in the period. All values can be found in Table 3.4 in the Appendix. The coding sources used were the annual U.S. Dept of State Religious Freedom Reports; reports from major NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch; and major media sources (e.g., BBC Monitoring, AFP, etc) in Factiva.com. All coding decisions are explained in each country's file in the "coding decisions" directory in the supplemental materials, with sources cited as appropriate. For more on the coding rules, see the codebook in the supplemental materials.

3.3.3 Relevant Covariates

Foreign fighter recruitment can be modeled as the difference between the expected utility of recruitment (i.e., benefits of service minus the costs of service) and the expected utility of non-recruitment. Below I discuss several classes of variables that could plausibly be affect either the expected utility of recruits or their ability to transit to Syria.

Economic and structural variables. Greater *GDP per capita* may increase the expected utility of non-recruitment (since the "outside option" will presumably be higher), but the greater resources and infrastructure available in wealthier countries should also make it easier to finance and arrange foreign travel. Conversely, *Youth Unemployment* should decrease the utility of non-recruitment (since the "outside option" will be lower), but high levels of youth unemployment may also reduce

the ability of recruits to fund foreign travel. Education is frequently proposed as a driver of extremism, partly on the grounds that *Literacy* ought to increase an individual's outside options. Further, *Infant Mortality* rates may also play an indirect role by proxying governance and human development. Lower mortality rates may be associated with worse roads and transportation networks, making foreign travel more difficult. *Oil* reserves may matter as well: on the one hand, rentier regimes may be more likely to fund domestic militants fighting abroad, as Saudi patrons did during the Soviet-Afghan war; on the other, however, they may incentivize conflict at home, and therefore foster domestic recruitment instead. *WTO* is included since cross-border travel should be easier in countries connected to the global economy. The percentage of the population that is *Urban* may also play a role; individuals in urban areas may be more likely to meet and interact with recruitment networks. Finally, foreign fighter recruitment may simply be a function of geographic proximity. To the extent that being closer to Syria should make traveling there easier, the effect should be captured by *Syria Neighbor* and *Syria Distance*.[13]

Demographic variables. Recent research has shown that *Youth Bulges* are a key determinant in state repression. In that sense the repression could cut both ways: the regime may ignore or even encourage militant exfiltration as a means to alleviate pressure domestically; by contrast, the extensive repression may constrain domestic and international travel. Second, since the Syrian insurgency is defined

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[13]The *GDP per capita, Youth Unemployment, and Infant Mortality* data are taken from the World Bank country estimates for 2010. *Literacy* data is taken from the CIA Factbook 2010. *Oil* is taken from Fearon and Laitin (2003). *WTO* is taken from the World Trade Organization. *Syria Neighbor* is hand-coded. *Syria Distance* is taken from Kristian Gleditsch's Capital Distance package.

in part by sectarian concerns, the *Religious Fractionalization* of home countries may play a role. In societies that are highly religiously fractionalized, religious identities may be more salient, making the appeals to religious solidarity of Syrian actors more compelling. Similarly, since nearly all the Syrian rebel factions are Muslim, *Muslim population* should also be an important factor, on the grounds that countries with fewer Muslims will be less likely to produce sizable foreign fighter contingents willing to fight with rebel actors that self-identify as Muslim. Further, it may that the *Muslim Population Growth Rate* matters more than the actual size of the Muslim population; a growing population may prompt a backlash in non-Muslim majority countries, which in turn might increase the likelihood of minority Muslims expatriating to Syria. Finally, it may be that Salafi-jihadist recruitment has greater appeal for Salafists where secular beliefs are more popular. Accordingly, *Pew Unaffiliated* captures the percentage of each country that do not identify with a religious denomination. [14]

Institutional variables. *Democratic* countries may experience less foreign recruitment on the grounds that recruits should be less likely to identify with the grievances of Syrian insurgents. However, the greater freedom of movement, speech, and association in democracies may also facilitate the formation of recruitment networks. By contrast, *Autocratic* countries may make cross-border travel more difficult, but as discussed above, they may also see the Syrian conflict as a means of relieving domestic pressure. Since there is significant qualitative and anecdotal

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[14] *Youth Bulge* data is calculated from UNESCO world population estimates. *Religious Fractionalization* is taken from Alesina et al. (2003). *Muslim Population* data is taken from the World Religion Database - National estimates for 2010.

evidence that jihadist networks have formed in prisons, a country's *Prison Rate* may increase the likelihood of foreign recruitment. *Forced Secularism* may matter on the grounds that appeals to co-religionist solidarity may be more effective in countries that bar all public expressions of religious identity. Likewise, *Muslim Minority Oppression*, which captures whether a regime targets Muslim minorities in particular, may do the same for Muslim co-religionists specifically.[15]

Foreign policy and colonial variables. Countries that carried out foreign military strikes against Muslim actors may see greater domestic Salafi-jihadist mobilization. Accordingly, *Libyan Coalition* captures whether countries participated in the Libya intervention in the spring of 2011, just prior to the Syrian civil war onset. Similarly, the presence of *U.S. Military Personnel* may also incentivize greater Salafi-jihadist mobilization and recruitment. Finally, the residual effect of colonial norms and institutions may also matter. To capture legacy effects, I thus include *Anglophone, Francophone, Arabophone* and *Former USSR* variables.[16]

Endogeneity controls. To guard against endogeneity, the covariates also include three further variables. First, I created a Muslim extremist attack dataset by coding all organizations in the Global Terrorism Dataset to which at least one attack was attributed between 2001 and 2011. Organizations were coded according to whether the group's aims aligned with the global Salafist movement. This coding rule excludes local militants that happen to be Muslim, such as the Janjaweed

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[15] *Democratic* and *Autocratic* variables are coded from PolityIV. *Prison Rates* are taken from the Institute for Criminal Policy Research. *Forced Secularism* is taken from the Religion and State dataset. *Muslim Minority Oppression* is coded from the Muslim and State - Minority dataset.

[16] *Libya Coalition* is handed-coded on the basis of coalition reports. *U.S. Military Personnel* is taken from the DoD budget report to congress for 2010. Colonial legacy variables are coded by official language in the CIA Factbook or whether a state was a part of the Soviet Union.

in Sudan, while including groups such as Hamas, which have local aspirations but nonetheless also see themselves as part of a more global movement. All attacks carried out by Muslim extremist groups were then coded as Muslim extremist attacks. The *Prior Muslim Attack* variable is a binary variable capturing whether the country suffered a Muslim extremist attack in the pre-conflict period. More details are provided in a supplemental codebook. Second, I also include *Prior Muslim Rebel* to indicate whether the country experienced a civil war in the pre-conflict period in which at least one rebel group was a Muslim extremist group. Data for this was taken from Chapter Two.

3.4   Results

158 countries had data available across all covariates, with 38 countries having too little data to include. The dataset was split in half, into training and test datasets of 79 countries each. Separate BART models for each of the threshold variables were then estimated using the Kapelner and Bleich (2016) implementation of BART.

Figure 3.1 shows variable inclusion barcharts for each model. The inclusion proportion sums to 1 across all variables, and roughly can be considered the likelihood that a splitting variable chosen at random from the posterior distribution will be a particular covariate. For the 10+ foreign fighter threshold, *Muslim Population* is the most predictive, followed by *Syrian Distance* and *Veil Ban*. In case the inclusion proportions are due primarily to random noise, I also run a local "feature selection" algorithm proposed by Bleich et al. (2014), which repeatedly permutes

82
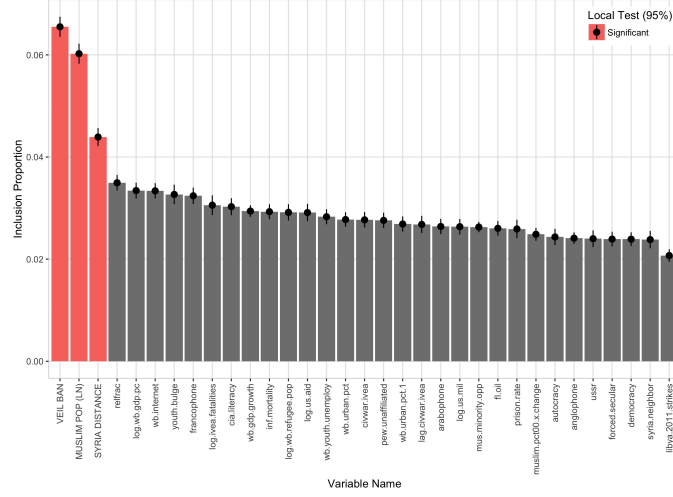
(a) 10+ Foreign Fighter Model
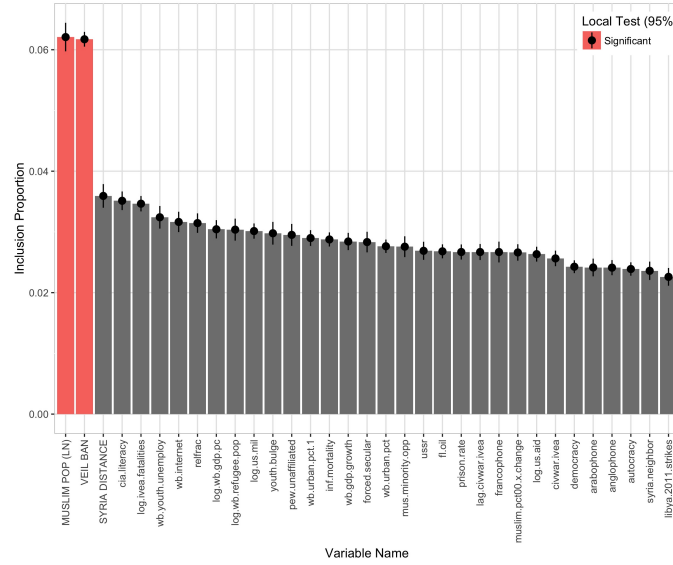
(b) 100+ Foreign Fighter Model

Figure 3.1: *Inclusion Proportions.* Each figure above shows the frequency with which each variable serves as a splitting variable after burn-in. Variables which pass the local feature selection test proposed by Bleich et al. (2014) are shown in red. *Veil Ban, Muslim Population,* and *Syria Distance* are all significant predictors for whether a country will produce ten or more foreign fighters. However, only *Veil Ban* and *Muslim Population* are significant predictors for whether a country produces ten or more. Results for the model fit on the 250+ threshold are identical to 3.1(b) and not shown.

the dependent variable and re-estimates the BART model, and checks whether the actual variable inclusion proportions are in the 95th quantile of all models. *Muslim Population*, *Syrian Distance* and *Veil Ban* all pass this at the 10+ foreign fighter threshold. At the 100+ and 250+ thresholds the *Muslim Population* and *Veil Ban* variables continue to have high inclusion proportions, but the *Syrian Distance* variable does not.

As noted above, however, one key advantage of BART is not just that it can identify important covariates, but that it can identify interactive and non-linear effects as well. Figure 3.2 shows the fifteen most important interactions across all possible covariate combinations for the 10+ and 100+ foreign fighter thresholds. (For legibility the 250+ threshold is not shown, but its results are similar.) Not surprisingly, the key variables listed above – *Muslim Population*, *Syrian Distance*, and *Veil Ban* – are all highly interactive, including with each other. The effect of Muslim population size is conditional on how close that population is to Syria, and likewise, how close a country is to Syria matters more when it has more Muslims.

