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Islam and Large-Scale Political Violence: Is There a Connection?

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Abstract

Are Muslims especially prone to large-scale political violence? From Montesquieu to Samuel Huntington, prominent modern analysts of politics have regarded Muslims as unusually inclined to strife. Many other observers have portrayed Islam as a peace-loving faith and Muslims as largely pacific. Yet scholars still lack much hard evidence on whether a relationship between Islam and political violence really exists. Precious few studies adduce empirical evidence on whether Islamic societies are actually more or less violent. This article assesses whether Muslims are more prone to large-scale political violence than non-Muslims. The authors focus neither on terrorism nor on interstate war. Instead, they investigate large-scale intrastate violence. The article makes three contributions. First, it offers useful data on Islam and political strife. Second, it investigates whether Muslims are especially violence prone. Relying on cross-national analysis, the authors find no evidence of a correlation between the proportion of a country's population that is made up of Muslims and deaths in episodes of large-scale political violence in the postwar period. Third, the authors investigate whether Islamism (the ideology), as opposed to Muslims (the people), is responsible for an

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inordinate share of the world's large-scale political violence. They find that Islamism is implicated in an appreciable but not disproportionate amount of political violence.

Keywords

Few matters in contemporary world politics command more interest than the relationship between Islam and political strife. Are Muslims especially prone to political violence? Office conversation among elites in Jakarta, Washington, Paris, Delhi, Beijing, and Ankara—not to mention kitchen-table talk in Surabaya, Kansas City, Marseille, Bangalore, Wuhan, and Istanbul—swirls around the issue. Yet the task of testing whether a relationship between Islam and political violence exists has hardly been touched. Few studies adduce empirical evidence on whether Islamic societies are actually more or less violent.

This article seeks to assess whether Muslims are more prone to large-scale political violence than non-Muslims. We do not focus on terrorism, which normally takes the form of dramatic, one-off events that may be transnational in character and that usually have a relatively small number of casualties. Nor do we concentrate on interstate war. Instead, we investigate large-scale intrastate violence. We cannot pretend to resolve the weighty question at hand or to make causal inferences. Despite enormous public interest in the issue, scholarly investigation is in its infancy. Empirical treatments are scarce, and the data available to us make a statistical evaluation of hypotheses difficult.

Our article makes three contributions. First, it offers some original data. Building on a major effort initiated by another scholar, Monty Marshall, we provide a database of events of large-scale political violence. We enrich Marshall's data by drawing out a particular set of cases and adding several coding categories. By doing so, we create a database that may be of interest to students of intrastate political conflict and of political Islam. Second, we use the data to explore whether Muslims are especially violence prone. We find no evidence of a correlation between the proportion of a country's population that is made up of Muslims and deaths in episodes of large-scale political violence. Third, we investigate whether Islamism (the ideology), as opposed to Muslims (the people), is responsible for an inordinate amount of large-scale political violence. We find that Islamism is implicated in an appreciable, but not necessarily disproportionate, amount of political violence.

Hypotheses on Islam and Large-Scale Political Violence

In *Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu (1995) stated,

> The gentleness so recommended in the gospel stands opposed to the despotic fury with which a prince would mete out his own justice and exercise his cruelties. . . . The Mohammedan religion, which speaks only with a sword, continues to act on men with the destructive spirit that founded it. (pp. 461-462)

A quarter of a millennium later, in one of the most globally influential works of social science of the late 20th century, Samuel Huntington (1996) similarly asserted that Islamic societies are especially prone to large-scale political violence. Huntington discussed both "intercivilizational" and "intracivilizational" violence. By the former, he meant conflict between Islamic and non-Islamic countries; by the latter, he meant conflict within countries. Huntington saw both kinds of strife as especially acute among Muslims. He not only asserted that "Islam's borders are bloody" but added "and so are its innards" (pp. 256-258).

Its innards are what concern us here. Armed conflict between Islamic and non-Islamic countries lies outside our purview. Assessing responsibility for who initiated (or is to blame for) interstate wars is a thorny issue but one that must be addressed if the analyst seeks to assess whether the people of this or that confession or region—or, for that matter, people living under one or another type of political regime—are more or less prone to go to war with other countries. Such matters are best left to specialists in international relations. Here we stick with assessment of whether the internal politics of predominantly Muslim countries are unusually bloody.

The notion that Islam is conducive to mass political violence is based on a claim about the way Muslims understand *jihad*, or holy struggle. Jihad has multiple meanings and manifestations. Recent scholarly works have provided sophisticated treatments (Bonner, 2008; Bonney, 2004; Cook, 2005; Kelsay, 2007). One meaning of jihad is armed struggle. Some people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, read passages of the Koran as condoning violence against the enemies of Islam. Many contemporary observers regard the notion of violent jihad as very much alive among contemporary Muslims. The notion of holy war is not foreign to Christianity, whose Crusader armies struggled mightily (if unsuccessfully) to recover the Holy Land during the 11th and 12th centuries. Nor is it alien to other religious traditions. But neither contemporary

Christianity nor any other modern major world religion has a concept of jihad—at least not one that is as central to its doctrine as jihad is to Islam. If some modern Muslims take to heart what they perceive as permission—even a prescription—to commit violence, one might expect large-scale political violence to be especially high among Muslims. The religion's perceived enemies may include non-Muslims, Muslims who collaborate with non-Muslims, Muslims who are viewed as lacking in piety, and Muslims who are seen as enforcing a political order that harms the faith. If the concept of jihad has sharp teeth, we might expect large-scale political violence to be more frequent and acute in societies with larger Muslim populations.

The empirical evidence on contemporary terrorism may reinforce an expectation of a positive association between Islam and large-scale political violence. Over the past several decades, a large portion of what are normally defined in the West as terrorist acts have been committed by Muslims in the name of Islam. If patterns of large-scale, sustained political violence mimic those of terrorist acts, one would expect the former to be unusually common and severe in predominantly Muslim societies.

The counterhypothesis is that Islam may help inoculate societies against mass political violence. Some writers claim that the vast majority of Muslims understand jihad in nonviolent terms and that the prevalence of the idea of jihad among Muslims is no spur to violence (Al-Ghannouchi, 2000; Lawrence, 2000; Lukens-Bull, 2005). It may even promote personal discipline and social solidarity in a manner that cuts the risk of bloodshed (Adler, 1983).

The expectation of a negative association between Islam and large-scale political violence may find support in the data on violent crime. Homicide rates tend to be low in predominantly Islamic countries. In fact, the proportion of society that is made up of Muslims provides a good predictor of cross-national variation in murder rates (Helal & Coston, 1995; Neapolitan, 1997; Souryal, 1987). If patterns of bloodshed arising from mass political violence look anything like patterns of criminal violence, one might expect less carnage from mass political strife in lands in which Muslims predominate.

These hypotheses may guide our inquiry, but there is no body of literature that actually tests them. Despite enormous interest in Islam and violence around the world, there have been surprisingly few efforts to assess empirically whether Muslims are especially prone to large-scale political violence. Assertions and commentary abound, but empirical tests are virtually nonexistent. The findings offered below may provide a starting point for bringing hard evidence to bear on questions that are of great significance and public interest.

Measuring Large-Scale Political Violence

There are several sources of data on large-scale political violence in the world. The compilation authored and regularly updated by Marshall (2008) stands out for its comprehensiveness and quality. Marshall's "Major Episodes of Political Violence" data set provides a complete list of events in the postwar period that produced 500 or more deaths. A recently updated version covers the period 1946-2007, and we rely on this version here.

