

# Explaining Why Some Muslims Support Islamist Political Violence

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PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH evidences considerable but varied support for Islamist terrorist tactics among the world's Muslim populations. According to 2014 data from the Pew Research Center, 47 percent and 46 percent of Bangladeshi and Lebanese respondents, respectively, approved of suicide bombing, compared with only 5 percent and 3 percent of Tunisian and Pakistani respondents, respectively.<sup>1</sup> This support is theoretically and practically important because public support for terrorism may explain where terrorist events occur, although the precise mechanism for this predictive utility is disputed.<sup>2</sup> For this and other empirical and theoretical reasons,

<sup>1</sup>Pew Research Center, "Levels of Support for Suicide Bombing over Time," 30 June 2014, accessed at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/01/concerns-about-islamic-extremism-on-the-rise-in-middle-east/pg-2014-07-01-islamic-extremism-11/>, 23 March 2019.

<sup>2</sup>Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malečková, "Attitudes and Action: Public Opinion and the Occurrence of International Terrorism," *Science* 325 (18 September 2009): 1534–1536; Jitka Malečková and Dragana Stanišić, "Public Opinion and Terrorist Acts," *European Journal of Political Economy* 27 (December 2011): S107–S121; and Jitka Malečková and Dragana Stanišić, "Changes in Public Opinion and the Occurrence of International Terrorism," *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 20 (December 2014): 631–653.

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scholars have sought to identify respondent-level determinants of support for suicide bombings and other forms of Islamist political violence.<sup>3</sup>

Political scientists have studied the posited correlation between support for political violence and an array of respondent-level factors, including ethnicity,<sup>4</sup> perceived and actual socioeconomic status, dimensions of education and human capital,<sup>5</sup> facets of belief and practice such as piety,<sup>6</sup> knowledge of Islam,<sup>7</sup> and exposure to violence,<sup>8</sup> among other

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<sup>3</sup>Will Bullock, Kosuke Imai, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Statistical Analysis of Endorsement Experiments: Measuring Support for Militant Groups in Pakistan," *Political Analysis* 19 (Autumn 2011): 363–384.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Kaltenthaler and William Miller, "Ethnicity, Islam, and Pakistani Public Opinion Toward the Pakistani Taliban," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38 (2015): 938–957.

<sup>5</sup>Krueger and Malečková, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism"; C. Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Relative Poverty, Perceived Violence, and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence From Pakistan," *Political Science Research and Methods* 6 (January 2018): 57–81; Blair Graeme, C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence From Pakistan," *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (January 2013): 30–48; Michael Mousseau, "Urban Poverty and Support for Islamist Terror: Survey Results of Muslims in Fourteen Countries," *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (January 2011): 35–47; Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, "Civil War," *Journal of Economic Literature* 48 (March 2010): 3–57; Claude Berrebi, "Evidence About the Link Between Education, Poverty, and Terrorism among Palestinians," *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 13 (2007): 1–36; Nicholas Sambanis, "Poverty and the Organization of Political Violence: A Review and Some Conjectures," in Carol Graham and Susan M. Collins, eds., *Brookings Trade Forum 2004* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2005), 165–211; and Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

<sup>6</sup>Mark Tessler and Jodi Nachtwey, "Islam and Attitudes Toward International Conflict: Evidence From Survey Research in the Arab World," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (October 1998): 619–636.

<sup>7</sup>C. Christine Fair, Jacob S. Goldstein, and Ali Hamza, "Can Knowledge of Islam Explain Lack of support for terrorism? Evidence From Pakistan," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40 (2017): 339–355.