Further evidence of how interactive each variable is can be found in Figure 3.3. For *Muslim Population*, the non-parallel separation in the centered ICE plot of Figure 3.3(b) shows that increasing population size will increase the likelihood of a foreign fighter contigent more in some countries than in others. Likewise, the same type of separation in the centered ICE plot of Figure 3.3(d) shows that in countries farther from Syria, the "effect" of that distance will decrease the likelihood of a foreign fighter contingent more in some countries than others. Finally, note that Figures 3.3(a)-3.3(d) also show clear non-linearities in the relationship between both

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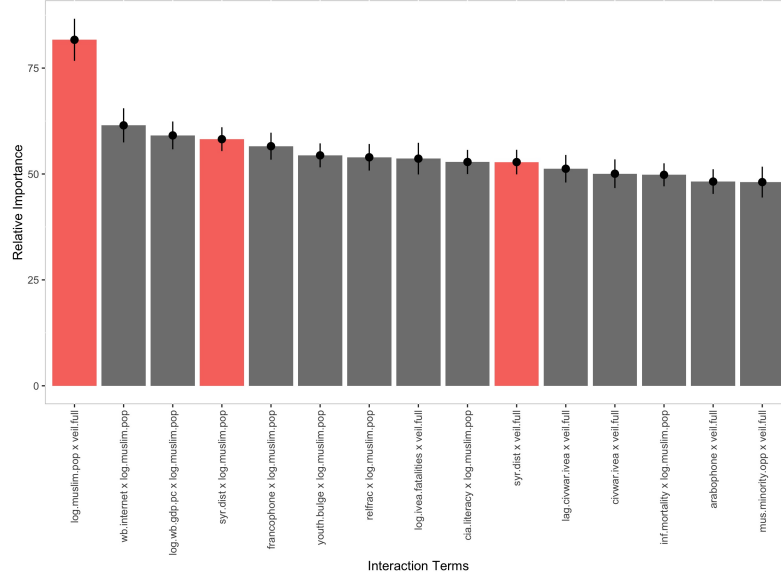
(a) Leading Interactions, 10+ Foreign Fighters
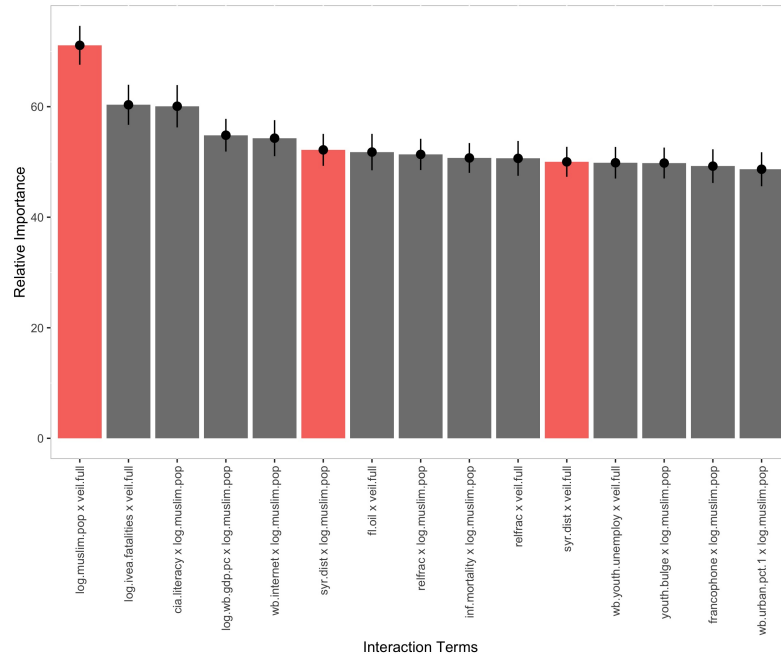
(b) Leading Interactions, 100+ Foreign Fighters

Figure 3.2: *Relative Importance of Interactions.* The top fifteen out of over 900 interactions are shown. Any interactions between two variables that passed the feature selection test proposed by Bleich et al. (2014) are shown in red. Note that for each model, the interaction between *Veil Ban* and *Muslim Population* is the most important. Results from the 250+ model not shown.
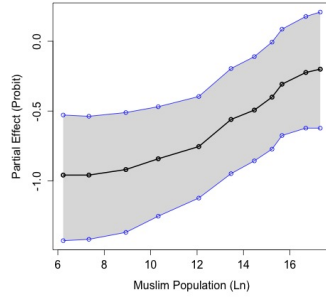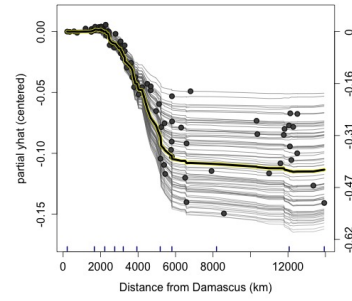
(a) PDP Muslim Pop.
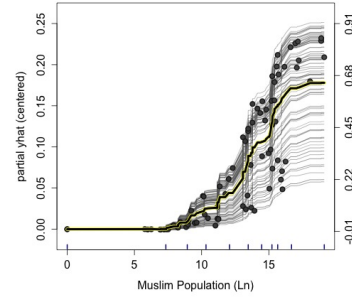
(b) ICE-c Muslim Pop.
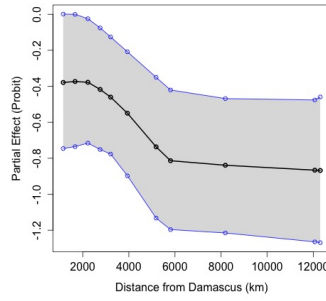
(c) PDP Syria Dist.

(d) ICE-c Syria Dist.
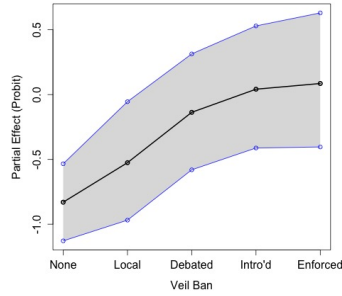
(e) PDP Veil Ban.
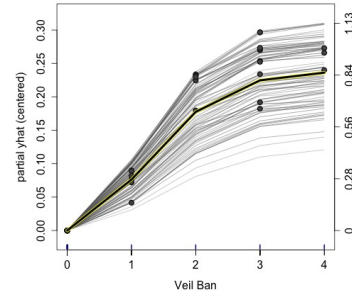
(f) ICE-c Veil Ban.

Figure 3.3: *PDP and ICE-c plots.* Each plot is estimated using training data on the 10+ Foreign Fighter Model. The PDP plots show highly non-linear relationships for *Muslim Population* and *Syria Distance* in particular. Non-parallel separation in the ICE-c plots indicate interactions are present, including for *Veil Ban*. The PDP plots show 80% credible intervals.

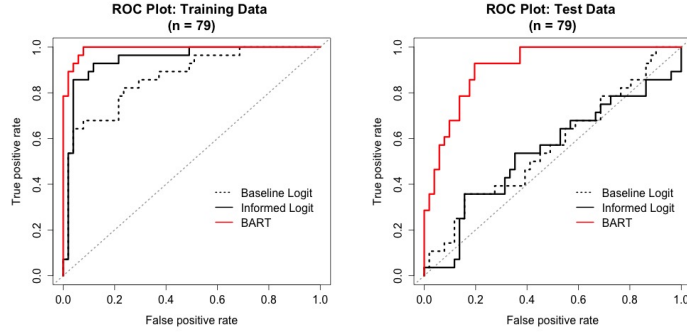(a) ROC: 10+ FF (Train)

(b) ROC: 10+ FF (Test)
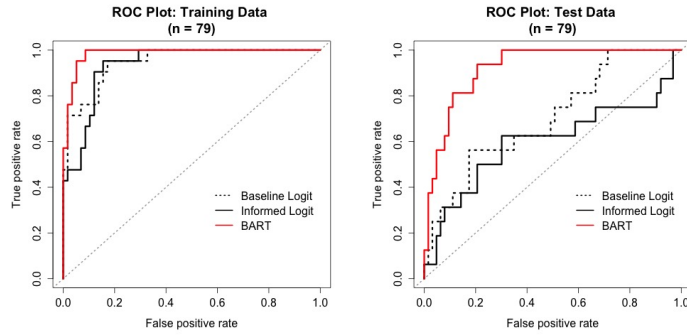
(c) ROC: 100+ FF (Train)

(d) ROC: 100+ FF (Test)
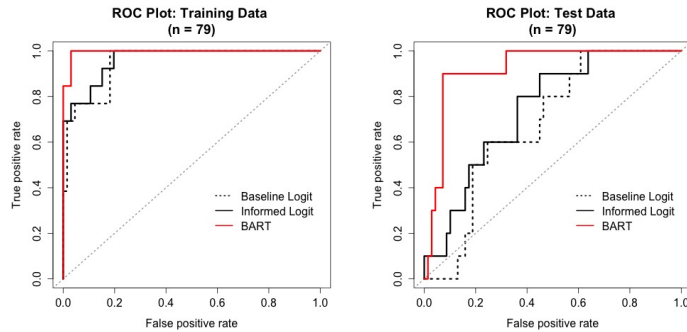
(e) ROC: 250+ FF (Train)

(f) ROC: 250+ FF (Test)

Figure 3.4: *Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curves.* The ROC curves above plot the false-positive versus the false-negative rates for BART models (in red) versus both naive and informed logistic regression models (gray and black, respectively). BART models remain predictive out-of-sample, implying we can trust the latent structure it is uncovering.
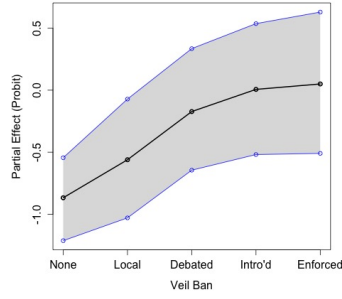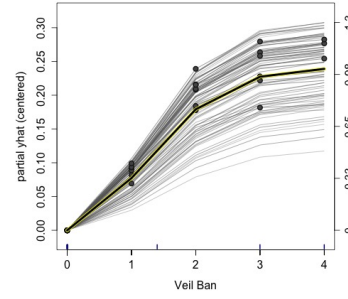
(a) PDP (10+ FF) (b) ICE-c (10+ FF)
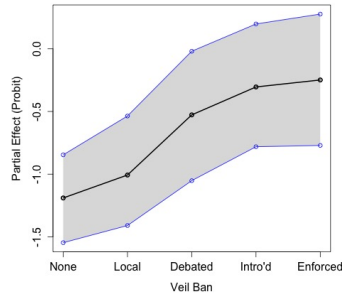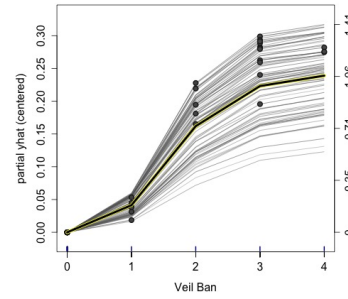
(c) PDP (100+ FF) (d) ICE-c (100+ FF)
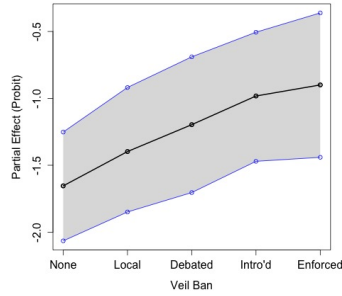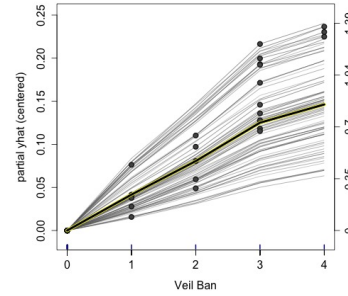
(e) PDP (250+ FF) (f) ICE-c (250+ FF)

Figure 3.5: *Out-of-Sample Veil Ban PDP and ICE-c Plots.* The plots above estimate effects of *Veil Ban* on out-of-sample data. The 80% credible intervals in the PDP plots reflect slightly greater uncertainty than in the in-sample plots. However, as *Veil Ban* increases across its range, each plot shows an average increase in the probability of a foreign fighter contingent.

Muslim Population and *Syrian Distance* and the likelihood of foreign fighter contingents: the "effect" of *Muslim Population* occurs primarily between about 150,000 and 8,000,000 Muslims, while for *Syrian Distance*, it appears to occur primarily between roughly 3,000 to 6,000 kilometers.

If the latent structure in these relationships actually corresponds to the underlying data generating process, then the BART models should be able to predict out-of-sample outcomes better than conventional models that do not accurately capture the complexity of that structure. Accordingly, Figure 3.4 shows the in-sample and out-of-sample predictive performance at each foreign fighter threshold for both BART models as well as a "baseline" and "informed" generalized linear model.[17] The generalized linear models come close to matching BART at in-sample prediction, but perform extremely poorly on out-of-sample prediction, particularly at the lower foreign fighter thresholds where the signal is noisier.

BART's performance at out-of-sample prediction validates the most substantively relevant finding: namely, the strong relationship between *Veil Ban* and the likelihood of Syrian foreign fighter contingents. Figure 3.5 shows PDP and ICE-c plots for *Veil Ban* for each BART model. Following Athey and Imbens (2016a), each plot was estimated using out-of-sample data. Due to the small sample size, the credible interval in each PDP plot is fairly large. However, the plots cumulatively show that as *Veil Ban* increases, the likelihood of foreign fighter contingents rises as well, regardless of the threshold used for estimation. In the 10+ Foreign

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[17]The baseline includes only *Muslim Population*, *Syrian Distance*, *Literacy* and *GDP per capita*. The informed model includes *Veil Ban* and higher-order polynomials for both *Muslim Population* and *Syrian Distance*.