According to Marshall, during the period under consideration there were 326 episodes of large-scale political violence. Some of these events were international (meaning interstate) in character; others were domestic. We are concerned with domestic (meaning intrastate) conflict. We exclude international conflicts, which include independence struggles against foreign (often colonial) domination. Marshall helpfully includes his own coding of types of conflict, which facilitates distinguishing between interstate and intrastate violence.

Most episodes—235 to be exact—were domestic (intrastate) in nature. This is the universe of cases we examine here. A complete list of these episodes, including the relevant data about them used in this article, is found in Appendix A.

From this list, we may extract several valuable pieces of data. One is how many episodes occurred in Islamic countries and how many took place elsewhere. These numbers provide only a starting point, however. The severity of the episodes varies widely, and we need to consider the toll each episode took in terms of human life. Marshall provides estimates on the number of deaths that each episode produced. His figures are necessarily rough and round because we lack precise body counts for many civil conflagrations.

Muslims and Large-Scale Political Violence

We aim to assess how much mass political violence has occurred among Muslims compared to among people of other creeds. First, let us have a look at the raw numbers.

We may start with a rudimentary classification of the world's countries and examination of the distribution of conflicts. Of the 171 countries in the world with populations of 250,000 or more inhabitants, 43 (25%) are predominantly Muslim.[1] Now, of the 235 major episodes of intrastate political violence, 76 (32%) happened in Islamic countries. Thus, Islamic countries have experienced a mildly disproportionate share of episodes.

We can cut into the data more deeply by looking at lives lost. If we sum up the body count in all 235 major episodes of political violence, the (sobering

Table 1. Summary of Episodes of Large-Scale Political Violence, by Predominant Confession of National Site

| Site of violence	Number of episodes		Number of deaths	
	n	%	*n*	%
Islamic countries	76	32	5,586,150	27
Non-Islamic countries	159	68	15,425,250	73
Total	235	100	21,011,400	100

Table 2. Mean Scores on the Indicators of Large-Scale Political Violence

Group of countries	Islamic (*n* = 43)	Non-Islamic (*n* = 128)	*p* value for *t* test
Average number of events 1946-2007	1.74	1.25	.15
Average number of deaths 1946-2007	129,655	120,643	.9
Percentage of population killed 1946-2007	0.65	0.72	.85

and stunning) statistic is 21,011,400. Of these, 5,586,150 people, or 27% of the total, perished in Islamic countries. So 27% of the loss of life in major episodes of political violence occurred in the 25% of the world's countries that are predominantly Islamic. Table 1 summarizes the numbers.

Table 2 presents the average number of events per country among Islamic and non-Islamic countries, the average number of deaths per country, and the average number of deaths as a percentage of the country's population in 1990. The last column in Table 2 presents the *p* value for a permutation *t* test between the average values in the Islamic and non-Islamic countries for each of the entries.[2]

The information in the third row of Table 2 is of particular interest. It represents the average percentage of the national population killed in Islamic and non-Islamic countries. These figures give us an idea of what proportion of each country's people was consumed in political conflagrations. In Muslim countries, on average, 0.65% of the population perished in major political violence. In non-Muslim countries, the analogous figure is 0.72%. Thus,
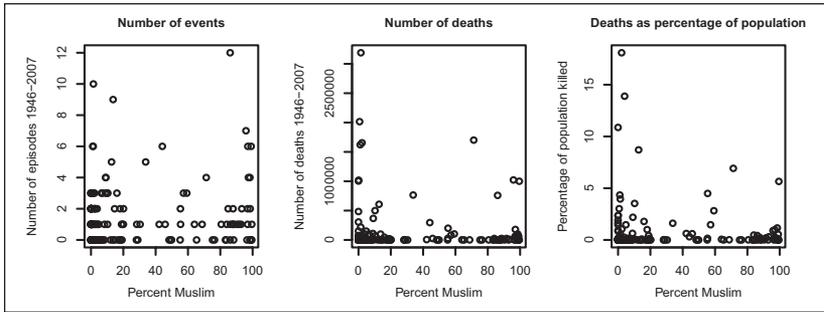
Figure 1. Correlation between political violence and Islamic population

Muslim countries have, on average, suffered slightly less severely from loss of life in major episodes of political violence than have non-Muslim countries.

Examining the data in Table 2 shows that although the number of events per country in Islamic countries is on average slightly higher than in non-Islamic countries, there have been fewer deaths as a proportion of the population related to political violence in Islamic countries than in non-Islamic countries. Yet none of the differences is statistically significant. In Figure 1, we present a graphical representation of how the number of events, the total number of deaths, and the number of deaths as percentage of the population of the country in 1990 are associated with the proportion of Muslims in a population. As can be seen in the plots, dividing the sample into Islamic and non-Islamic countries is quite arbitrary because there is no clear clustering at high or low levels of percentage Muslims in the population. In the analysis below we therefore choose to use as a variable the proportion of Muslims in a population rather than dividing the world into Islamic and non-Islamic countries as was done in the tables above.

Several other facts are worthy of note. It is apparent from the plots that there are some extreme outliers in the data at both high and low levels of Muslims in the population. An overwhelming amount of the carnage took place in a fairly small set of countries. Roughly three quarters of all deaths occurred in just nine countries. In descending order of the number of deaths, those countries are China, Vietnam, Sudan, Cambodia, the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly called Zaire), Korea (North and South, mostly during the war of the early 1950s), Pakistan, Angola, and Afghanistan. Three of those countries are predominantly Muslim (Sudan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan), two are predominantly Christian (the DRC and Angola), and in four neither Christianity nor Islam predominates (China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Korea).

When we consider total deaths as a percentage of the population, the worst-off countries again represent a mélange of religious traditions. In 12 countries, 3% or more of the national population died in large-scale political violence. In descending order of percentage that perished, those countries are Cambodia, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Rwanda, Sudan, Afghanistan, Bosnia, the DRC, Burundi, Mozambique, Korea, and Vietnam. These are the countries that, in proportional terms, suffered the most severely. Three are predominantly Islamic (Sudan, Afghanistan, and Bosnia) and five predominantly Christian (Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Rwanda, the DRC, and Burundi). The other four (Cambodia, Mozambique, Korea, and Vietnam) are neither predominately Muslim nor predominantly Christian.

To assess whether there is a link between Islam and mass political violence, we need analyses that control for the other differences between Islamic and non-Islamic countries that might be driving the difference in means that we observe.[3] We run statistical models to try to approximate a conditional mean of the number of deaths for different percentages of Muslims in the population.[4] We measure Islam as the percentage of the population that is made up of Muslims (Association of Religion Data Archives, 2008). Here we encounter a potential temporal problem in the data. Our data on percentage Muslim are drawn from a survey of conditions in recent decades, and our dependent variable, mass political violence, covers episodes reaching back to 1946. We do not have good cross-national data on religious composition of countries in 1946, however, so we must rely on the data we have for later years. Yet doing so probably causes little distortion because the religious composition of societies changes slowly if at all, and the correlation between conditions in, say, 1950 and 1990 is probably very high. Thus, we use the data for more recent decades as a proxy for conditions throughout the postwar period, while bearing in mind that the data are imperfect.

One of the main possible confounders in the study of political violence is socioeconomic development. We might expect richer countries to be less conflict prone than poorer countries. Where want is more widespread, mass violence may be more likely. Ethnic fractionalization may also be of importance. Higher fractionalization may be conducive to greater intercommunal tension and more mass political violence. Socioeconomic inequality may threaten civil peace as well. We would hypothesize that higher inequality would be associated with more violence. The level of democracy might also exert influence. Here the effect could cut either way. More open government might furnish channels for the peaceful resolution of differences among groups and thereby reduce the risk of large-scale violence. But a counterhypothesis is also plausible. Authoritarian regimes, by virtue of their greater harshness and commitment to imposed stability, may be better than democracies at staving

off mass political violence. The robustness of the state apparatus is another potentially important variable. Many analysts hold that weak states are far more vulnerable to mass political violence than stronger ones.