<sup>8</sup>Blair et al., "Poverty and Support for Militant Politics"; Daphna Canetti, "Emotional Distress, Conflict Ideology, and Radicalization," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50 (October 2017): 940–943, at 940; Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, Daphna Canetti, Carmit Rapaport, and Stevan E. Hobfoll, "Conflict Will Harden Your Heart: Exposure to Violence, Psychological Distress, and Peace Barriers in Israel and Palestine," *British Journal of Political Science* 46 (October 2016): 845–859; Bernd Beber, Philip Roessler, and Alexandra Scacco, "Intergroup Violence and Political Attitudes: Evidence From a Dividing Sudan," *Journal of Politics* 76 (July 2014): 649–665; Jason Lyall, Graeme Blair, and Kosuke Imai, "Explaining Support for Combatants During Wartime: A Survey Experiment in Afghanistan," *American Political Science Review* 107 (November 2013): 679–705; Bernadette C. Hayes and Ian McAllister, "Sowing Dragon's Teeth: Public Support for Political Violence and Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland," *Political Studies* 49 (December 2001): 901–922; Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky, Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War," *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (April 2011): 201–218; Agustin Echebarria-Echabe and Emilia Fernández-Guede, "Effects of Terrorism on Attitudes and Ideological Orientation," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 36 (March 2006): 259–265; and Daphna Canetti, Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, and Ehud Eiran, "Suffer the Children: The Psychology of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Foreign Affairs* 8 October 2014, accessed at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142177/daphna-canetti-sivan-hirsch-hoefler-and-ehud-eiran/suffer-the-children>, 23 March 2019.

individual-level factors such as attitudes toward American culture and U.S. foreign policy<sup>9</sup> and political dissatisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

Other scholars have sought to unpack the relationship between personal political preferences such as support for democratic politics and support for Islamist militancy,<sup>11</sup> as well as the relationship between support for Islamist politics and support for Islamist militancy.<sup>12</sup> Other kinds of studies have examined economic sociotropic considerations, which covary with community-wide or nationwide characteristics such as inequality.<sup>13</sup> These empirical inquiries into the determinants of support for Islamist political violence often come to indeterminate and/or contradictory findings.

In this article, we dilate on a study by Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, and Elizabeth Nugent<sup>14</sup> in which the authors sought to explain why studies linking support for political violence and preferences for Sharia (often referred to as “Islamic law”) arrive at divergent conclusions. They suspected that part of the problem derives from the suboptimal ways that scholars perforce conceive of and instrumentalize Sharia. Using a unique data set that they collected from a national survey of Pakistan, they argued that Sharia should be conceptualized as comprising (at least)

<sup>9</sup>Sabri Ciftci, Becky J. O'Donnell, and Allison Tanner, “Who Favors al-Qaeda? Anti-Americanism, Religious Outlooks, and Favorable Attitudes Toward Terrorist Organizations,” *Political Research Quarterly* 70 (September 2017): 480–494; and Lars Berger, “Foreign Policies or Culture: What Shapes Muslim Public Opinion on Political Violence against the United States?” *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (November 2014): 782–796.

<sup>10</sup>M. Najeeb Shafiq and Abdulkader H. Sinno, “Education, Income, and Support for Suicide Bombings: Evidence From Six Muslim Countries,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54 (February 2010): 146–178.

<sup>11</sup>C. Christine Fair, Neil A. Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Faith or Doctrine?” Islam and Support for Political Violence in Pakistan,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (Winter 2012): 688–720; and Martha Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism,” *Comparative Politics* 13 (July 1981): 379–399.

<sup>12</sup>Mark Tessler, “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries,” *Comparative Politics* 34 (April 2002): 336–354; C. Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, and Elizabeth R. Nugent, “Conceptions of Shari’a and Support for Militancy and Democratic Values: Evidence From Pakistan,” *Political Science Research and Methods* 6 (July 2018): 429–448; Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism”; John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Hamdi Muluk, Nathanael G. Sumaktoyo, and Dhyah Madya Ruth, “Jihad as Justification: National Survey Evidence of Belief in Violent Jihad as a Mediating Factor for Sacred Violence among Muslims in Indonesia,” *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 16 (June 2013): 101–111; Simon Haddad, “Islam and Attitudes Toward U.S. Policy in the Middle East: Evidence From Survey Research in Lebanon,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 26 (2003): 135–154; and Fair, Littman, and Nugent, “Conceptions of Shari’a.”