Table 3.4: Foreign Fighters By Veil Ban Status

	None	Local	Debated	Introduced	Enforced
10+ FF	21	6	12	16	5
	(15%)	(46%)	(86%)	(84%)	(83%)
100+ FF	10	3	8	13	5
	(7%)	(23%)	(57%)	(68%)	(83%)
250+ FF	5	2	4	8	5
	(4%)	(15%)	(29%)	(42%)	(83%)
Total	140	13	14	19	6

Table 3.2 shows both the number of countries that meet a particular threshold of foreign fighters, and the extent to which they pursued *Veil Ban* legislation. For example, of the countries with 10 or more foreign fighters, 21 did not have any issues with Islamic headress at all. However, 12 had a national political call for a nationwide restriction on Islamic headress, 16 saw legislation for such a restriction introduced, and 5 saw such legislation enacted.

Fighter model shown in Figure 3.3(e), moving from a country with no discussion or incidents related to Islamic headdress to one that enacts a nationwide ban will on average increase the likelihood of a foreign fighter contingent by about 30 percentage points, from a probability of roughly .2 to .5; this is roughly a 150% increase in the underlying probability of a foreign fighter contingent.

3.4.1 Quantitative Validation

The *Veil Ban* finding is strong enough that it warrants validation in basic bivariate data and conventional logistic regression. Table 3.4 shows summary statistics of the number of countries with specified foreign fighter contingents by level of veil ban legislation. Figure 3.6 illustrates that data using barcharts. The bivariate data show a clear and consistent trend across foreign fighter thresholds; the percentage of countries that produced foreign fighter contingents is far lower in those that did

not consider veil ban legislation in the pre-war period than in those that did. For instance, just 4% of countries that had no discussion or incidents related to Islamic headdress produced contingents of 250 or more fighters. By contrast, over 80% of countries that enforced a national veil ban in the pre-war period did.

Similarly, basic logistic regressions also show a relationship between *Veil Ban* and foreign fighter cells. Tables 3.6-3.8 in the Appendix estimate logistic regressions at the same three threshold sizes used for the BART models. The regressions are estimated on all 160 countries in the test and training data. The coefficient for *Veil Ban* is positive and statistically significant in each model.

3.5 Theory Development

The BART results confirm two intuitive findings: namely, the closer a country is to Syria and the more Muslims it has, the higher its likelihood of producing a foreign fighter cell. However, the results also reveal that there is a strong association between the extent to which a country considered veil ban legislation and the likelihood that it produced a foreign fighter cell. Since the *Veil Ban* finding concerns a policy intervention whereas the *Muslim Population* and *Syria Distance* findings do not, below I focus only on developing a potential theory for the *Veil Ban* result.

3.5.1 Indirect Mechanism: Veil Bans as Proxy

Since BART did not identify the "jihadist violence" covariates as significant, it is unlikely that the *Veil Ban* variable is serving as a proxy for prior jihadist violence.
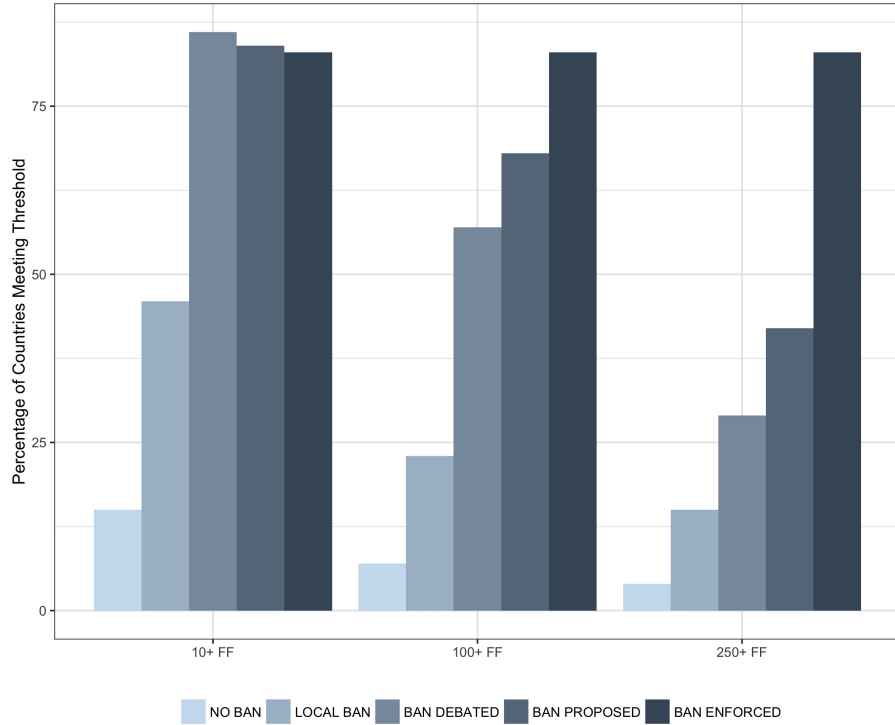
Figure 3.6: *Percentage of Countries Meeting Foreign Fighter Thresholds, By Veil Ban Status.* Each barchart above represents the percent of countries meeting foreign fighter thresholds, given the extent of veil legislation and rhetoric in the pre-war period. For instance, the plot shows that only 4% of countries with no veil ban discussion sent more than 250 fighters to Syria, but roughly 30% of those that debated veil bans did, and over 80% of countries that enforced a veil ban did. Data are taken from Table 3.4.

However, even if veil bans are not endogenous to violence, it is not clear from the data that the effect of the veil ban variable owes entirely to veil ban legislation itself. Indeed, the size of the effect should actually cast suspicion on this: that in at least one model *Veil Ban* has a higher inclusion proportion than *Muslim Population* suggests the variable is capturing much more than just the effect of veil bans. In particular, it could be picking up on latent tensions between domestic Muslim and non-Muslim communities that do not reach the level of violence, but nonetheless are significant enough that national politicians stand to gain by endorsing such legislation. Likewise, in countries that are majority Muslim, it could be picking up on latent tensions between secular or "moderate" elites and domestic Muslim populations that have begun to exhibit non-violent Salafist practices.

Despite that, however, there is reason to believe that the debates over veil bans did in fact have an impact on foreign fighter recruitment. In that regard, two questions are pertinent: is there a plausible direct mechanism for why veil bans might influence foreign fighter recruitment? Second, is there qualitative evidence consistent with that mechanism?

3.5.2 Mechanism: "Eliminating the Grayzone"

In the seventh issue of *Dabiq*, its English-language magazine, the Islamic State published an article entitled "The Extinction of the Grayzone." The article urged its followers to carry out attacks in the West, on the grounds that Western governments

would respond by repressing their domestic Muslim populations, such that "Muslims in the West will quickly find themselves between one of two choices, they either apostatize and adopt the *kufri* religion propagated by Bush, Obama, Blair ... or they perform hijrah to the Islamic State and thereby escape persecution from the crusader governments and citizens."[18]

The *Dabiq* article thus revealed plainly and clearly the Islamic State's recruitment strategy: force Muslims abroad to feel as though they must choose between being authentically Muslim and also a citizen of a secular state. The more the Islamic State can eliminate what it calls the "grayzone" – the space where it is possible for Muslims to have authentic nationalist and religious identities – then the more it believes it can successfully recruit Muslims to its cause.[19]

Significantly, veil ban legislation is predicated upon prescribing what is and is not an acceptable public Muslim identity. As such, one purpose of the legislation is to firmly demarcate secular national identities from a particular form of authentic Muslim identity. Because these laws require women to be arrested for wearing religious dress in public spaces, they effectively rely on the coercive power of the state to "eliminate the grayzone" for a particular class of Muslim women.

Veil ban legislation can be said to impact recruitment as follows. If we assume

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[18]Middle East Media Research Institute, "Dabiq VII Feature Article: The World Includes Only Two Camps – That Of ISIS And That Of Its Enemies," February 18, 2015. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.memrijttm.org/dabiq-vii-feature-article-there-is-no-longer-any-gray-zone-the-world-includes-only-two-camps-that-of-isis-and-that-of-its-enemies.html.

[19]For more on this point, see Murtaza Hussain, "Islamic State's Goal: 'Eliminating the Greyzone' of Coexistence between Muslims and the West', *Intercept* November 17, 2015. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from https://theintercept.com/2015/11/17/islamic-states-goal-eliminating-the-grayzone-of-coexistence-between-muslims-and-the-west/.

that recruiters will be more successful the stronger a potential recruit's prior belief is that national and Muslim identities are incompatible, then veil bans should influence recruitment in two ways. First, the public discourse around veil bans – the discourse used by national politicians to justify them – will often use the same binary logic as the recruiter. For example, Daniel Bacquelaine, the Belgium MP who introduced Belgium's legislation to ban the full veil in 2010, claimed that "wearing the burqa in public is not compatible with an open, liberal, tolerant society."[20] Likewise, French President Jacques Chirac defended a 2003 headscarf bill by claiming that France felt "in a certain way under attack as a result of the display of ostentatious religious signs, which are totally contrary to its secular tradition."[21] Nearly a decade later, after widespread rioting erupted in France over implementation of the 2011 law, the French Interior Minister, Manuel Valls, defended the full veil ban by insisting that it was "a law against practices that have nothing to do with our traditions and our values."[22] Meanwhile, in Britain, Philip Hollobone, an MP who introduced veil ban legislation into the House of Commons in 2010, defended his bill in equally stark terms, claiming that full veils were "offensive" and "against the British way of life" before concluding, "this is Britain; we are not a Muslim country."[23] What each of these statements share in common is that they were uttered by national political

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[20]Ian Traynor, "Belgium moves towards public ban on burka and niqab," *Guardian*, March 31, 2010. Retrieved March 23, 2016 from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/31/belgium-public-ban-burqa-niqab.

[21]*BBC*, "France awaits headscarves report," December 11, 2003. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3307995.stm.

[22]Agence France-Presse, "France condemns 'unacceptable' rioting triggered by veil ban," *The National*, July 24, 2013. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/europe/france-condemns-unacceptable-rioting-triggered-by-veil-ban.

[23]*Telegraph*, "France condemns 'unacceptable' rioting triggered by veil ban," *The National*, March 12, 2013. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/7425027/MP-calls-for-burkas-to-be-banned-in-Britain.html.

figures, and conveyed to a national audience that a particular national identity was incompatible with, or "contrary to," a particular form of religious dress. Indeed, each of these quotes warned that that incompatibility was so stark Islamic headdress ought to be banned even when worn in activities that did not threaten public order. The rhetoric and legislation thus served to reinforce to Muslims themselves that they had to choose between their religious and national identities (J. W. Scott, 2009; Brems, 2014).

Second, in addition to the rhetoric used to justify the bans, how far the bills make it through the legislative process sends a signal about how widely held that rhetoric is. it is one thing for a potential recruit to hear a minor national politician insist that Muslim and national identities are incompatible. it is another for a bill to have enough support to be introduced into Parliament, and still another for the bill to be passed. The further veil ban bills proceed, the more they signal that society at large views national and Muslim identities as incompatible. For a potential recruit contemplating whether national and religious identities are compatible themselves, the popular support for such a bill may strengthen her prior belief that they are not. When a recruiter approaches her, she may then be more susceptible to the recruiter's pitch, centered as it is on having to choose between identities.

If this mechanism is true there should also be qualitative evidence of it. Below I walk through two cases that demonstrate such evidence.

3.5.3 Case Study: Belgium

One of the countries farthest above a population-adjusted base rate of foreign fighters is Belgium. To date two common theories have been offered to explain its high recruitment rate. First, many experts have noted that a high proportion of Belgium's foreign fighters come from its Moroccan Muslim population, rather than its Turkish one, and cited co-ethnic networks as the probably cause. However, Italy has roughly the same number of Moroccans as Belgium (around 500,000), yet far fewer recruits. If Moroccan co-ethnic networks explained Belgium's foreign fighter outflow, then there should have been far more foreign fighters from Italy.

By contrast, a second explanation concerns facilitation networks, principally the mobilizational ability of a group called Sharia4Belgium. This is the favored explanation of Belgium's own intelligence service; its head, Jaak Ries, has said that the high number of Belgians in Syria "can be explained by the campaign of Sharia for Belgium to recruit fighters," and that "We think that this organisation was able to convince many people to make the journey and to join IS." In his assessment, Raes was reiterating what many other outside experts have said as well: that the high number of foreign fighters owed to the specific facilitation network of Sharia4Belgium. Indeed, the *Washington Post* asserted that "Belgium's pipeline to Syria was built by Sharia4Belgium,"[24] while Peter van Ostaeyen, an expert on Belgian jihadists, told the *New York Times* that the group "played an important

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[24]Michael Birnbaum, "Belgian Muslims face renewed anger, alienation after attacks in Paris," *Washington Post*, January 14, 2015. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/after-paris-attacks-belgian-muslims-face-renewed-fight/2015/01/14/823d8f40-9b62-11e4-96cc-e858eba91ced_story.html.

role in turning Belgium into Europe's biggest source of jihadist fighters."[25] Those associated with the group served in several different insurgents organizations within Syria, including Jabhat al-Nusra, but most fought for the Islamic State – including both the captors of American hostage James Foley, as well as Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the Belgian who traveled to Syria before returning to Europe to plot the Paris attacks.[26]

However, if Sharia4Belgium was the leading recruitment network within Belgium, what explains its success? As Holman (2016) recently showed, we can think of facilitation networks as an emergent phenomenon. As such these networks ought to have an equal likelihood of emerging given the same outside factors. Yet Sharia4Belgium proved far more successful than its peer groups, such as Sharia4UK.