This is by no means a complete set of possible predictors of large-scale intrastate violence. But it does cover many of what have often been considered the main explanatory variables. Finding data even for the variables outlined here is difficult, however. The main problem is that we are examining events that cover a substantial period of time (about 60 years, starting with the first year after the end of World War II). It would be ideal to have data for each country for our control variables for 1946, which we could treat as the starting point of the period, or for each year starting from 1945 or 1946, which might allow for time-series analysis. But we lack such data. We lack good information on level of socioeconomic development, measured as income *per capita* and life expectancy, for the early postwar years. We have some numbers, but prior to the 1970s data for many countries are missing and what we have are often of dubious reliability. The further we move back in history, the less plentiful the data become. Even the most complete sources lack data for many countries for GDP (or income) per capita, fertility rate, life expectancy, infant mortality, and the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture.[5] Our best hope is to rely on data on fertility rates for a midpoint in the interval of time we are considering. Here we measure socioeconomic development as total fertility rate (births per woman) from 1970 to 1975, as reported by the United Nations Development Programme in a recent report.[6] Lower fertility rates indicate higher socioeconomic development. Thus, if higher levels of development promote civil peace, we would expect to find a positive relationship between fertility rates and deaths per capita in large-scale political violence.

We lack data on ethnic fractionalization specifically for the immediate postwar period. But because ethnic composition is relatively stable, we may consider the numbers we have to be acceptable estimates of conditions throughout the postwar years (Alesina, Easterly, Devleeschauwer, Kurlat, & Warcziarg, 2002). We would expect greater fractionalization to cause more political violence.

Data on socioeconomic inequality, which is measured using the Gini index, are too sparse and unreliable for decades preceding the 1990s to be used here. This variable we must omit.

We do have some data for the openness of political regime, and we use those scores here. Freedom House ratings began appearing only in the mid-1970s. Here we use data for Freedom House scores in 1975 (Freedom House, 2008).[7] Scores range from 1 (*most open polity*) to 7 (*least open polity*). We flip the scores, such that 7 represents *most open* and 1 *least open*, to provide more intuitive presentation. For the countries of the former Soviet Union, we use the Soviet Union's score in 1975; for those of the former Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia's

score in that same year; for the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Czechoslovakia's score in that year.[8]

Including a control for the robustness of the state apparatus, which may affect the risk of large-scale political violence, would be desirable, but it is not practicable. We have several good sources of quantitative data based on expert surveys, but they apply only to the past decade or so (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2008; Marshall & Cole, 2008). We may, however, use a dichotomous variable for when countries received their independence. Countries that did not enjoy independent statehood as of the beginning of the previous century may be more likely to have weak state structures than those that obtained statehood earlier. Countries that were not independent by the year 1900 include those that were constituents of empires and that were under colonial rule. Here we control for that factor using a dichotomous (dummy) variable, with 1 standing for countries whose history of independent statehood postdates the beginning of the 20th century and 0 for those that did enjoy independent statehood before 1900. If late national independence is associated with weaker state structures and thus with a higher propensity to suffer large-scale political violence over the past six decades, we would expect a positive relationship between the dummy variable for late statehood and deaths because of political violence.

If we were attempting definitively to assess the causes of large-scale political violence, the data available to us and the methods we use would be inadequate. But we have no such pretension. We seek only to ascertain the correlation between a single factor, the Muslim proportion of the population, and mass political violence. The other regressors are merely controls. Thus, the shortage of stellar data need not derail our investigation.

Deaths as a percentage of the population in major episodes of political violence constitutes our outcome variable. If Muslims are more prone to mass political violence, we should see a positive relationship between percentage of the population made up of Muslims and the outcome variable; if Muslims are less prone to mass political violence, the relationship should be negative. Table 3 shows the results of the statistical analyses.

We rely on negative binomial regression, which is commonly used to estimate count models in which many cases have very low scores on the dependent variable.[9] In the negative binomial models presented in Tables 3 and 4, the coefficients are log odds ratios. The variable of interest is the percentage Muslims in the country. As Table 3 shows, the coefficient for this variable is weakly negative, indicating that countries with a higher percentage of Muslims have slightly lower levels of large-scale political violence even when we control for other variables. The coefficient is not, however, statistically significant at conventional levels.

The Akaike information criterion (AIC) is a goodness-of-fit measure for which the smallest value suggests the best fit. The diminutive differences in

Table 3. Regressions of Number of People Killed in Major Episodes of Political Violence (as a Percentage of 1990 Population) on Hypothesized Predictors

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	−0.249	−2.320***	−0.441	−0.500	−3.065***	−3.012***	−0.276
	(0.309)	(0.643)	(0.694)	(0.685)	(0.654)	(0.645)	(0.685)
Percentage Muslim	−0.004	−0.009	−0.009	−0.010	−0.011	−0.010	−0.010
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Fertility rate		0.392**	0.281†	0.248*	0.339**	0.370*	0.248*
		(0.132)	(0.145)	(0.118)	(0.127)	(0.166)	(0.118)
Ethnic diversity			−0.624			−0.549	
			(0.888)			(0.991)	
Level of democracy			−0.460***	−0.462***			−0.485***
			(0.112)	(0.118)			(0.128)
Late independence			0.229	0.204	1.273**	1.279**	
			(0.407)	(0.400)	(0.468)	(0.482)	
N	171	171	171	171	171	170	171
Akaike information criterion	354.738	343.101	330.542	329.637	339.275	340.078	327.745

Negative binomial models with robust standard errors in parentheses.
$^{\dagger}p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

the AIC across models indicate that adding in more variables does not substantially bolster our ability to explain the outcome variable. The models generally have a poor fit, suggesting that something other than all of these variables, including the percentage Muslims in a population, may drive variation in the number of deaths by political violence. Yet it bears note that both development and democracy are statistically significant. More poverty (shown by higher fertility rates) and less democracy (indicated by lower inverted Freedom House scores) are associated with more carnage.

As was clear in Figure 1 above, although most countries had no or a very small portion of the population destroyed in episodes of large-scale political violence, a few countries have very high numbers. To what extent are these outliers driving the results? In Table 4 we run the same models as in Table 3 but exclude the six countries with the highest number of deaths per capita: Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, and Sudan. These countries were selected because they have values higher than the 97th percentile on the variable for percentage of the national population that perished in episodes of large-scale political violence. As we can see in Table 4, excluding the extreme cases does not dramatically change the results. The proportion of Muslims still has a weak, negative coefficient that is not statistically significant.[10]

Table 4. Regressions of Number of People Killed in Major Episodes of Political Violence (as a Percentage of 1990 Population) on Hypothesized Predictors, Excluding the Major Outliers in the Data

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	−1.026***	−2.074**	−0.794	−0.809	−2.394***	−2.394***	−0.789
	(0.227)	(0.715)	(0.679)	(0.726)	(0.673)	(0.652)	(0.763)
Percentage Muslim	−0.002	−0.006	−0.008	−0.008	−0.008	−0.007	−0.008
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Fertility rate		0.219	0.153	0.141	0.197	0.200	0.141
		(0.146)	(0.163)	(0.137)	(0.150)	(0.178)	(0.135)
Ethnic diversity			−0.211			−0.041	
			(0.940)			(0.982)	
Level of democracy			−0.289**	−0.289**			−0.291**
			(0.092)	(0.096)			(0.102)
Late independence			0.039	0.019	0.589	0.590	
			(0.423)	(0.416)	(0.455)	(0.451)	
N	165	165	165	165	165	164	165
Akaike information criterion	255.575	252.227	249.781	248.203	252.513	253.994	246.205