<sup>13</sup>Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism”; Brian Burgoon, “On Welfare and Terror: Social Welfare Policies and Political Economic Roots of Terrorism,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50 (April 2006): 176–203; James A. Piazza, “Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (May 2011): 339–353; Mark Huband, *Warriors of the Prophet: The Struggle for Islam* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); and Esposito and Voll, *Islam and Democracy*.

<sup>14</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, “Conceptions of Shari’a.”

three components and instrumentalized accordingly: scriptural literalism such as support for Koranic physical punishments, often referred to as “Hudood punishments” (whipping, stoning, amputation, etc.); a demand for good governance, including access to fair courts, diminished corruption, provision of public services; and restrictions on women in public life. They found that while respondents who understood Sharia in terms of scriptural literalism (Hudood punishments) were more likely to support Islamist political violence, those who understood it as good governance or restrictions on women were not more likely to do so.

In another study, Fair, Ali Hamza, and Rebecca Heller,<sup>15</sup> using data from the Pew Research Center’s 2011–2012 World’s Muslims data set, queried whether this framework sheds light on support for suicide bombing in Bangladesh, another large Muslim-majority country in South Asia that recognized Islam as the basis of law at the time of the survey and was a part of Pakistan until 1971. However, they augmented their model by explicitly controlling for respondent attitudes toward secularism. In general, they replicated the major findings of Fair, Littman, and Nugent<sup>16</sup> for Pakistan in that those who understood Sharia in terms of scriptural literalism were more likely to express support for suicide attacks, while other dimensions of Sharia were not statistically correlated with respondent beliefs about suicide attacks. They also found that support for secularism and support for suicide attacks were negatively correlated. These results may not be so surprising given the ostensible commonalties between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The question remains whether the instrumentalization of Sharia proffered by Fair, Littman, and Nugent<sup>17</sup> explains support for Islamist violence among Muslim polities that differ from Bangladesh or Pakistan geographically, demographically, politically, historically, or in the dominant sectarian commitments embraced by their polities.

We approach this question by using data from Pew’s World’s Muslims survey, which was fielded between October 2011 and November 2012 through face-to-face interviews with Muslim respondents in the appropriate national language. We use only those countries for which we could replicate the independent variables in the study by Fair, Hamza,

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<sup>15</sup>C. Christine Fair, Hamza Ali, and Rebecca Heller, “Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh? What the Data Say,” *Politics and Religion* 10 (September 2017): 622–661.

<sup>16</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, “Conceptions of Shari’a.”

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

and Heller,<sup>18</sup> which also used this data set. This yields a sample of 20 countries and 23,361 respondents. In addition to including the respondent-level study and control variables suggested by Fair, Littman, and Nugent,<sup>19</sup> as well as those used in Fair, Hamza, and Heller,<sup>20</sup> we include several state-level variables suggested by the large literature examining the relationship between religious attitudes and the state's relationship with religion,<sup>21</sup> such as the percentage of Muslims in the state, whether the state espouses Islam as the state religion, and other dimensions of the state's relationship with religion proposed in Jonathan Fox's Religion and State Round 2 (RAS2) data set.<sup>22</sup> We also include a measure of the respondent's exposure to Islamist violence over the decade prior to the survey using data from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism based at the University of Maryland<sup>23</sup> and averaged measures of civil and political freedom from Freedom House for 2001–2011.

We use a multilevel, generalized linear model for a dichotomous dependent variable to test whether respondent support for suicide bombing is explained by the individual- and state-level variables posited here. We generally find that support for Koranic literalism (Hudood), greater perception of economic well-being, exposure to terrorism, and the share of Muslims in the population are positively correlated with support for suicide bombing, while secularism is negatively correlated.