According to the founder of Sharia4Belgium, Fouad Belkacem, the group's success owes in part to regulations around Islamic headdress. In 2009, the city of Antwerp passed a ban on hijab in public facilities. One year later, in March of 2010, Belkacem founded Sharia4Belgium in his hometown of Antwerp. The group quickly experienced dramatic growth, even prior to the passage of Belgium's nationwide ban on the veil in 2011. When Belkacem later accounted for the group's growth, Belkacem called the Antwerp ban a "bomb" that fueled his group's rise.[27] Like-

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[25]Andrew Higgins, "Head of Belgian Group Said to Recruit Fighters for Syria Gets 12-Year Term," *New York Times*, February 2, 2015. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/world/europe/fouad-belkacem-sharia4belgium-verdict-trial-belgium.html.

[26]David A. Graham, "What's the Matter With Belgium?," *Atlantic*, November 17, 2015. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/belgium-radical-islam-jihad-molenbeek-isis/416235/.

[27]Matthew Hilburn, "Belgium Proves Vital Jihadist Recruiting Hub," *Voice of America*, October 4, 2014. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.voanews.com/a/belgium-proves-fertile-recruiting-ground-for-jihadists-sharia4belgium/2472015.html. Joshua Keating, "Why There are So Many Jihadists in Belgium," *Slate*, January 15, 2015. Retrieved August

wise, after Belgium passed its full nationwide ban in 2011, a woman with links to

Sharia4Belgium, Stephanie Dtepo, headed-butted a police officer who tried to arrest

her for wearing the niqab. In response, Belkacem released a video drawing attention

to the case, and calling for Muslims to launch attacks within Belgium in response to

the veil ban.[28] That Belkacem would focus on the veil ban in his recruiting pitch, or

that he would cite the 2009 ban as being instrumental in the group's formation, is

not surprising: the rhetoric around the national ban, such as its author's claim that

the veil was "incompatible" with liberal values, echoes perfectly Belkacem's own

rhetoric. During a debate with another prominent Belgian politician, for instance,

Belkacem said, "you are either a Muslim or a democrat, you cannot be both."[29]

Former members of Sharia4Belgium have also identified Belgium's veil ban as

a reason for their recruitment. Indeed, for Intisar Umm Mansur, the pen name of a

Belgian woman in Sharia4Belgium, "it was Belgium's headscarf ban which started

her radicalization process." Or as Mansur has said publicly: "I don't understand

that people see the headscarf as a form of oppression. That ban caused more harm

than good. Without it ... I wouldn't have kept myself away from the world, and

maybe I wouldn't have been radicalized." After being radicalized, Mansur went on

to pledge allegiance to the of the Islamic State, Umar al-Baghdadi, and made plans

to enter Syria from Turkey before her husband discovered the plan and stopped

26, 2016 from http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2015/01/15/why_there_are_so_many_jihadists_in_belgium.html.

[28]*Reuters*, "Belgium arrests Islamist for hate video after riot over face veil arrest," June 7, 2012. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2012/06/07/belgium-arrests-islamist-for-hate-video-after-riot-over-face-veil-arrest/.

[29]Soeren Kern, "Belgium vs. Islamic Jihadists," *Gatestone Institute*, 2013. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3679/belgium-vs-islamic-jihadists.

her.[30]

How and why Sharia4Belgium was able to facilitate the movement of its members into Syria is a tactical issue. But how it was able to attract recruits at all was tied, at least in part, to the political context in which it operated – namely, a context in which the state had recently prohibited specific forms of Muslim identity.

3.5.4 Case Study: Quebec

The foreign fighter data used in this paper occurs at a national level and is temporally aggregate. As a result, it is hard to isolate the effect of veil bans because there is no way to compare pre- and post-treatment data. Further, if the theory is true, then it should hold to some extent at the sub-national level as well.

The case of Quebec offers a unique lens on the issue. A fellow at George Washington's Center for the Study of Extremism, Amar Amarasingam, compiled data on foreign fighters at the provincial level. His data record 2 foreign fighters from Quebec prior to Sept 2013, and 14 thereafter. The date is significant because in September of 2013, the Parti Quebecois introduced into the Quebec parliament a bill called the "Charter of Values". Modeled after similar bills in France, the Charter sought to ban wearing the veil in government offices and spaces. The bill was eventually defeated, but only after a rancorous public debate within the

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[30] *New York Times*, "Woman claims hundreds of Muslim women in Antwerp 'pledged allegiance to ISIS'," June 09, 2016. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2016/06/09/woman-claims-hundreds-of-muslim-women-in-antwerp-pledged-allegiance-to-isis/.

Quebecois media and press.[31] Given the bill's title – the bill's opening was "Charte affirmant les valeurs de laïcité et de neutralité religieuse" – not surprisingly rhetoric around the bill was similar to debates elsewhere, and had a similar effect. As the friend of one Quebecois who traveled to Syria said, "At first, I'd say it was mostly about the Charter... At that point, a lot of people were wondering: 'Why are we being humiliated?' 'Why are we being put down?' 'Why is it always Muslims who are targeted?" (Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence, 2016). Likewise, according to Amarasingam, who spoke to the friends and families of several other foreign fighters, "The Charter of Values was indeed a big catalyst according to many of the friends of these guys/girls I've spoken with - they had experienced a general sense of discrimination and racism in the Quebec context, but the Charter was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back."[32]

The data for the Quebec are too small to draw any strong conclusions on their own, and likewise the quotes may involve any number of biases. Nonetheless, the data and quotes are consistent with the mechanism described above: that for the individuals who left Quebec for Syria, the Charter seems to have reset their prior beliefs about the compatibility of Quebecois and Muslim identities.

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[31]Jake Flanagin, "The Dangerous Logic of Quebec's 'Charter of Values'," *Atlantic*, January 23, 2014. Retrieved August 26, 2016 from http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/01/the-dangerous-logic-of-quebecs-charter-of-values/283272/.

[32]Interview with Amarasingam in April 19, 2016.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter offers preliminary analysis of Syrian foreign fighter recruitment. The empirical results indicate that the likelihood of a Syrian foreign fighter cell from a given country increases with the size of that country's Muslim population, and also with greater proximity to Syria. In addition, the results also indicate that foreign fighter contingents are much more likely to come from countries that debated, introduced, or passed veil ban legislation in the pre-war period.

The veil ban result in particular has important academic and policy implications. Where the former is concerned, the chapter highlights the need for further data collection on the global presence and activity of Salafist movements on the one hand, and regime responses to perceived Salafist activity on the other. Without such data it will not be possible to isolate the full effect of veil bans apart from latent tensions between the regime and Salafist population.

Where policy implications are concerned, veil ban legislation has become an increasingly pressing issue, particularly in Europe. The mass inflow of Syrian refugees into the European Union, coupled with the recent terror attacks in Paris and Brussels, have led many countries to re-think their approach to Muslim integration. As a result, many countries that previously never discussed veil ban legislation are now beginning to do so; Latvia, for instance, passed a nationwide ban on veil legislation in the spring of 2016. Likewise, countries that failed to pass bans on the grounds that the ruling coalition did not believe the European Commission of Human Rights would uphold them, such as Germany, are now reconsidering them after the ECHR

upheld France's full ban last year.

If the goal of such legislation is to reduce radicalization, then policymakers may want to reconsider. Although the results of this chapter are preliminary rather than definitive, they are more consistent with theoretical arguments that veil ban rhetoric and legislation increases, rather than decreases, the likelihood of mass Salafi-jihadist recruitment.

Table 3.5: Veil Ban Status and Foreign Fighters by Country

Veil Ban Status	Country	Foreign Fighters
Ban Enforced	Tunisia	6500.00
Ban Enforced	Turkey	2100.00
Ban Enforced	France	1700.00
Ban Enforced	Belgium	470.00
Ban Enforced	Tajikistan	386.00
Ban Enforced	Singapore	2.00
Ban Enforced	Syria	0.00
Ban Proposed	Egypt	800.00
Ban Proposed	Germany	760.00
Ban Proposed	United Kingdom	760.00
Ban Proposed	Kyrgyzstan	500.00
Ban Proposed	Uzbekistan	500.00
Ban Proposed	Turkmenistan	360.00
Ban Proposed	Bosnia and Herzegovina	274.00
Ban Proposed	Kosovo	266.00
Ban Proposed	Netherlands	215.00
Ban Proposed	Spain	192.00
Ban Proposed	Azerbaijan	160.00
Ban Proposed	Albania	145.00
Ban Proposed	Maldives	110.00
Ban Proposed	Italy	87.00
Ban Proposed	Switzerland	57.00
Ban Proposed	Israel	45.00
Ban Proposed	Bulgaria	0.00
Ban Proposed	Mozambique	0.00
Ban Proposed	Thailand	0.00
Ban Debated	China	300.00
Ban Debated	Kazakhstan	300.00
Ban Debated	Sweden	300.00
Ban Debated	Austria	266.00
Ban Debated	Algeria	210.00
Ban Debated	Australia	188.00
Ban Debated	Canada	130.00
Ban Debated	Denmark	125.00
Ban Debated	Kuwait	70.00
Ban Debated	Norway	70.00
Ban Debated	Somalia	70.00
Ban Debated	Ireland	30.00
Ban Debated	New Zealand	8.00
Ban Debated	Ethiopia	0.00
Local Ban	Russia	2400.00
Local Ban	Morocco	1350.00
Local Ban	United States of America	200.00
Local Ban	Trinidad and Tobago	50.00

Veil Ban Status	Country	Foreign Fighters
Local Ban	Ukraine	50.00
Local Ban	India	36.00
Local Ban	Moldova	1.00
Local Ban	Chile	0.00
Local Ban	Croatia	0.00
Local Ban	Kenya	0.00
Local Ban	Nigeria	0.00
Local Ban	Rwanda	0.00
Local Ban	Tanzania	0.00
No Ban	Saudi Arabia	2500.00
No Ban	Jordan	2250.00
No Ban	Lebanon	900.00
No Ban	Indonesia	600.00
No Ban	Libya	600.00
No Ban	Pakistan	200.00
No Ban	Macedonia	123.00
No Ban	Yemen	110.00
No Ban	Malaysia	100.00
No Ban	Philippines	100.00
No Ban	Finland	85.00
No Ban	Sudan	85.00
No Ban	Serbia	60.00
No Ban	Afghanistan	50.00
No Ban	Georgia	50.00
No Ban	Montenegro	30.00
No Ban	Argentina	23.00
No Ban	United Arab Emirates	15.00
No Ban	Bahrain	12.00
No Ban	Portugal	12.00
No Ban	Qatar	10.00
No Ban	Japan	9.00
No Ban	Brazil	3.00
No Ban	Madagascar	3.00
No Ban	Cambodia	1.00
No Ban	Romania	1.00
No Ban	South Africa	1.00
No Ban	Andorra	0.00
No Ban	Angola	0.00
No Ban	Antigua and Barbuda	0.00
No Ban	Armenia	0.00
No Ban	Bahamas	0.00
No Ban	Bangladesh	0.00
No Ban	Barbados	0.00
No Ban	Belarus	0.00
No Ban	Belize	0.00

Veil Ban Status	Country	Foreign Fighters
No Ban	Benin	0.00
No Ban	Bhutan	0.00
No Ban	Bolivia	0.00
No Ban	Botswana	0.00
No Ban	Brunei	0.00
No Ban	Burkina Faso	0.00
No Ban	Burundi	0.00
No Ban	Cameroon	0.00
No Ban	Cape Verde	0.00
No Ban	Central African Republic	0.00
No Ban	Chad	0.00
No Ban	Colombia	0.00
No Ban	Comoros	0.00
No Ban	Congo (Republic of)	0.00
No Ban	Costa Rica	0.00
No Ban	Cuba	0.00
No Ban	Cyprus	0.00
No Ban	Czech Republic	0.00
No Ban	Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.00
No Ban	Djibouti	0.00
No Ban	Dominica	0.00
No Ban	Dominican Republic	0.00
No Ban	East Timor	0.00
No Ban	Ecuador	0.00
No Ban	El Salvador	0.00
No Ban	Equatorial Guinea	0.00
No Ban	Eritrea	0.00
No Ban	Estonia	0.00
No Ban	Federated States of Micronesia	0.00
No Ban	Fiji	0.00
No Ban	Gabon	0.00
No Ban	Gambia	0.00
No Ban	Ghana	0.00
No Ban	Greece	0.00
No Ban	Grenada	0.00
No Ban	Guatemala	0.00
No Ban	Guinea	0.00
No Ban	Guinea-Bissau	0.00
No Ban	Guyana	0.00
No Ban	Haiti	0.00
No Ban	Honduras	0.00
No Ban	Hungary	0.00
No Ban	Iceland	0.00
No Ban	Iran	0.00
No Ban	Iraq	0.00