Negative binomial models with robust standard errors in parentheses.
**$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

We may graphically illustrate the model's estimate of the relationship between percentage Muslim and predicted percentage of the population killed in major episodes of political violence. Figure 2 shows the estimated relationships. The left-hand plot shows the association between the percentage Muslims in a country and the predicted percentage of the population that died because of mass political violence from 1946 to 2007. The prediction is based on Model 3 presented in Table 3, holding fertility rate and level of democracy to their mean value and late national independence to 1. Moving from being 0% Muslim to 100% Muslim is associated with a 0.32 percentage point reduction in the predicted proportion of the population killed in episodes of large-scale political violence. Yet, as is reported in Table 3, this reduction is not statistically significant. We cannot be confident that there is actually a systematic difference in levels of violence between countries with larger and smaller Muslim populations. The right-hand plot shows the relationship without outliers, as predicted by Model 3 in Table 4. Moving from a country with 0% to 100% Muslims is associated with a 0.18 percentage point reduction in the proportion of the population destroyed in mass political violence, but again this reduction is not statistically distinguishable from 0.
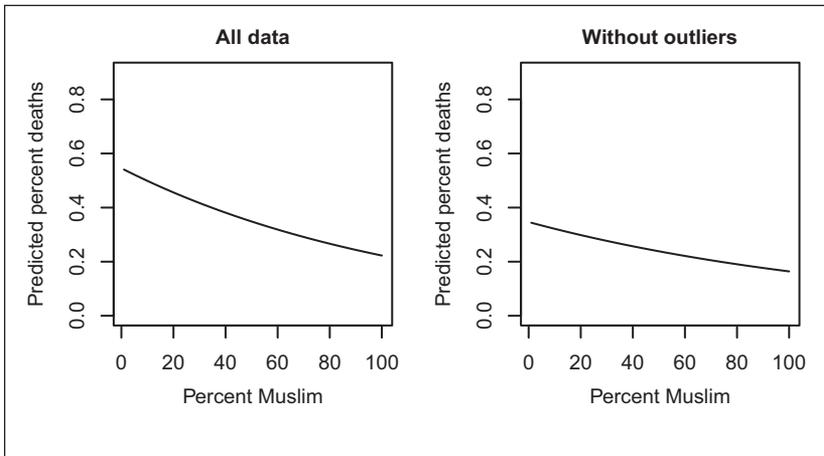
Figure 2. Predicted percentage of people killed in large-scale episodes of political violence

To sum up the findings of this section, we find some evidence that Muslims are *less* inclined to large-scale political violence than non-Muslims, but the difference is small and not statistically distinguishable from zero. The soundest conclusion we can draw is that we find no evidence that Muslims are more inclined than non-Muslims to large-scale political violence.

Islamism and Large-Scale Political Violence

So far we have examined the relationship between Muslims and mass political violence. But what about the impact of radical *Islamism*, as opposed to *Muslims*? Above, we found that countries with larger shares of Muslims in the population do not have higher death rates from mass political violence. But it still is possible that *Islamists* are responsible for a grossly disproportionate amount of the world's mass political violence. Radical Islamism is a potent ideology—or, rather, multiplicity of ideologies—whose adherents are sometimes inclined to force. Even if most Muslims disapprove of Islamist ideologies and violent methods, and even if, as shown above, Muslim lands are not disproportionately afflicted by large-scale political violence, it is possible that Islamists, as bearers of a distinct cause or ideology, may be responsible for an inordinate amount of mass political violence.

The findings of some writers might lead one to such a conclusion. Monica Duffy Toft (2007) finds that in the 42 religious civil wars that took place between 1940 and 2000, incumbent governments and rebels who identified with Islam

were involved in a far greater percentage of wars than were governments and rebels who identified with other religions. Toft explains her finding in terms of numerous factors, including the historical absence in the Islamic world of an internecine religious war analogous to Europe's Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, the spatial proximity of Islam's holiest sites to Israel and to large oil reserves, and the concept of jihad. Toft's findings may help explain why Islamists are more frequently involved in religious civil wars than are partisans of other religions. Our main question and our data, however, differ from Toft's. She focuses specifically on religious wars, whereas we examine all large-scale episodes of political violence and ask when Islamists had a role in making those conflicts.

To answer the question, we have coded all episodes of large-scale political violence in terms of whether or not Islamists were involved in instigating the conflict. In making this judgment, we relied on press reports, secondary sources, and personal communication with country specialists. We identified Islamists in terms of actors' self-identification as well as the way they are perceived by governments and observers. Assessing whether or not Islamists were culpable is, for the vast majority of cases, unproblematic. Little sleuthing is required. Most of the episodes are protracted conflicts whose perpetrators operated openly and whose identities are not difficult to establish.

In some cases coding required judgment calls. For example, the war in Chechnya in the 1990s pitted insurgents from a largely Muslim region against the central government in a largely Christian society. But the initiators of the conflict were ethnonationalists who sought separation from Russia; they were not Islamists. The insurgents subsequently attracted funding from the likes of Saudi Arabia, and their struggle became something of a cause célèbre among Islamists abroad. Some of the insurgents themselves, moreover, eventually took up the banner of Islam. At the time of the war's initiation, however, the insurgents were almost uniformly nominal Muslims who neither identified themselves nor were identified by the Russian or other governments as Islamists. We therefore code this conflict as not having been instigated by Islamists. The civil war of the 1990s in Tajikistan, by contrast, we code as having Islamist perpetrators. Some observers regard the protagonists in this war largely as rival clans and regional elites, not as militant religionists, and do not regard Islamists as responsible for the war's initiation. Yet because some forces that clearly identified themselves as Islamists were involved in the onset of the war, we code the conflict as having been instigated by Islamists (Heathershaw, 2009; Hughes, 2008; Lieven, 1999; Jonson, 2006).

To ensure transparency, we present the coding in the table presented in Appendix A. We ask whether or not the conflict was "instigated in whole or in part by Islamists." The answer (yes or no) is presented in the right-most column of the table.

Table 5. Summary of Episodes of Large-Scale Political Violence, by Instigator

Instigator	Number of episodes	%	Number of deaths	%
Islamists at least partially responsible	27	11	3,402,700	16
Islamists not responsible	208	89	17,608,700	84
Total	235	100	21,011,400	100

Cases are coded yes even if Islamists were only *partially* responsible. Sometimes Islamists were only one of several instigators, and perhaps not the main one. For example, the genocide against communists and ethnic Chinese that took place as the Suharto regime consolidated power in Indonesia in 1965-1966 is coded as yes even though Islamists were only one of several culprits. In this case, Islamists were arguably more tools of Suharto's—decidedly secularist—military than prime movers. In another genre of episode, Islamists were partially involved in instigation of violence but did more dying than killing. Thus, Islamists are coded as being "in whole or in part" responsible for the instigation of the civil violence that took 2,000 lives in Egypt from 1992 to 1999, though agents of the secularist government may have killed more of their Islamist foes than the other way around.

Of the 235 major episodes of intrastate political violence, Islamists participated in instigating 27, or 11% of the total. Of the 21,011,400 deaths causes by all episodes, 3,402,700, or 16%, occurred in the episodes in which Islamists were involved in instigation. Table 5 summarizes the numbers.