We organize the remainder of this article as follows: In the second section, we review the germane literature and draw out testable hypotheses, with a focus upon the Fair, Littman and Nugent framework. Third, we describe the data we use and the specifications that we employ. In the penultimate section, we discuss the results of our estimation. We conclude with a discussion of the major implications of our findings.

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<sup>18</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, "Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?"

<sup>19</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, "Conceptions of Shari'a."

<sup>20</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, "Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?"

<sup>21</sup>Jocelyne Cesari and Jonathan Fox, "Institutional Relations Rather than Clashes of Civilizations: When and How Is Religion Compatible with Democracy?" *International Political Sociology* 10 (September 2016): 241–257; and Kathleen Collins and Erica Owen, "Islamic Religiosity and Regime Preferences: Explaining Support for Democracy and Political Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Political Research Quarterly* 65 (September 2012): 499–515.

<sup>22</sup>Jonathan Fox, "Building Composite Measures of Religion and State," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 7 (2011): Article 8.

<sup>23</sup>Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan, "Introducing the Global Terrorism Database," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (2007): 181–204.

## EXPLAINING SUPPORT FOR ISLAMIST MILITANCY ACROSS MUSLIM COUNTRIES: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE

Here we review the current empirical literatures that identify potential determinants of individual support for Islamist violence. These studies suggest several individual-level factors, such as personal religiosity, the effect of secular commitments, and the conceptualization of Sharia or Islamic law, in addition to several individual-level controls. This literature also suggests considerations at the state level, including national fatality rates associated with terrorism, the proportion of the population composed of Muslims, dimensions of the state's relationship with religion, and state-level control variables. While there are literatures that focus on psychological explanations,<sup>24</sup> we do not review them here as we do not have data to evaluate those claims. There is a considerably vaster literature on what explains the occurrence of terrorism that is not germane to this study, and thus we do not review it either.<sup>25</sup>

### *Individual Factors (Level 1)*

*Measures of religiosity.* Several scholars have sought to lucubrate what relationship, if any, exists between individual religiosity and support for Islamist violence. This scholarship generally is moored to Samuel Huntington's 1993 "clash of civilizations" thesis<sup>26</sup> and suggests that people who exhibit higher levels of dedication to Muslim religious practices (fasting, paying zakat [Islamic tithing], frequent prayer, studying the Koran, and attending religious services) are more likely to support Islamist violence than those with less commitment. Bernard Lewis—a noted detractor of Islam—asserted in 1990 that the root of so-called Muslim rage is Islam itself, which, according to Lewis, "inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence" against the West.<sup>27</sup> This hypothesis has not withstood empirical scrutiny: scholars generally

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<sup>24</sup>Jeff Victoroff, Janice R. Adelman, and Miriam Matthews, "Psychological Factors Associated with Support for Suicide Bombing in the Muslim Diaspora," *Political Psychology* 33 (December 2012): 791–809.

<sup>25</sup>Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism"; Martin Gassebner and Simon Luechinger, "Lock, Stock, and Barrel: A Comprehensive Assessment of the Determinants of Terror," *Public Choice* 149 (December 2011): 235–261; and Andreas Freytag, Jens J. Krüger, Daniel Meierrieks, and Friedrich Schneide, "The Origins of Terrorism: Cross-Country Estimates of Socio-Economic Determinants of Terrorism," *European Journal of Political Economy* 27 (December 2011): S5–S16.

<sup>26</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, "If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World." *Foreign Affairs* (1993): 186–194; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>27</sup>Bernard Lewis. "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, 47–60, accessed at <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/>, 23 March 2019.

find no relationship between religiosity and piety alongside support for Islamist violence.<sup>28</sup> This ensemble of studies give rise to our first testable hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** Religiosity is not correlated with support for Islamist violence, all else held constant.

*Scriptural literalism.* Several recent studies have refined the literature that posits a relationship between support for Sharia and Islamist terrorism. Some scholars<sup>29</sup> argue that support for Sharia should be parsed into support for specific components of Sharia. These studies converge on the similar conclusion that it is not support for Sharia per se that best predicts support for Islamist violence but rather support for some version of scriptural literalism.