Veil Ban Status	Country	Foreign Fighters
No Ban	Ivory Coast	0.00
No Ban	Jamaica	0.00
No Ban	Kiribati	0.00
No Ban	Laos	0.00
No Ban	Latvia	0.00
No Ban	Lesotho	0.00
No Ban	Liberia	0.00
No Ban	Liechtenstein	0.00
No Ban	Lithuania	0.00
No Ban	Luxembourg	0.00
No Ban	Malawi	0.00
No Ban	Mali	0.00
No Ban	Malta	0.00
No Ban	Marshall Islands	0.00
No Ban	Mauritania	0.00
No Ban	Mauritius	0.00
No Ban	Mexico	0.00
No Ban	Monaco	0.00
No Ban	Mongolia	0.00
No Ban	Myanmar	0.00
No Ban	Namibia	0.00
No Ban	Nauru	0.00
No Ban	Nepal	0.00
No Ban	Nicaragua	0.00
No Ban	Niger	0.00
No Ban	North Korea	0.00
No Ban	Oman	0.00
No Ban	Palau	0.00
No Ban	Panama	0.00
No Ban	Papua New Guinea	0.00
No Ban	Paraguay	0.00
No Ban	Peru	0.00
No Ban	Poland	0.00
No Ban	Samoa	0.00
No Ban	San Marino	0.00
No Ban	Sao Tome and Principe	0.00
No Ban	Senegal	0.00
No Ban	Seychelles	0.00
No Ban	Sierra Leone	0.00
No Ban	Slovakia	0.00
No Ban	Slovenia	0.00
No Ban	Solomon Islands	0.00
No Ban	South Korea	0.00
No Ban	Sri Lanka	0.00
No Ban	St. Kitts and Nevis	0.00

Veil Ban Status	Country	Foreign Fighters
No Ban	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0.00
No Ban	St. Lucia	0.00
No Ban	Suriname	0.00
No Ban	Swaziland	0.00
No Ban	Taiwan	0.00
No Ban	Togo	0.00
No Ban	Tonga	0.00
No Ban	Tuvalu	0.00
No Ban	Uganda	0.00
No Ban	Uruguay	0.00
No Ban	Vanuatu	0.00
No Ban	Venezuela	0.00
No Ban	Zambia	0.00
No Ban	Zimbabwe	0.00

Table 3.6: Logit Model for 10+ Foreign Fighters

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	-0.9096	0.2114	-4.30	0.0000
log.muslim.pop	0.0488	0.0084	5.80	0.0000
syr.dist	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.97	0.3352
cia.literacy	0.0073	0.0016	4.53	0.0000
wb.gdp.pc	0.0000	0.0000	1.25	0.2118
veil.full	0.1118	0.0261	4.28	0.0000

Table 3.7: Logit Model for 100+ Foreign Fighters

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	-0.7809	0.1933	-4.04	0.0001
log.muslim.pop	0.0380	0.0077	4.94	0.0000
syr.dist	0.0000	0.0000	0.56	0.5772
cia.literacy	0.0054	0.0015	3.65	0.0003
wb.gdp.pc	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.81	0.4195
veil.full	0.1359	0.0239	5.69	0.0000

Table 3.8: Logit Model for 250+ Foreign Fighters

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	-0.3625	0.1732	-2.09	0.0378
log.muslim.pop	0.0176	0.0069	2.55	0.0116
syr.dist	-0.0000	0.0000	-1.16	0.2487
cia.literacy	0.0034	0.0013	2.59	0.0105
wb.gdp.pc	-0.0000	0.0000	-1.82	0.0707
veil.full	0.1083	0.0214	5.07	0.0000

Chapter 4: Sacred Choice: Why Some Religious Organizations Resort to Violence, While Others Engage in Peaceful Protest

Why do some religious organizations resort to violence, while others engage in peaceful protest? What accounts for variation in the political behaviors of religious organizations?

Few questions are as important for understanding modern global politics. Religious actors have played an integral role in many of the most salient and far-reaching events of the past several decades. In the late 1970s, religious organizations played a crucial role in both the demonstrations and violence that led to regime change in Iran (Kurzman, 2004). In the 1980s, the Catholic Church featured prominently in the protest movements that led to new regimes in Poland and the Philippines (Appleby, 2000). More recently, the Arab Spring has demonstrated both the political efficacy of religious organizations as well as the extraordinary diversity of behaviors by which they engage in political contestation.

Significantly, the varied behaviors of religious organizations cannot be explained solely in terms of denomination sect. For instance, popular conceptions of Islam and Buddhism sometimes hold that the former is inherently violent (Gorka, 2016), while the latter is innately irenic (Kraft, 1992). Yet such conceptions are

plainly contradicted both by the many Islamic groups that protest non-violently (Gleditsch & Rudolfsen, 2016), and the multiple Buddhist organizations that engage in violence and armed conflict (Tambiah, 1992; Jerryson, 2011). If religion informs strategic choice, it clearly does not do so via denominational identities or beliefs alone. At the same time, religious political behaviors also cannot be explained purely in terms of country-level political and economic factors either. As the history of Syria in 2011 and 2012 alone illustrates, religious organizations operating within the same country, and facing the same political and social contexts, can exhibit markedly different political behaviors. Finally, the puzzle also cannot be explained purely in terms of religious demographics: far from representing aggrieved minorities, many of the most well-known examples of both violent and non-violent religious organizations identified with large religious majorities.

What is needed is a model of religion and politics that can account for the political behavior of religious organizations even when sectarian identities, political contexts, and demographic share are held constant. For example, over the past decade in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has mobilized non-violently for democratic reforms (Hamid, 2014), even as Beit al-Maqdis, which also identifies as Muslim, has engaged in sustained violence (Al-Anani, 2014). Likewise, in post-colonial India, the Shanti Sena and RSS, Hindu organizations alike, engaged in civil disobedience and violence, respectively (Weber, 1996; Rambachan, 2003). Similarly, in the post-war United States, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) mobilized peacefully (Morris, 1984), whereas the Christian Identity movement resorted to violence (Barkun, 1997). What explains the difference

in behavior across those organizations? The answer cannot be the religious identity of each organization, or the political regimes they faced. Nor can it owe to the demographic strength of a particular group. The variation in religious organizational behavior thus represents a compelling empirical puzzle.

The puzzle is all the more pressing in light of the burgeoning literature on strategic choice (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013). Two general points of consensus in that literature are that non-violence is less costly than violence, and that non-violence generally requires mass support to work (DeNardo, 1985). In theory, organizations whose co-religionists comprise most of the population should thus choose non-violence, since it is the less costly option and the organization should be able to mobilize broad support on the basis of religious solidarity. Yet empirically, as the examples above demonstrate, there are many cases where majority religious organizations nonetheless resort to violence rather than civil resistance. Why do they do so? Why would some religious organizations resort to violence even when they could, in theory, generate mass support by appealing to religious solidarity?

This chapter seeks to resolve that question. It explains the variation in the political behaviors of majority religious organizations primarily in terms of political theology. In particular, I argue that an organization's political theology conditions how it will view the *ex post* distribution of power following a successful non-violent movement. I argue that organizations with inclusionary or hybrid political theologies will view the *ex post* distribution favorably, because they will be (albeit for different reasons) more concerned with the process by which political power is distributed rather than the specific outcome of that distribution. By contrast, purely

exclusionary organizations will be more concerned with *who* gets political power rather than *how* that power is distributed, and will view the *ex post* distribution unfavorably on the grounds that they will be unlikely to be able to distribute political power solely to themselves. Accordingly, inclusionary and hybrid organizations should be more likely to engage in protest, whereas exclusionary groups should be more likely to resort to violence.

A significant appeal of my model has to do with its generalizability. Since all major faith traditions have developed both inclusionary and exclusionary theologies, the model is agnostic to denominational or sectarian identity. Accordingly, to illustrate the model's validity I use a series of paired case studies that vary across denominations. In particular, I discuss Christian organizations in the post-war United States and Muslim organizations in both Tunisia and Mali. Taken together, the case studies show a strong association between an organization's stated political theology, its expectations regarding the distribution of political power, and its subsequent political behavior.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I motivate the model in terms of the current literature on religion and conflict on the one hand, and strategic choice on the other. Second, I introduce a basic model of strategic choice. Third, I introduce political theology and show how it alters the expected payoffs from the conventional model. Fourth, I provide empirical support in the form of four paired cases studies in the United States, Tunisia, and Mali. Fifth, I conclude.

4.1 Motivations

As religious actors have become increasingly important to global politics, political scientists have belatedly begun to turn their attention to them (Philpott, 2009). However, political science has yet to systematically examine how religious organizations choose between competing political behaviors.

Instead, most of the work on religion has focused on the role of religious actors in either civil war (Fox, 2004a; Svensson, 2007; Hassner, 2009; Basedau et al., 2016) or terrorism (Juergensmeyer, 1997; Pape, 2005; Piazza, 2008, 2009; Henne, 2012). In that regard, the extant scholarship on religious behavior almost invariably selects on violence, and thus cannot address the prior question of why religious organizations commit to violent rather than non-violent contestation. Further, even among the literature that selects on violence, there are few causal explanations for religious behavior that uniquely pertain to religion. Despite several notable exceptions (e.g., Philpott, 2007; McCauley, 2014), most works rely on mechanisms and explanations that either apply only to specific religions (e.g., so called "essentialist" arguments), or that apply equally well to ethnic organizations on the one hand or all ideological organizations on the other. What is missing in the literature is an explanation of religious behavior that can both account for the broad diversity of observed behaviors and that rests in part on the uniquely religious character of religious actors.

By contrast, there is a vibrant and growing literature on strategic choice generally. The question of why and how political actors choose between violent and

non-violent forms of contention has been a subject of debate since at least Tilly (1978), but gained renewed attention following the path-breaking work of Stephan and Chenoweth (2008; 2011), which systematically compared the efficacy of violent and non-violent movements. However, while the recent attention to strategic choice has generated causal theories concerning a wide array of possible factors, from political grievances (White, Vidovic, González, Gleditsch, & Cunningham, 2015) and group cohesion (Pearlman, 2011) to gender (Asal et al., 2013) and self-determination (K. G. Cunningham, 2013), to date there has been no published work that focused on religion specifically.

At present, the political science literature on religious behavior has yet to look at strategic choice, while the strategic choice literature has yet to look at religion. By proposing a novel theory of religion and strategic choice, this study thus advances the emerging strategic choice literature, even as it also extends the political science of religion in an important new direction.

4.2 Theory

4.2.1 Basic Model

Before discussing the role of religion in strategic choice I first need to outline the basic model for how political actors select between competing political behaviors. Loosely adapted from Schock (2005), the basic model consists of a single non-state actor confronting a state regime. The actor seeks a maximalist claim of either regime overthrow or constitutional reform, while the state regime seeks to preserve

the status quo. In order to pursue its claim, the actor must select between one of four options: quiescence, conventional politics, non-violent contestation, and violent contestation.[1] Each behavior has a payoff modeled in terms of the likelihood of regime change or constitutional reform (p) minus repression and mobilization costs (c). The model assumes the actor will choose the behavior for which $p-c$ is greatest.

Each behavior is defined as follows. First, *quiescence* occurs when an organization abstains from both conventional and unconventional political behavior. Quiescent organizations refrain from any form of political engagement; while they may speak or even act publicly, they make no overt political claims and do not engage in any type of political activity. Due to their restraint, quiescent organizations incur no costs for their behavior, but also have no probability of success. Put succinctly, there is no pathway leading from quiescence to constitutional change.