We may compare the numbers on Islamist-instigated violence to those on episodes that actors other than Islamists instigated. The brief accounts provided in the "description" column in Appendix A contain the needed information. Ten episodes (4% of the global total), accounting for 3,069,020 deaths (15% of the global total), occurred in China and Taiwan in revolutionary and postrevolutionary hostilities stemming from the Chinese Communist Party's coming to and holding of power. These episodes exacted approximately the same number of deaths as all episodes in which Islamists were wholly or partly responsible for the instigation of conflict. A total of 26 episodes (11% of the total), accounting for 3,830,300 deaths (18% of the total), occurred in the six Middle and East African nations of Angola, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, the DRC or Zaire, Rwanda, and Uganda. Government forces and partisans of rival ethnic groups bear responsibility for these conflicts, whose frequency and death toll were roughly equivalent to those of the conflicts in which

Islamists bore some responsibility. None of these countries is primarily Islamic, nor were the instigators of any of these conflicts Islamists.

Is Islamist-instigated conflict responsible for a disproportionate amount of violence? Are the 11% of episodes and 16% of deaths for which Islamists bear some responsibility a grossly disproportionate amount or not? Here the reader must make his or her own judgment. We simply have no base rate or objective standard against which to judge. Our assessments are further complicated when we consider that some of the conflicts that Islamists participated in igniting were also instigated by other actors who bear joint responsibility. Indeed, in some of the episodes that we code as Islamist instigated, Islamists were only one of several initiators of the conflict, and in some cases they were not necessarily either the leading initiators of the conflict or the main culprits for bloodletting during the course of the episode. All we can say with certainty is that Islamists do bear some responsibility for major episodes of political violence in the postwar world but that some other actors have been responsible for as much large-scale political violence as Islamists have.

Conclusion

Large-scale political violence is not disproportionately common or deadly in Muslim lands. When we control for possible confounding variables in regressions that treat countries as units of analysis, a higher percentage of Muslims is actually associated with a bit less carnage in major episodes of intrastate political violence. But the effect is small and tenuous; the empirical evidence does not allow us to conclude that Muslims are less prone than non-Muslims to political violence. All we can say for sure is that we turn up no evidence that countries with a larger share of Muslims have experienced a disproportionate share of carnage in political strife in the postwar period. Our finding of a nonrelationship contradicts portrayals of Muslim lands as disproportionately afflicted by large-scale civil conflict.

Whether Islamists are responsible for an inordinate amount of the world's large-scale political violence is a separate question. It is difficult to answer. Whether the share of conflicts that Islamists had a hand in initiating is disproportionate or not is in the eye of the observer. Islamists bore some responsibility for 11% of major episodes of political violence, which account for 16% of deaths. In the view of the authors, these numbers are not negligible, but neither are they overwhelming. Non-Islamist actors, such as revolutionary forces in China and partisans of interethnic struggles in Middle and East Africa, had a hand in instigating roughly as much strife and loss of life as Islamists did. Islamism has indeed been a wellspring of large-scale political violence in the postwar world, but it has been only one of numerous such sources.

Comprehensive List of Major Episodes of Intrastate Political Violence, 1946-2007

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1945-1947	Iran	Azerbaijani and Kurd rebellions	2,000	Islam	No
1945-1949	Greece	Greek civil war	150,000	Christianity	No
1946	Bolivia	Civil violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1946-1950	China	Chinese civil war	1,000,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1947	China	Repression of Taiwan dissidents	20,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1947	Paraguay	Civil violence (Liberals)	1,000	Christianity	No
1947-1948	Yemen AR	Civil violence (Yahya clan coup attempt)	5,000	Islam	No
1947-1949	India	Kashmir rebellion	4,000	Hinduism	Yes
1948	Colombia	Civil violence (Conservatives)	1,000	Christianity	No
1948	Costa Rica	Civil violence (National Union)	2,000	Christianity	No
1948	South Korea	Civil violence (Army)	1,000	Buddhism	No
1948	India	Civil violence (Hyderabad)	200	Hinduism	No
1948-1956	Malaysia	Repression of Chinese by Malay militia	12,500	Islam	No
1948-	Myanmar (Burma)	Ethnic war (Karen, Shan, and others)	100,000	Buddhism	No
1948-1960	Colombia	"La Violencia" civil war (Liberals)	250,000	Christianity	No
1950	Indonesia	Ethnic violence (Moluccans)	5,000	Islam	No
1950-1951	China	Repression of the landlords	1,500,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1950-1952	Philippines	Civil violence (Huks)	10,000	Christianity	No
1950-1953	North Korea, South Korea	Korean War (civil war)	1,500,000	Buddhism	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1950-1960	Malaysia	Independence and civil violence	15,000	Islam	No
1951	Thailand	Civil violence	NA	Buddhism	No
1952	Egypt	Civil violence (Nasser coup)	1,000	Islam	No
1952	Bolivia	Civil violence	2,000	Christianity	No
1952-	India	Ethnic war (northeast tribals; Assam separatists)	25,000	Hinduism	No
1953	Indonesia	Civil violence (Darul Islam)	1,000	Islam	Yes
1953-1954	Vietnam	Repression of landlords	15,000	Buddhism	No
1954	Guatemala	Civil violence (coup against Arbenz)	1,000	Christianity	No
1954-1955	Taiwan	Ethnic violence (Native Taiwanese vs. KMT)	5,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1955	Costa Rica	Civil violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1955	Taiwan	Civil violence (Taiwanese vs. KMT)	5,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1955	Argentina	Civil violence (army rebellion)	3,000	Christianity	No
1956	North Vietnam	Civil violence	NA	Buddhism	No
1956-1957	Haiti	Civil violence	NA	Christianity	No
1956-1960	Yemen AR	Ethnic violence (Yemeni-Adenese clans)	1,000	Islam	No
1956-1967	China	Ethnic war (Tibetans)	100,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1956-1972	Sudan	Ethnic warfare (Islamic vs. African)	500,000	Islam	Yes
1957	Oman	Civil violence	NA	Islam	No
1957-1959	Cuba	Civil war (Castro ousts Batista)	5,000	Christianity	No

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1957-1961	Indonesia	Civil violence (dissident military)	30,000	Islam	No
1958	Lebanon	Civil violence	2,000	Islam	No
1958	Iraq	Civil violence (coup ousts monarchy)	2,000	Islam	No
1958	Jordan	Civil violence	NA	Islam	No
1958-1975	North Vietnam, South Vietnam	"Vietnam War" (civil war)	2,000,000	Buddhism	No
1959	Iraq	Civil violence (Shammar tribe)	2,000	Islam	No
1959	China	Repression of counterrevolutionaries	50,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1959-1966	Rwanda	PARMEHUTU overthrow of Tutsi monarchy; repression of Tutsis	75,000	Christianity	No
1960-1961	Pakistan	Ethnic violence (Pushtun)	1,000	Islam	No
1960-1965	Zaire	Katanga civil war	100,000	Christianity	No
1960-1973	Laos	Civil war	25,000	Buddhism	No
1961-1993	Iraq	Ethnic warfare (Kurds)	150,000	Islam	No
1962-1963	Algeria	Civil violence (rebel factions)	2,000	Islam	No
1962-1970	Yemen AR	Civil war (following coup)	40,000	Islam	No
1962-1973 [1993]	Ethiopia	Eritrean separatists	2,000	Islam and Christianity	Yes
1963	Iraq	Civil violence	NA	Islam	No
1963	Iran	Civil violence (land reform)	1,000	Islam	Yes
1963-1968	Cyprus	Civil violence (Makarios crisis)	2,000	Islam and Christianity	No

(continued)

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Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1963-1993	Indonesia	Ethnic warfare (Papuan–West Irian)	15,000	Islam	No
1964	Guatemala	Civil violence	NA	Christianity	No
1964	Zambia	Civil violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1964	Tanzania	Civil violence	NA	Islam and Christianity	No
1964	Brazil	Civil violence	NA	Christianity	No
1964-1966	Kenya	Shifta; Somali separatism	1,000	Christianity	No
1965	Burundi	Ethnic violence (failed coup; Hutu/Tutsi)	5,000	Christianity	No
1965	Dominican Republic	Civil violence	3,000	Christianity	No
1965	Peru	Civil violence	NA	Christianity	No
1965-1966	Indonesia	Repression of Chinese/Communists	500,000	Islam	Yes
1965-1968	United States	Civil violence (urban Afro-American unrest)	1,000	Christianity	No
1965-1994	Chad	Civil war	75,000	Islam	No
1965-	Israel	Ethnic war (Arab Palestinians/Palestine Liberation Organization)	20,000	Judaism	No
1966	Nigeria	Repression of Ibo	20,000	Islam and Christianity	No
1966	Uganda	Ethnic violence (Buganda)	2,000	Christianity	No
1966-1970	Nigeria	Ethnic warfare (Biafra separatism)	200,000	Islam and Christianity	No
1966-1975	China	"Cultural Revolution"	500,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1966-1996	Guatemala	Repression of indigenous peoples	150,000	Christianity	No

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1967	Zaire	Civil violence	800	Christianity	No
1967-1983	Thailand	Ethnic violence and repression (Malay)	NA	Buddhism	Yes
1968	France	Civil violence (student and labor unrest)	3,000	Christianity	No
1968	Czechoslovakia	"Prague Spring" civil violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1968-1982	India	Repression of Naxalites	2,000	Hinduism	No
1969-1979	Equatorial Guinea	Repression of dissidents	50,000	Christianity	No
1969-1994	United Kingdom	Ethnic violence (Northern Ireland/Irish Republican Army)	3,000	Christianity	No
1970	Jordan	Civil violence (Palestinians)	10,000	Islam	No
1970-1975	Oman	Civil violence (Dhofar rebellion)	3,000	Islam	No
1970-1975	Cambodia	Civil war	150,000	Buddhism	No
1970-1982	Italy	Ethnic violence (Sardinians)	2,000	Christianity	No
1971	Sri Lanka	Civil violence (attempted coup)	10,000	Buddhism	No
1971	Bangladesh, Pakistan	Ethnic war (Bengali independence)	1,000,000	Islam	No
1971-1978	Uganda	Ethnic warfare (Idi Amin regime)	250,000	Christianity	No
1972	Burundi	Ethnic violence (Hutus target Tutsis)	2,000	Christianity	No
1972-1973	Burundi	Repression of Hutus	100,000	Christianity	No
1972-1979	Zimbabwe	Ethnic violence (ZANU/ZAPU vs. Whites)	20,000	Christianity	No
1972-1997	Philippines	Civil warfare (New Peoples Army)	40,000	Christianity	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1972-	Philippines	Ethnic warfare (Moros)	50,000	Christianity	Yes
1973	Chile	Civil violence (army ouster of Allende)	5,000	Christianity	No
1973-1977	Pakistan	Ethnic warfare (Baluch separatism)	12,000	Islam	No
1974	Cyprus	Civil violence	5,000	Islam and Christianity	No
1974-1976	Chile	Repression of dissidents ("disappeared")	20,000	Christianity	No
1974-1985	Turkey	Civil violence	8,000	Islam	No
1974-1991	Ethiopia	Ethnic warfare (Eritreans and others)	750,000	Islam and Christianity	No
1975	Portugal	Civil violence	NA	Christianity	No
1975-1978	Cambodia	Khmer Rouge repression of dissidents	1,500,000	Buddhism	No
1975-1990	Laos	Civil violence (rebel Lao and Hmong)	10,000	Buddhism	No
1975-1991	Indonesia	Ethnic violence (Aceh)	15,000	Islam	Yes
1975-1991	Lebanon	Ethnic war (various sects)	100,000	Islam	Yes
1975-1992	Bangladesh	Ethnic war (Chittagong Hills)	25,000	Islam	No
1975-2002	Angola	Civil war (UNITA)	1,000,000	Christianity	No
1975-2005	Angola	Civil violence (Cabinda separatists; FLEC)	3,500	Christianity	No
1975-	Colombia	Civil violence, land reform, and drug trafficking (Left: ELN, FARC, ELP, MAO, M-19; Right: MAS, AUC)	55,000	Christianity	No
1976	South Africa	Ethnic violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1976	Sudan	Islamic Charter Front	1,000	Islam	Yes