Second, *conventional politics* consists of political behavior that is constitutionally protected or occurs within sanctioned policy-making processes. The specific bounds of that behavior depend on the type of regime in power. In a full democracy, conventional politics might consist of political speech, congressional lobbying, individual voting, etc. In a full autocracy, conventional politics will generally be more restrained, confined to whatever activities the regime in power deems licit. Further, just as the nature of conventional politics will vary by regime type, so too

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[1]Schock also includes a fifth option, "everyday forms of resistance," which he borrows from James Scott (1985, 1990). However, I would argue that if such forms of resistance exist as distinct from non-violent contention at all, they do so only at the individual level; at the organization or organizational level, such resistance would constitute a form of non-violent contention. Also, note that where I refer to conventional politics, violent contestation and non-violent contestation, Schock refers to institutional political action, violent political action, and non-violent political action, respectively.
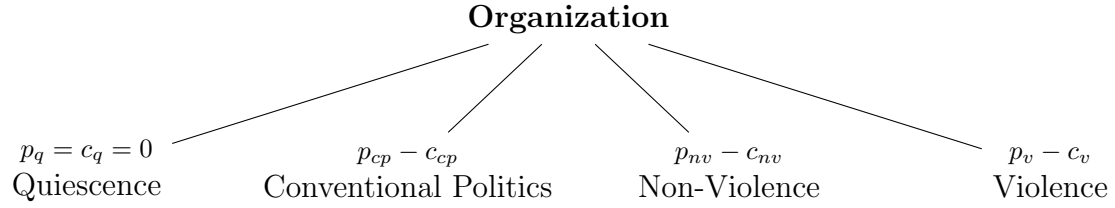
Figure 4.1: Baseline model of strategic choice. Note that the payoff for quiescence is zero, and that c_{cp} converges toward zero in democracies.

will the pathways by which conventional politics enables constitutional change. For example, in consolidated democracies, organizations pursuing such change generally need to generate sufficient popular support that they can then amend the constitution directly via plebiscite or indirectly by pressuring elected officials. By contrast, in consolidated autocracies, no such electoral mechanism is likely to exist. Instead, the main pathway by which constitutional reform is likely to occur (if at all) is regime lobbying, wherein an organization uses what institutional processes exist to persuade a sufficient subset of regime members to support constitutional reform.

Third, *non-violent contestation* refers to politicized activity that occurs outside of institutionalized policy-making processes and imposes costs upon the state, but does not result in mass destruction of private property or the mass use of lethal force (Schock, 2005; McAdam & Tarrow, 2000). Although a remarkably wide range of behaviors can be classified as non-violent, organizations seeking constitutional reform will generally engage in non-violent behaviors that publicly demonstrate the extent of movement support, such as mass protests, marches, boycotts, or strikes. Both mass support and its public demonstration are crucial (Sharp, 1973; DeNardo,

1985; Ackerman & Kruegler, 1994; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). The more support an organization attracts and the more it publicly demonstrates that support, the more it will credibly signal to the regime that neither "waiting out" the non-violent movement nor repressing it are viable responses. In that case, the regime's only remaining options would be to abdicate or accommodate the organization. If the regime opts to abdicate, the regime would leave power altogether, after which the non-violent movement's leadership could assume power and implement its preferred constitutional order directly. Conversely, if the regime opts for accommodation, it would implement the movement's preferred constitutional order without itself surrendering power.[2]

Fourth, *violent contestation* refers to politicized activity that imposes costs on the state via the mass destruction of property or mass use of lethal force. Violent behavior may impose costs upon the state in two ways. First, it may do so directly, by engaging in conventional conflict with the state military (Blattman & Miguel, 2010; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Walter, 1997) or by selectively targeting state property and personnel (Kalyvas, 2006). Second, it may do so indirectly, by targeting private property or employing lethal violence against civilians. In that case the violence would impose domestic audience costs on the state (Pape, 2005; Conrad, Conrad, & Young, 2014). In either case note that the organization need not generate mass support: the technologies of violence allow even small organizations to impose non-trivial costs on the state. Violent organizations ultimately succeed when those costs

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[2]Note that this option will not always be available, since it requires the regime to be able to both change the constitutional order without delegitimizing itself and to credibly commit not to "roll back" the reforms in the future.

are great enough that the organization is able to either seize power for itself, or pressure the regime into adopting its preferred constitutional reforms.

Laid out in this way, the basic model predicts that conventional politics will be the default political behavior for actors with maximalist claims. Since conventional politics offers greater gains than quiescence and fewer costs than violent or non-violent contestation, political actors should be most likely to operate within conventional institutions and processes. And indeed, this prediction is largely borne out by the empirical record: for instance, K. G. Cunningham (2013) shows that organizations making self-determination claims engaged in conventional politics 82% of the time. In four out of five organization-years, that is, self-determination organizations did not engage in violent or non-violent activity at all.[3]

However, contentious behaviors still frequently occur. How can the model explain them? One way is to note that conventional politics may not allow for maximalist claims. In autocratic states, for instance, regimes have strong reason to restrict the political space in which legitimate regime change can be pursued. Likewise, even in democracies, it may not be possible to pursue constitutional reforms if the reforms threaten elite actors with a vested interest in the status quo. Significantly, if an actor believes there is no space to pursue regime change or constitutional reform via conventional politics, then it may view contentious behaviors as the only viable pathways to achieve its maximalist goal. Consider the Apartheid regime in South Africa. The African National Congress (ANC) and other anti-Apartheid groups

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[3]The Cunningham data contained 3,898 total organization years, and in 3,233 of them there was no violent or non-violent behavior. Similarly, the MAROB dataset found that organizations in the Middle East engaged in non-contentious politics in 57% of organization-years (Asal et al., 2013).

were effectively barred from pursuing constitutional reforms through conventional politics – and not surprisingly, the ANC and others began organizing contentious activity (Lodge, 1983).

Whether an actor engages in violent or non-violent contention, however, primarily has to do with repression costs (Davenport, 2007). If we assume that states will impose greater repression costs for violent than non-violent contention, the model predicts that actors will be more likely to engage in non-violent protest. Consider the peaceful anti-Communist movements in the late 1980s and early 1990s, or the "color revolutions" in eastern Europe in the 2000s. In each wave of protest, the repression costs were minimal, and mass protests emerged. By contrast, if we relax the assumption that repression costs will be lower for non-violent contention, the model predicts that violence is more likely to emerge. For instance, in order to discredit its opposition, the Assad regime incentivized violent contention by brutally suppressing the non-violent protests that erupted in 2011. Not surprisingly, faced with a violent crackdown, the Syrian opposition began to "substitute" violent contention for non-violent contention.[4]

However, the model must also be able to explain violent contention even in contexts where repression costs are low. For instance, Chenoweth and Schock (2015) found 58 cases between 1900 and 2006 in which violent actors operated alongside sustained non-violent campaigns. High repression costs for non-violence cannot be the reason for violence in those cases, since the state clearly was either unwilling or unable to impose them on each sustained non-violent campaign.

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[4]For more on substitution, see Moore (1998, 2000) and Lichbach (1987).

What accounts for violence even when repression costs are low? The basic model can explain violence in such cases in two ways. First, actors may not believe they can *mobilize* a successful mass movement. Ethnic and religious minorities, for example, are by definition unable to attract nationwide support on the basis of identity alone. As a result, minority organizations, such as the PKK in Turkey, may not view non-violence as a plausible strategy, on the grounds that they would not be able to mobilize enough supporters to impose sufficient costs on the regime. K. G. Cunningham (2013) is again instructive: self-determination organizations tend to represent ethnic minorities, which may explain why there are almost ten times as many violent organization-years (590) as non-violent ones (60) in her dataset.

Second, actors may not believe they can *control* a successful mass movement. For actors making sovereign claims, this is an important distinction. If the goal is to replace the current regime rather than just to remove the it, then controlling the *ex post* distribution of power is crucial. Consider the GIA in Algeria, which sought not just to overthrow the Zeroual regime, but to install itself in power (Laskier, 2008, p. 106). For the GIA to have viewed non-violence as a viable option, it would have to had to believe not only that it could mobilize a mass movement, but that it could sufficiently direct that movement to install itself in power once the Zeroual regime had been deposed. By contrast, for actors making purely constitutional claims, whether they can control a successful mass movement is less relevant. Consider the coalitions and organizations that mobilized the "Pro-Democracy Movement" in Argentina in the late 1970s: since they sought only to force the ruling military junta from office and impose democratic reforms, they did not need to direct the *ex post*

distribution of power to a particular party (Brysk, 1994). As a result, the leaders of Argentina's democratic movement only needed to believe they could mobilize mass support, not control it. Since controlling a movement is more difficult than mobilizing one, actors making sovereign claims ought to be less likely to view non-violence as a viable option, and more likely to view violence as their best recourse.

The basic model accounts for a broad variety of political behaviors with a minimum of assumptions. Below I discuss how religion informs that model.

4.2.2 Religion and the Basic Model: Political Theology and Maximalist Claims

I argue that religion shapes political behavior through claims-making. More specifically, I argue that the political theology of a given religious actor determines whether it will make sovereign or constitutional claims, and that those claims in turn determine its political behavior.

To develop my theory, I need to begin with two definitions. First, I define religious actors as religious organizations. Importantly, religious organizations are *religious* in the sense that they make explicit appeals to a particular faith, not that their members share the same religious identity. If shared identity were the only criteria, then by default all organizations in religiously homogeneous areas would effectively be religious ones. For example, during Mali's civil conflict in the early 1990s, almost all members of both the Azawad People's Movement (MPA) and the Islamic Arab Front of Azawad (FIAA) were Muslim. However, since only the

FIAA made a claim to be representing Islam, only the FIAA would be considered a religious organization.[5] Meanwhile, religious organizations are *organizations* in the sense that an actor's individual members are organized enough to deliberate and act as a collective body. The emphasis on deliberative action means that organizations are distinct both from spontaneous gatherings on the one hand, and religious families, denominations, or sects on the other. Thus the protesters that spontaneously gathered in Sidi Bouzid and elsewhere in the Tunisian countryside in January 2011 do not constitute an organization, whereas the Ennahda Movement, whose institutional structures pre-dated the December protests and whose leadership quickly moved to capitalize on it, clearly does. Likewise, the Copts in Egypt would not constitute an organization, but the Coptic Church would. In order to meet the criteria for strategic deliberation, religious organizations must be able to demonstrate some form of collective decision-making.[6]

Second, I define political theology as the subset of theology that articulates the proper nature and structure of political order. Political theology thus does not refer to any and all theology that pertains to a salient issue of public policy, such as school prayer. Rather, it refers to the set of religious beliefs and traditions concerned with the ideal political regime or constitutional order. Significantly, I argue that

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[5]Notably, this definition thus includes both official clerical organizations, such as the Catholic Church, as well as lay or temporal organizations, such as, for example, Fretilin in Indonesia.

[6]Note that this definition also does not distinguish between the extent and intensity of an organization's religiosity. Some religious organizations may emphasize piety and zealously enforce dogma among its members; others may only appeal to religion in a cynical ploy for recruits. However, whether an organization's religious appeals are sincere or strategic however is not relevant here. Not only is assessing the sincerity of belief notoriously difficult (even for the pious themselves), but even more, whether claims are sincere or strategic has little theoretical importance in the model below. As will be discussed, once an organization makes religious claims, the claims themselves are what will uniquely constrain or expand its strategic options.

there are three broad types of political theologies, defined in terms of how a given religious actor views those in its religious "in-group" (i.e., its co-religionists), and those in its religious "out-group" (i.e., those who identify with a separate faith).

I define each political theology as follows. *Inclusionary* political theologies are based on the belief that God or the divine assigns equal value to all human beings, and that therefore the ideal political order should grant equal rights and privileges to all individuals. Notably, every major faith has interpretive traditions in which the core theological imperative is not so much to impose divine sanction as it is to reflect divine love. The Abrahamic faiths all have a version of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "beloved community" (King Jr., 1990) or Mahmoud Taha's "brotherhood."[7] Likewise, the Hindu notion of *satya*, or "truth", which Mahatma Ghandi famously popularized, also has cognates in Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, among others (Kallungal, 2012). Not surprisingly, political theologies predicated on such universalist beliefs make no political distinction based on religious identities. They are thus inclusionary insofar as they seek to extend the same political rights and protections to all individuals.