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1976-1980	Argentina	"The Dirty War" repression of dissidents	20,000	Christianity	No
1976-1992	Indonesia	Colonial war (East Timor)	180,000	Islam	No
1977-1979	Ethiopia	"Ogaden War" ethnic violence (Somalis)	10,000	Islam and Christianity	No
1977-1980	Turkey	Ethnic violence (Armenians)	5,000	Islam	No
1977-1983	Zaire	Repression of dissidents	10,000	Christianity	No
1978	Somalia	Military faction	500	Islam	No
1978-1979	Nicaragua	Civil war (Sandinistas)	40,000	Christianity	No
1978-1993	Iran	Civil war (Islamic state)	50,000	Islam	Yes
1978-2002	Afghanistan	Civil war	1,000,000	Islam	Yes
1979-1980	South Korea	Unrest, riots, and government repression	1,000	Buddhism	No
1979-1985	Iran	Ethnic war (Kurds)	40,000	Islam	No
1979-1992	El Salvador	Civil war (FMLN)	75,000	Christianity	No
1979-1998	Iraq	Ethnic violence (Shias)	25,000	Islam	No
1980	Brazil	Repression of dissidents (death squads)	1,000	Christianity	No
1980	Jamaica	Civil violence (elections)	1,000	Christianity	No
1980-1985	Nigeria	Ethnic violence (Islamic groups)	9,000	Islam and Christianity	Yes
1980-1998	China	Ethnic violence (Uighurs, Kazakhs)	10,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1981	Ghana	Civil violence (Konkomba vs. Nanumba)	1,000	Christianity	No
1981	Gambia	SRLP rebellion	650	Islam	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1979-1982	Syria	Repression of dissidents (Muslim Brotherhood)	25,000	Islam	Yes
1981-1986	Uganda	Repression of dissidents	100,000	Christianity	No
1981-1987	Zimbabwe	Ethnic violence (Ndebele)	3,000	Christianity	No
1981-1990	Nicaragua	Civil war (Contras)	30,000	Christianity	No
1981-1992	Mozambique	Civil war (RENAMO)	500,000	Traditional beliefs and Christianity	No
1982-1997	Peru	Civil violence (Sendero Luminoso)	30,000	Christianity	No
1983-	India	Civil violence (elections in Assam)	3,000	Hinduism	No
1983-1984	China	Repression of dissidents	5,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1983-1993	India	Ethnic warfare (Sikhs)	25,000	Hinduism	No
1983-1996	South Africa	Ethnic/civil warfare	20,000	Christianity	No
1983-1998	Pakistan	Ethnic violence (Sindhis; Muhajirs)	5,000	Islam	No
1983-	Sri Lanka	Ethnic war (Tamils)	75,000	Buddhism	No
1983-2002	Sudan	Ethnic war (Islamic vs. African)	1,000,000	Islam	Yes
1984	Cameroon	Military faction	750	Traditional beliefs and Christianity	No
1984	Zaire	Ethnic/civil warfare	1,000	Christianity	No
1984-1999	Turkey	Ethnic warfare (Kurds)	40,000	Islam	No
1985	Liberia	Repression of dissidents (failed coup)	5,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1986-1987	Yemen PDR	Civil war	10,000	Islam	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1986-1993	Nigeria	Ethnic violence (Muslim-Christian)	10,000	Islam and Christianity	Yes
1986-2006	Uganda	Ethnic violence (Lord's Resistance Army: Langi and Acholi)	15,000	Christianity	No
1987	Chile	Civil violence	3,000	Christianity	No
1987-1990	Sri Lanka	Civil war (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna-Sinhalese extremists)	25,000	Buddhism	No
1988	Myanmar	Civil violence (student protests)	2,000	Buddhism	No
1988	Burundi	Ethnic violence (Tutsis against Hutus)	10,000	Christianity	No
1988-1997	Azerbaijan	Ethnic war (Nagorno-Karabakh)	15,000	Islam	No
1988-1997	Papua New Guinea	Ethnic warfare (Bougainville)	1,000	Christianity	No
1988-	Somalia	Civil war	100,000	Islam	No
1989	China	Civil violence (Tiananman protests)	2,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1989	Romania	Civil violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1990	China	Repression of dissidents	2,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1990-1991	Soviet Union	Sporadic ethnic/communal violence	5,000	Christianity	No
1990-1994	Rwanda	Ethnic warfare (Tutsis vs. Hutu regime)	15,000	Christianity	No
1990-1995	Mali	Ethnic warfare (Tuareg)	1,000	Islam	No
1990-1997	Liberia	Civil war	40,000	Traditional beliefs	No
1990-1997	Niger	Civil war (Azawad and Toubou)	1,000	Islam	No
1990-1997	Cambodia	Civil warfare (Khmer Rouge)	5,000	Buddhism	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1990	India	Ethnic war (Kashmiris)	35,000	Hinduism	Yes
1991	Croatia	Civil war (Croatian independence)	10,000	Christianity	No
1991	Burundi	Civil violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1991	Haiti	Civil violence (Aristide presidency)	NA	Christianity	No
1991-1993	Georgia	Civil war	1,000	Christianity	No
1991-1993	Kenya	Ethnic violence (Kalenjin, Masai, Kikuyu, Luo)	2,000	Christianity	No
1991-1993	Georgia	Ethnic war (Abkhazians-Ossetians)	3,000	Christianity	No
1991-1993	Bhutan	Ethnic violence (Drukpas vs. Nepalese)	NA	Buddhism	No
1991-1994	Djibouti	Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) rebellion	1,000	Islam	No
1991-1994	Croatia	Ethnic war (Serbs)	40,000	Christianity	No
1991-1997	Moldova	Ethnic violence (Transdniester Russians)	2,000	Christianity	No
1991-2001	Sierra Leone	Civil/ethnic warfare (Revolutionary United Front [RUF]/Mende)	25,000	Islam	No
1991-2004	Algeria	Civil warfare (Islamic militants)	60,000	Islam	Yes
1991-2002	India	Ethnic violence (Hindu vs. Muslim)	3,500	Hinduism	No
1992-1995	Bosnia	Ethnic war (Serbs, Croats, Muslims)	200,000	Islam	No
1992-1996	Zaire	Ethnic violence	10,000	Christianity	No
1992-1998	Tajikistan	Civil warfare	25,000	Islam	Yes
1992-1999	Egypt	Civil violence (Islamic militants)	2,000	Islam	Yes

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1992-1999	Senegal	Ethnic violence (Casamance)	3,000	Islam	No
1993	Congo-Brazzaville	Ethnic violence	2,000	Christianity	No
1993-2005	Burundi	Ethnic warfare (Tutsis against Hutus)	100,000	Christianity	No
1994	Rwanda	Ethnic violence (Hutus target Tutsis)	500,000	Christianity	No
1994	Ghana	Ethnic violence	1,000	Christianity	No
1994	Yemen	Ethnic warfare (south Yemenis)	3,000	Islam	No
1994-1996	Russia	Civil war (Chechnya secession)	40,000	Christianity	No
1994-1997	Mexico	Ethnic violence (Chiapas)	1,000	Christianity	No
1994-1998	Rwanda	Ethnic warfare (Hutus vs. Tutsi regime)	15,000	Christianity	No
1996-1998	Iraq	Ethnic warfare (Kurds)	2,000	Islam	No
1996-2006	Nepal	Civil war (United People's Front [UPF] "People's War")	8,000	Hinduism	No
1996-	Zaire/DRC	Civil war (ouster of Mobutu and aftermath)	1,500,000	Christianity	No
1997-1999	Congo-Brazzaville	Civil warfare	10,000	Christianity	No
1997	Albania	Civil violence (Pyramid schemes)	2,000	Islam	No
1997-2005	Indonesia	Ethnic violence (Aceh; GAM militants)	3,000	Islam	Yes
1997-	Nigeria	Communal violence (Delta province; Ijaw, Itsekeri; and others	1,500	Islam and Christianity	No
1998	Lesotho	Civil violence (May elections)	1,000	Christianity	No
1998-1999	Yugoslavia	Ethnic war (Kosovar Albanians)	15,000	Christianity	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
1998	Indonesia	Civil violence (ouster of Suharto)	2,000	Islam	No
1998	Georgia	Ethnic warfare (Abkhazia)	1,000	Christianity	No
1998-1999	Guinea-Bissau	Civil war (coup attempt)	6,000	Traditional beliefs and Islam	No
1998-2003	Solomon Islands	Communal violence (Malaita/Isatabu islanders)	500	Christianity	No
1999	Indonesia	Ethnic violence (East Timor independence)	3,000	Islam	No
1999-2002	Indonesia	Ethnic violence (Moluccas; Muslim/Christian)	3,500	Islam	Yes
1999-2000	Ethiopia	Ethnic war (Oromo separatists)	2,000	Islam and Christianity	No
1999-2006	Russia	Ethnic war (Chechen separatists)	30,000	Christianity	No
2000-2001	Guinea	Parrot's Beak clashes	1,000	Islam	No
2000-2003	Liberia	Civil violence (attacks by LURD guerillas)	1,000	Traditional beliefs	No
2000-2005	Côte d'Ivoire	Civil war (north, south, west divisions)	3,000	Traditional beliefs, Islam, and Christianity	No
2001	Indonesia	Communal (Dayaks vs. Madurese immigrants)	1,000	Islam	No
2001	Rwanda	Ethnic war (attacks by Hutu guerillas)	2,500	Christianity	No
2001	Central African Republic	Civil violence (attacks by Bozize loyalists; coup)	1,000	Christianity	No

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
2001-2004	Nigeria	Ethnic violence (Christian-Muslim; Plateau; Kano regions	55,000	Islam and Christianity	No
2001-	India	Maoist insurgency (People's War Group; Maoist Communist Centre; People's Liberation Guerilla Army)	1,500	Hinduism	No
2001-	Pakistan	Sectarian violence: Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Ahmadis	2,000	Islam	No
2002-2003	Congo-Brazzaville	Civil violence (Ninja militants in Pool region)	500	Christianity	No
2003	Thailand	Anti–Drug Trafficking Campaign	2,500	Buddhism	No
2003-	Saudi Arabia	Islamic militants	700	Islam	Yes
2003-	Sudan	Communal-separatist violence in Darfur	200,000	Islam	No
2004-	Yemen	Followers of al-Huthi in Sadaa	2,000	Islam	Yes
2004-	Haiti	General unrest surrounding ouster of President Aristide and his Lavalas Family ruling party	2,000	Christianity	No
2004-	Pakistan	Pashtuns in Federally Administered Tribal Areas, mainly in South Wazirstan and North-West Frontier Province	1,500	Islam	No
2004-	Thailand	Malay-Muslims in southern border region (Narathiwat, Pattani, Songkhla, and Yala provinces)	3,000	Buddhism	Yes
2004-	Turkey	Kurds in southeast	1,000	Islam	No

(continued)

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Appendix A (continued)

Date	Site	Description	Deaths	Predominant religion(s) of country	Conflict instigated in whole or in part by Islamists?
2005-	Pakistan	Rebellion in Baluchistan	800	Islam	No
2005-	Chad	Anti-Deby regime; United Front for Democratic Change (FUC), Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), and others	1,500	Islam	No
2005-	Central African Republic	APRD (northwest) and UFDR (northeast) rebels	1,500	Christianity	No
2006-	Mexico	Federal Army and police offensive against entrenched drug cartels and corrupt police and officials, mainly in the northern region bordering the United States	4,000	Christianity	No
2006-	Chad	Communal fighting between Toroboro ("black" and sedentary farmer) and Janjawid ("Arab")	5,000	Islam	No
2007-	Lebanon	Palestinian/Islamic militants	500	Islam	Yes
2007-	Ethiopia	Somalis and Oromo militants in Ogaden	1,000	Islam and Christianity	No
2007-	Kenya	Communal violence following disputed presidential election	1,000	Christianity	No

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Appendix B

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Output for Deaths in Major Episodes of Political Violence

Regressions of percentage of population killed in major episodes of political violence on hypothesized predictors

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	0.776**	−0.340	0.844	0.675	−0.581†	−0.495†	0.833
	(0.236)	(0.277)	(0.595)	(0.501)	(0.313)	(0.295)	(0.525)
Percentage Muslim	−0.003	−0.010†	−0.012†	−0.012†	−0.011†	−0.011†	−0.011†
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Fertility rate		0.259**	0.227*	0.180*	0.228*	0.268*	0.185*
		(0.099)	(0.108)	(0.086)	(0.091)	(0.118)	(0.086)
Ethnic diversity			−0.869			−0.717	
			(0.857)			(0.835)	
Level of democracy			−0.223*	−0.212*			−0.228*
			(0.091)	(0.083)			(0.089)
Late independence			0.228	0.181	0.571*	0.625*	
			(0.202)	(0.183)	(0.261)	(0.299)	
N	171	171	171	171	171	170	171
R^2	.002	.044	.087	.08	.055	.06	.079

Regressions of percentage of population killed in major episodes of political violence on hypothesized predictors, excluding the major outliers in the data

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	0.358***	0.029	0.434†	0.422†	−0.038	−0.036	0.434†
	(0.081)	(0.170)	(0.224)	(0.233)	(0.164)	(0.161)	(0.254)
Percentage Muslim	−0.001	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Fertility rate		0.078†	0.058	0.053	0.070	0.071	0.053
		(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.056)	(0.046)
Ethnic diversity			−0.083			−0.021	
			(0.346)			(0.356)	
Level of democracy			−0.078**	−0.078**			−0.079*
			(0.029)	(0.029)			(0.031)
Late independence			0.020	0.015	0.155	0.157	
			(0.113)	(0.111)	(0.124)	(0.124)	
N	165	165	165	165	165	164	165
R^2	.001	.029	.06	.06	.034	.034	.06

OLS models with robust standard errors in parentheses.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

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Notes

1. We include all countries that enjoyed national independence and had populations of 250,000 or more as of 2005. To qualify as an "Islamic country," Muslims must constitute an absolute majority among the population according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA, 2008) and the *CIA World Factbook 2008* (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008). The only countries of relevance to this article in which there is divergence among these sources are Sierra Leone, which the *CIA World Factbook* lists as majority Muslim but the ARDA does not, and Bosnia, which the ARDA lists as majority Muslim but the *CIA World Factbook* does not. After consultation with other sources and country experts, we classify each country as majority Muslim.

2. The nonparametric permutation *t* test was chosen to avoid having to assume that the data are normally distributed. The more commonly used Welch *t* tests of the difference of means, which do rest on this distributional assumption, yield very similar *p* values to those reported here for the nonparametric permutation *t* test.

3. On possible causes of large-scale intrastate political violence, see Midlarsky (2009), Powell (1982), Rabushka and Shepsle (1972), Hegre (2001), Fearon and Laitin (2003), Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005), and Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner (2009).

4. This way of thinking about regression analysis has been explicated by Freedman (2009).

5. For example, Mitchell (1993) contains a rich body of data, but for national income figures are given only in local currencies, which makes cross-national standardization (at least for the time until the 1970s or so) impossible. The only other good indicator of socioeconomic development for which this source provides data is infant mortality. Here it furnishes useful data stretching back to the 19th century but for Africa prior to the 1980s provides data for only four countries. Such shortages are found in other sources as well.

6. See United Nations Development Programme (2007, pp. 243-246). Numbers are unavailable in that source for Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, North Korea, Somalia,

Taiwan, and Yugoslavia. For those countries data for fertility rates are for 1989 and are drawn from the *CIA World Factbook 1989* (Central Intelligence Agency, 1989).

7. As an alternative source, we used the Polity scores provided by the Polity IV Project (2008). As an alternative to the Freedom House ratings for 1975, we used Polity scores for 1946 for all countries for which numbers are available, which is most countries that were independent at that time. For all others, we used the Polity score for the first year of national independence. For many African countries, which were generally the last to gain independence, that time is usually 1960 or thereabout. The Polity data are less plentiful than the Freedom House data, however, and using them requires the loss of a substantial number of cases. We therefore present the results of the analyses using Freedom House ratings here. Using the Polity scores did not appreciably change the results.

8. For other countries that lack scores for 1975, data for the closest available year are used. Data for Belize are for 1981; for Djibouti, 1977; for Namibia, 1974; for Palestine Territories, 1977; and for the Solomon Islands, 1978. Data for Germany are for the Federal Republic in 1975; for Yemen, data are an average of scores for North and South Yemen in 1975.

9. Poisson models, binomial models, and negative binomial models are the most commonly used models for studying count data. These models generally, and in this case specifically, give a much better model fit than the ordinary least squares (OLS) models because the normality assumption underlying an OLS model usually is violated when using count data. Count data have a lower bound of zero and no upper bound and are seldom normally distributed. Poisson models make an assumption that the mean and the variance in the distribution are the same, whereas negative binomial models are often recommended for overdispersed data. Overdispersion in the data can arise when the occurrence of one event increases the probability of further events, as is the case in the political violence data. See Hilbe (2008). We nevertheless also conducted the analyses using standard OLS models, specified as they are here in Tables 3 and 4. The output is presented in Appendix B. In the OLS models we see a negative and significant coefficient for percentage Muslims in the population. The model fit is very poor, however, and it is hard to draw conclusions from these findings.

10. Because the standard errors of the coefficients remain almost the same across the different specifications, we have no reason to believe that there is a multicollinearity problem driving the results in these models. We also tested for multicollinearity by examining the variance inflation factors (VIFs) of the variables in the models presented in Tables 3 and 4. Because all VIFs are less than 2, we have no reason to believe that we have a major problem with multicollinearity. See Belsley, Kuh, and Welsch (1980).

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