By contrast, both *hybrid* and *exclusionary* political theologies are based on the belief that there exists an "in-group" whose members enjoy God's special favor, and an "out-group" whose members do not. Further, each holds that the ideal political order is one that subordinates the out-group to the in-group and that grants the in-group political rights and privileges commensurate with its unique theolog-

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[7]G. H. Jensen, "Killing of Sudan 'Heretic' A Loss for Modern Islam," *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1985, G2. Retrieved October 30, 2014 from http://www.factiva.com.

ical status. Just as all major faiths have traditions that lead to liberal theologies, so too do all major religions have traditions that stress above all the uniqueness of the faith, and the concomitant need for its adherents to enjoy sovereignty. In Islam the various traditions of Shari'a law are largely predicated on this belief, as are many Halakhic traditions in Judaism; likewise, the "Dominionist" movement within Christianity draws on Genesis 1:28 to argue that God created the world for Christians to enjoy dominion over it (Barron, 1992; Goldberg, 2007; McVicar, 2013), while Hindu nationalists cite the "divine descent" of Rama in the Ramayana – as well as the associated doctrine of *dharma raja* – to argue that Hindus ought to enjoy political supremacy (Flood, 1996; Hiltebeitel, 2003).[8] However, while both *hybrid* and *exclusionary* political theologies exclude out-group members, they differ in how they regard all members of the religious in-group. What I term "hybrid theologies" hold that political rights and responsibilities ought to be shared widely within the religious in-group, and in that regard are politically inclusive of in-group individuals even as they are politically exclusive of all out-groups individuals. By contrast, fully exclusionary theologies restrict political power even within the religious in-group. Exclusionary theologies hold that only a select few among the true believers – typically a priestly or prophetic class – can legitimately hold power, typically on the grounds that because only the elect can discern God's will, only they can implement it.

As Table 4.1 shows, I argue that each political theology leads to a specific

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[8]Similarly, early Buddhist communities in Southeast Asia explicitly co-opted the concept of *dharma raja* (Eckel, 2005, p. 159), or the "Righteous King" (W. L. King, 1995, p. 83). Core to Buddhist notions of *dhamma raja*, particularly as understood by modern Buddhist nationalists, is a political theology that insists political sovereignty must reside in a Buddhist ruler.

type of maximalist claim, and that in turn, each type of claim leads to a particular contentious behavior. I lay out the three causal pathways in Table 4.1 as follows.

First, religious organizations with exclusionary political theologies are more likely to make *sovereign* maximalist claims. Since the leadership of such organizations view themselves as the "elect", or as uniquely ordained to interpret and implement the divine will, they will seek not only to remove the current regime from power, but to install themselves in power instead. However, pursuing sovereign claims uniquely constrains the availability of non-violence as a viable pathway to power. To install themselves via non-violent contention, an exclusionary organization would have to either a) mobilize mass support for itself specifically, or b) mobilize mass support along sectarian lines, and then trust that it would be able to impose control over the *ex post* distribution of power if the movement succeeded. However, since exclusionary organizations seek to reserve special political rights and privileges for its leadership class, such organizations are keenly aware they are unlikely to receive mass support for themselves alone. Likewise, they would also know that they would be unlikely to exert control over a non-violent movement with only minority support. For instance, consider Jemaah Islamiyya (JI) in Indonesia (Barton, 2004). For JI to have seized power via non-violence, it would have had to mobilize broad popular support for itself specifically, or to participate in a broader mass movement that it could control. Even in Indonesia, where many Muslims shared JI's austere version of Islam, the JI knew it was unlikely to be able to mobilize such support. Accordingly, for groups like the JI, violence will often appear to be the most viable option for installing itself specifically in power.

Table 4.1: Political Theologies, Claims, and Behaviors

Political Theology	In-Group	Out-Group	Claim	Behavior
Exclusionary	Exclusive	Exclusive	Sovereign	Violent
Hybrid	Inclusive	Exclusive	Constitutional	Non-Violent
Inclusionary	Inclusive	Inclusive	Constitutional	Non-Violent

Second, religious organizations with hybrid political theologies will make *constitutional* claims. While they seek to bar those outside their faith from attaining political power, they nonetheless seek to reform political institutions so that co-religionists enjoy equal rights and privileges. In countries where their co-religionists comprise a majority, non-violent contention is thus a viable option. They should be able to mobilize mass support along sectarian lines, and since they are making constitutional rather than sovereign claims, they will not need to control the *ex post* distribution of power. To return to the Indonesian context, an example of a hybrid organization is the Muhammadiya (Webber, 2006; Mujani & Liddle, 2009). During the late 1990s, the Muhammadiya made constitutional claims, in the sense that it sought to remove the Suharto regime in order to extend political power to Sunni Muslims broadly, through electoral reforms. Significantly, the Muhammadiya viewed non-violent contention as a viable option because it knew it could generate popular support along sectarian lines, without concern for whether it would be able to mobilize mass support for itself specifically. Not surprisingly, groups like Muhammadiya tend to view non-violent contention as a more viable option than violent contention.

Finally, religious organizations with inclusionary political theologies will also make constitutional claims. As with, for example, Mahatma Ghandi's Indian Na-

tional Congress (Tomlinson, 1976), such organizations will not be threatening to out-group individuals and will know they can generate mass support from co-religionists as well as those outside their faith. Accordingly, such organizations are more likely to view non-violent contention as more viable than violence.

4.3   Methodology: Paired Case Studies

Comparison lies at the heart of political methodology and inference (Przeworski & Teune, 1970; Ragin, 1987; G. King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994). Political scientists, and especially scholars of comparative politics, have long used case studies to construct comparisons that yield credible inferences (Lijphart, 1975; George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2007). Of particular interest are paired case studies that draw on "most-similar" systems designs: by selecting similar cases that vary in a key explanatory variable but hold confounding variables constant, researchers can make strong inferences about the explanatory variable (Meckstroth, 1975; Tarrow, 2010), so long as these cases do not select on the dependent variable (Geddes, 1990).

To validate the theory above, I use a series of paired case studies. In each case, the political theology of two political organizations vary alongside their political behavior. To show how variation in theology leads to variation in behavior, each paired case is drawn from an identical political context, ensuring that major structural factors, such as regime change and economic wealth, are held constant. Further, in line with the theory above, the cases also meet the following criteria. First, in each case the co-religionists of the religious organizations in question make

up a majority of the population. Second, in each case the primary organization assumes that pursuing maximalist claims via conventional politics is not viable. Third, in each case the repression costs for non-violence are relatively low.

Each case has a primary organization whose theology is discussed in-depth in order to illustrate one of the pathways in Table 4.1. In the case of the post-war United States, the primary organization is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which illustrates the inclusionary theology pathway. In the case of Arab Spring Tunisia, Rachid Ghannouchi's Ennahda movement demonstrates the effect of hybrid theology. Meanwhile, in contemporary Mali, Ansar al-Din illustrates the exclusionary pathway.

4.3.1   Postwar United States: Inclusionary Theology and the SCLC

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the doctrine of "separate but equal" institutions in a landmark ruling of *Plessy vs. Ferguson.* Over the next fifty years, segregated political and civic institutions provision became a defining feature of American public life, particularly in the South. While segregation occurred along racial lines, however, it also had a religious dimension. Both the white majority and black minority were overwhelmingly Christian, albeit with competing understandings of what Christianity meant and how it ought to underpin political order.

By mid-century, those competing visions led to religious organizations with markedly different behaviors and beliefs. Arguably the most important religious organization in this period was the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, or

SCLC. Led by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernethy, the SCLC was formed in 1957 to coordinate affiliate organizations, principally churches, throughout the South. Each affiliate agreed to support the local boycotts and economic noncooperation efforts of the others. The purpose of the SCLC was never to seize power for itself, nor even to advocate to whom political power ought to be distributed. Rather, its sole purpose was to mobilize support for non-violent resistance, which would be used to impose enough political and economic costs on both local and national administrations to make segregation and a lack of political enfranchisement unsustainable.

Political theology was central to the SCLC's contentious activity (Morris, 1984). At the core of that theology was an ethic of love (King Jr., 1990, p. 8), grounded in the belief that God loves all individuals because all individuals are created in God's image. As King noted at a church conference in 1962, "Christian tradition refers to [the] inherent dignity of man in the Biblical term of image of God. This innate worth referred to in the phrase the image of God is universally shared in equal portions by all men ... An individual has value because he has value to God" (1990, p. 122). This belief then translates naturally into a political vision: "God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race and in the creation of a society where all men can live together as brothers, where every man will respect the dignity and the worth of human personality" (1990, p. 215). Notably, in King's vision "all men" is not constrained by race or creed, but instead refers quite literally to all individuals. As he notes in his articulation of the American dream, "One of the first things we notice in this dream is an amazing universalism. It does not say

some men, but it says all men. It does not say all white men, but it says all men, which includes black men. It does not say all Gentiles, but it says all men, which includes Jews. It does not say all Protestants, but it says all men, which includes Catholics" (1990, p. 208).

The political theology of King and the SCLC was thus inclusionary in the sense that the political vision it espoused included both Christians and non-Christians alike. (Further, since King, Abernethy and others in the SCLC espoused this theology long before the SCLC was founded, its articulation was not endogenous to the SCLC's political activity.) In attempting to realize that vision, the principle question King and his peers faced was a strategic one. Although there was a threat of local repression by extra-judicial groups – the very weekend the SCLC was founded, for instance, Abernethy's house and church were bombed – there was little risk of repression by the federal government. In that context, King and the SCLC opted for non-violent resistance.

Throughout his activism, King consistently and repeatedly articulates both why he believes contentious activity is necessary, and why he is avoiding violent contention. The "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" is emblematic in that regard. Penned in response to an open letter written by prominent white clergy asking King to wait for the courts to order de-segregation, King betrayed little faith that judicial rulings and conventional political processes would ever be enough. "For years now I have heard the words 'Wait!' It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity .... We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied.' We have waited for more than 340 years

for our constitutional and God-given rights" (1990, p. 292). Similarly, King also echoed his prior sentiment about the "futility of violence" by noting the extreme costs of violence: "I am convinced that by now many streets of the South would be flowing with floods of blood" if the SCLC had resorted to violence (1990, p. 297). Since the costs of both conventional politics and violence were too great, King insisted, non-violent resistance was the best strategic option.

Key to that option was the belief King held that he could mobilize mass support along religious lines (Cone, 1992). King knew that for his strategy to work, the SCLC would have to mobilize not just black churches, but white ones too. Accordingly, he and the SCLC leadership consistently defined their movement as a Christian one. In fact, months after its founding, the SCLC changed its name from the Southern Negro Leadership Conference to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, on the grounds that appealing to co-religionists could mobilize greater support than appealing to co-ethnics. Further, in his sermons and speeches – as illustrated by his Letter from a Birmingham Jail – King took pains to articulate why white Christians in particular should also be in favor of desegregation and political enfranchisement for blacks.

King's SCLC thus stands in sharp contrast to the Christian Identity organizations that effectively married white nationalism with a unique interpretation of Christianity. Even as King's movement appealed to white Christians on the basis of religious solidarity, Christian Identity did so on the basis of ethno-religious solidarity (Goldberg, 2007; Barkun, 1997). In line with its predecessor organization, the Ku Klux Klan, the Christian Identity movement articulated a political theol-

ogy that was patently exclusionary: it not only sought political supremacy over non-Christians – and in that vein, frequently singled out Jews for political subjugation – but it also excluded both non-white co-religionists and white Christians who sympathized with them. For Christian Identity organizations, any political order that extended political equality to all, regardless of ethnicity and religious identity, was fundamentally at odds with its own political vision. Not surprisingly, Christian Identity organizations have frequently resorted to violence.

Taken together, King's SCLC and Christian Identity organizations provide a compelling comparison. Each self-defined as Christian, yet one articulated an inclusionary theology while the other articulated an exclusionary one – and not coincidentally, the former engaged in non-violent contention, while the latter resorted to violence.

4.3.2 Arab Spring Tunisia: Hybrid Theology and Ennahda

In December of 2010, after two decades of rule by the secularist regime of Zen El Abidine Ben Ali, a young street vendor in Sidi Bouaziz set himself on fire in response to police aggression. Over the succeeding two weeks, as several young Tunisians self-immolated and further incidents of police brutality occurred, mass protests emerged and began to spread. By January, the demonstrations had reached Tunis; by late-January, Ben Ali had abdicated power and flown to Saudi Arabia. Two months later, the last remaining officials from the Ben Ali regime had been purged from the cabinet altogether.

Throughout Tunisia's transition from secularist regime to constitutional democracy, "Nahdawhis", or members of Tunisia's Ennahda movement, played a central role. Founded by Rachid Ghannouchi in the early 1980s, the Ennahda movement was similar to other mainstream Islamist movements of the period, such as Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, in articulating and calling for a coherent political theology founded on Sharia and divine will (Marks, 2015). The staunchly secular Bourguiba regime thus viewed Ennahda as a threat, and repeatedly arrested – and tortured – Ghannouchi and his colleagues. Not long after Ben Ali came to power in 1987, it became clear he too would only continue to repress Ennahda's leadership, and Ghannouchi fled to London.

During his two decades in exile, Ghannouchi further elaborated his political theology. In particular, in 1994 Ghannouchi published *Public Liberties in the Islamic State* – the book for which he is best known, and which clearly articulates what I term a hybrid theology. At the core of Ghannouchi's political theology is *istikhlaf*, or "vice-regency." In Ghannouchi's vision, a legitimate political order is one in which the *umma*, or Muslim community, acts as a "vice-regent" for God's will (Hamid, 2014). Ghannouchi's insistence on *istikhlaf* makes his theology exclusive in the sense that non-Muslims cannot hold sovereignty; rather, political sovereignty must reside in the Muslim community. In that regard, Ghannouchi is similar to many other Islamist groups, even Salafist ones. Where Ghannouchi departs from mainstream Salafi doctrine, however, is in his elaboration of how political power ought to be distributed among Muslims themselves. Whereas most Salafist argue against democracy and for clerical rule, Ghannouchi insists that democracy is the

most legitimate way to allocate power amongst Muslims themselves. Building off the work of early modern Muslim intellectuals such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida (Hourani, 1983; Shavit, 2010), Ghannouchi argued that the principles of democracy also underlay classical Islamic political concepts such as *shura*, or ruling council; *bay'a*, the popular ratification of rulers; and *ijma'*, or communal consensus (March, 2013). In line with these concepts, Ghannouchi argues, all Muslims ought to participate in political life, via democratic elections, because all Muslims also participate, by definition, in the *umma* that serves as God's agent on earth (Hamid, 2014; March, 2013).

A critical implication of Ghannouchi's thought is that it only allows for constitutional, not sovereign, claims. While it is certainly possible to hold his political theology and also seek public office – as Ghannouchi himself later did – the entire point of Ghannouchi's theology is that sovereignty lay with the Muslim people en masse, not with any particular group or organization claiming to represent them (March, 2013). Thus, sovereign political claims, in which an organization seeks to accumulate political power for itself alone, are not compatible with Ghannouchi's political thought. If Ghannouchi and Ennahda were to make a maximalist claim, it would have to be constitutional rather than sovereign.

During the Ben Ali reign, that is precisely what Ghannouchi did from afar – and what the Nahdawis remaining in Tunisia did from within. Significantly, the constitutional nature of those claims also informed Ennahda's strategic calculus. Reforming the constitution via conventional politics clearly was not possible during the Ben Ali era. The choice instead, particularly toward the end of the Ben Ali

regime, was whether to pursue constitutional reforms via violent or nonviolent con-tention. Since Ennahda sought constitutional freedoms for all Muslims, and Tunisia was overwhelmingly Muslim, non-violent contention was a viable option; by con-trast, violent contention not only would have threatened to discredit Ennahda and the opposition, but would have run counter to the communal ethic at the heart of Ghannouchi's conception of the *umma*. Not surprisingly, Nahdawis engaged in non-violent contention throughout the transition period.

Ennahda's constitutional claims and non-violent behavior stand in stark con-trast with the sovereign claims Ansar al-Sharia, which along with Ennahda is the most well-known politically-engaged religious organization in Tunisia. As with En-nahda, Ansar al-Sharia sought to administer Sharia within Tunisia. Unlike En-nahda, however, Ansar al-Sharia held an exclusionary theology and made explicitly sovereign claims. In accordance with those views, it has largely refrained from both conventional politics and non-violent contention; neither offer a definitive pathway for Ansar al-Sharia to gain power itself. Instead, Ansar al-Sharia has not only pub-licly called for and defended Salafi-jihadist violence, but materially supported such violence. Indeed, between 2011 and 2014, thousands of Ansar al-Sharia members and sympathizers were sent to fight in Libya and Syria, while others carried out targeted assassinations within Tunisia itself.

The comparison between Ennahda and Ansar al-Sharia is a telling one. Both confronted the same political context, yet held markedly different theological po-sitions about how political power ought to be distributed. In part because of the difference between their hybrid and exclusionary theologies, respectively, their polit-

ical behavior also diverged, with Nahdawis engaged in non-violent resistance while Ansar al-Sharia resorted to violence.

4.3.3 Contemporary Mali: Exclusionary Theology and Ansar Din

In January 1991, after nearly a quarter center of military rule by General Moussa Traoré, pro-democracy activists in Mali began to mobilize against the Traoré regime. Led by the Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA), the National Committee for Democratic Initiative (CNID) and the Mali Pupils and Students Association (AEEM), the initial wave of protests and demonstrations faced a brutal crackdown, with several hundred activists killed. In response to the brutal repression, in late March AEEM organized a "National Day of Martyrs" demonstration that over 100,000 Malians attended. One week later, after tense negotiations with the activists and religious leaders, Traoré resigned, and a multi-party democracy was established.

The removal of the military junta opened the door for two parallel developments. The first was a revamped insurgency in the north. The ruling coalitions voted into office in Bamako included few representatives of the minority Arab groups in the Sahara, and as a result a succession of militant Tuareg groups continued their secessionist efforts. The second was a proliferation of new forms of Islam. Muslim communities within Mali had long fused Sufi doctrine with animist practices and beliefs, but the transition to democracy, with its newfound protections for religious freedom and expression, allowed more new and modern forms of Islam to flourish

(Soares, 2006). Of particular note were the rise of Mahmoud Dicko, a Salafist imam that would become president of Mali's Islam Council, and the Ansar Din organization of Ousman Madani Haïdara, a more traditional imam that adhered to Maliki doctrine.[9]

In 2012, both developments converged. In January, a more secular Tuareg militant group, the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (NMLA), again began striking government positions. The NMLA's advance forced a new group in the north, the Ansar al-Dine of Iyad Ag Ghaly, to make a decision: whether to fight alongside the NMLA, or instead mobilize non-violently. In theory, the latter should have been a viable option, and not just because of Mali's modern history with mass non-violence. More specifically, Ag Ghaly's Ansar al-Dine could have reached out to Haïdara's Ansar al-Dine as well as Dicko's Salafist networks, and mobilized non-violent support along broad religious lines. Indeed, only three years before, in 2009, Dicko and Haïdara had joined forces in a mass protest against a proposed "Family Law." The success of that protest revealed both that the ruling coalition would not brutally repress non-violent contention, and also that there was far less popular support for Mali's "secular" government than might have been thought.

If Ag Ghaly's Ansar al-Dine had wanted to impose a generic Muslim or even Salafist state, it would have been possible to attempt to do so through non-violent contention. Mass non-violent mobilization, however, would have required ceding control a measure of control to Dicko and Haïdara's organizations. Yet for Ag

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[9]Jack Watling and Paul Raymond, "The struggle for Mali," *Guardian*, November 25, 2015. Retrieved October 30, 2016 from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/25/the-struggle-for-mali.

Ghaly and his Ansar al-Dine, such control was precisely the point: the goal was not merely to impose Muslim rule, but to install themselves in power over all of Mali. As a Malian diplomat to Saudi Arabia, Ag Ghaly had come to adopt not only strict Wahhabist views, but also the *takfiri* ideology that seeks to distinguish "true believers" even from other self-identifying Muslims and Salafists (Valentine, 2015, p. 251). Ag Ghaly and Ansar al-Dine thus held a patently exclusionary political theology in which both non-Muslims and other Muslims alike were to be barred from political power. As a result, they also made sovereign maximalist claims – and anticipated, likely correctly, that co-religionist and Salafist networks elsewhere in the country likely would not have mobilized non-violently on their behalf.

The Ansar al-Dine thus opted to fight alongside the MNLA instead. Not surprisingly, once the MNLA had captured the key towns of Gao, Kadal and Timbuktu and secured control over northern Mali, the Ansar al-Dine, in conjunction with another exclusionary organization, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), then wrested control from the MNLA. Immediately after Ansar al-Dine had captured Gao in particular, its spokesman, Oumar Ould Hamaha, contacted the Associated Press (AP) and not only stressed that the group now enjoyed sovereignty, but that it was using it to impose its exclusionary vision. "Our fighters control the perimeter. We control Timbuktu completely. We control Gao completely. It's Ansar Dine that commands the north of Mali," Hamaha said. "Now we have every opportunity to apply Shariah." Further, when the AP asked how Ansar al-Dine would govern co-religionists who did not share its austere political theology, Hamaha replied, "Sharia does not require a vote. It's not a democracy. It's the di-

vine law that was set out by God to be followed by his slaves. One hundred percent of the north of Mali is Muslim, and even if they don't want this, they need to go along with it."[10] True to its word, the Ansar al-Dine, along with the MUJAO, then imposed a strict form of Sharia throughout northern Mali until French forces forced them out in early 2013.[11]

In light of the successful non-violent movements in Mali, the violent contestation of Ag Ghaly's Ansar al-Dine is instructive. Ansar al-Dine sought regime change in all of Mali rather than just the North, and also shared a religious identity with the overwhelming majority of Malians. Had it merely sought constitutional reforms, Ansar al-Dine would have had a basis for mobilizing popular support. Instead, however, Ansar al-Dine made a claim to sovereignty, and sought not just to overthrow the ruling democratic regime, but to install itself in power. Accordingly, non-violent mobilization was not a viable option, leaving violent insurgency as its most viable method for seizing power. The gambit nearly worked: the organization's military success in the north did in fact cause the government in Bamako to fall. However, Ansar al-Dine's success also prompted a foreign intervention that rolled back the group's gains, and in many ways left it weaker than it had been in early 2012.

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[10] *USA Today*, "Al-Qaeda-linked Islamists seize north Mali towns,' June 29, 2012. Retrieved October 30, 2016 from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2012-06-29/Mali-rebels/55923760/1.

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4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I offer a novel theory of religious organizations' behavior. Religious organizations that identify with the same majority religion, and that face the same political regime, will often behave quite differently: some will resort to violence while others will engage in non-violent contention. To explain that variation, I develop a theory in which political theology shapes the maximalist claims a given organization makes, which in turn shapes whether it views violent or non-violent contention more favorably.

My theory points to several implications. The first is a need for better data. Although the case studies above provide a measure of support for my theory, paired case studies alone cannot provide strong causal evidence. A more extensive and systematic data collection effort would significantly increase the confidence we can have in that theory.

Second, the theory also contributes a new way to generalize across religions. The few scholars of international relations and comparative politics that do examine religion tend to focus on Islam specifically (e.g., Stepan & Robertson, 2003; Fish, 2002; Fox, 2001; Toft, 2007). By abstracting common theological traditions across all major faiths, the theory provides a way of analyzing religion that may be of use across multiple religions, and for a broad range of questions about religion and politics.

Finally, the theory and cases studies in this chapter provide evidence that political theology matters for understanding politics. Political scientists have long

debated the role and concept of ideology (Mullins, 1972; Minar, 1961), with a particular focus on how ideas do – and do not – influence political behavior (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Jacobs, 2009; Sanin & Wood, 2014). This chapter shows that religious ideas matter too. Far from being the sole province of clerics and acolytes alone, religious beliefs and ideas can shape major issues of public import – including and especially the question of why political violence occurs at all.

Chapter 5:   Conclusion

Few issues today are as politically relevant – or as politically fraught – as the relationship between religion and political violence. From foreign policy debates over counter-insurgency strategy to domestic debates over immigration, the topic of religious violence touches on nearly every salient dimension of political discourse.

Yet even as the importance of religion has grown, political science has generally had little insight to offer on religion in general and religious conflict in particular. Far from engaging debates over religion, the field has largely refrained from studying religion altogether (Philpott, 2002; Kettell, 2012). Further, to the extent that scholars of international relations and comparative politics have looked at religion and religious conflict, it has typically been only to rebut popular but easily discredited understandings of Islam (e.g., Fish et al., 2010; Karakaya, 2015; Gleditsch & Rudolfsen, 2016). By contrast, genuine engagement with the potential mechanisms and pathways by which religion might lead to violence have been remarkably rare.

This dissertation advances the literature on religion and armed conflict much further. Why do some rebel groups target civilians more extensively than others? By introducing new data on the religious claims and recruitment practices of armed rebels, Chapter Two shows that religious militants – particularly those that seek

to impose a religious state – inflict greater violence against civilians than other militant groups. Meanwhile, why do some countries produce religious foreign fighter contingents, while others do not? By coupling new data on global veil ban legislation with a nonparametric machine learning algorithm, Chapter Three shows that the extent to which countries debated, introduced or enforced restrictions on Islamic headdress were a significant predictor of Islamic State foreign fighter recruitment. Finally, why do some religious organizations protest peacefully, while others resort to violence? By combining a novel theory of religion and strategic choice with a series of paired case studies, Chapter Four shows that exclusionary religious beliefs are more likely to lead to violence, while inclusionary ones are more likely to lead to non-violent protest.

Each chapter in this dissertation thus offers a compelling new insight into how and why religion informs conflict dynamics and processes. Collectively, however, they also demonstrate a way forward. By pairing better data with better theories and methodologies, the various chapters of this dissertation show that political scientists can in fact conduct research on religion and political violence without compromising core assumptions of positivist social science and counterfactual reasoning. Given the increasing prevalence of religious conflict, that is perhaps the most important contribution the dissertation makes overall.

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