Fair, Littman, and Nugent designed a survey for Pakistanis to test this hypothesis and found that Pakistanis who believed in the so-called Hudood punishments (whipping, stoning, and amputation) were more likely to support Islamist militants, in part because many Islamist militant groups themselves propound this version of Sharia. In contrast, Pakistanis who understood Sharia to be a version of good governance were no more or less likely to support Islamist terrorist groups and were more likely to support democracy.

Fair, Hamza, and Heller replicated this study in Bangladesh using Pew's World's Muslims survey and confirmed the relationship between literalist interpretations of Islam and support for suicide bombing to defend Islam against its enemies. Similarly, Sabri Ciftci, Becky O'Donnell, and Allison Tanner<sup>30</sup> found that people holding literalist views of Islamic law were more likely to support al Qaeda, in part because al Qaeda justifies its jihad against the West and Arab regimes as promulgating Sharia. This gives rise to the following testable hypothesis:

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<sup>28</sup>Tessler and Nachtwey, "Islam and Attitudes Toward International Conflict"; Esposito and Voll, *Islam and Democracy*; Mark Tessler and Michael D.H. Robbins, "What Leads Some Ordinary Arab Men and Women to Approve of Terrorist Acts Against the United States?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51 (April 2007): 305–328; and Fair, Malhotra, and Shapiro, "Faith or Doctrine?"

<sup>29</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, "Conceptions of Shari'a"; Fair, Hamza, and Heller, "Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?"; and Ciftci, O'Donnell, and Tanner, "Who Favors al-Qaeda?"

<sup>30</sup>Ciftci, O'Donnell, and Tanner, "Who Favors al-Qaeda?"

**Hypothesis 2:** Respondents who embrace literalist interpretations of Sharia are more supportive of Islamist violence, all else held constant.

*Commitments to secularism.* If support for Hudood punishments and other aspects of literalist interpretations of Islamic law is correlated with support for Islamist militancy, then the corollary that support for secularism covaries with the rejection of Islamist militancy should hold. After all, groups that perpetrate Islamist violence not only call for implementation of such Islamic law, they also vigorously denounce secularism and other efforts to remove Islam from governing and ordering the lives of Muslims and, in many Muslim countries, brutally attack secularist and other progressives.<sup>31</sup> Transnational and local Islamist terrorist groups alike aspire to bring Islam back to countries that used to be in Muslim control, including parts of Europe that are now secular democracies.

To date, few studies have explored this variable explicitly to explain support for Islamist terrorism. Instead, scholars have mainly examined the relationship between support for democratic values and support for Islamist violence, with varying conclusions.<sup>32</sup> However, Simon Haddad and Hilal Khashan<sup>33</sup> found that people who identified with secular parties had lower levels of support for the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks than those who supported religious parties. Fair, Hamza, and Heller<sup>34</sup> explicitly examined preferences for secular forms of government as a determinant of support for Islamist violence. Using Pew's World's Muslims data from Bangladesh in 2011–2012, they concluded people who favored secular forms of governing were less likely to support suicide bombing. This scant but important literature gives rise to a third testable hypothesis:

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<sup>31</sup>Tarek Amara, "Tunisian Salafists Storm Female Student Hostel to Stop Dancing," Reuters, 18 April 2013, accessed at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-islamists-idUSBRE93H0RR20130418>, 23 March 2019; and Saad Hammadi, "Anyone Could Become a Target': Wave of Islamist Killings Hits Bangladesh," *Guardian*, 30 April 2016, accessed at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/30/bangladesh-islamist-attacks-murder-gay-atheist-activists-dhaka>, 23 March 2019.

<sup>32</sup>C. Christine Fair, Clay Ramsay, and Steve Kull, *Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Militancy, and Relations with the US* (Working paper, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, February 2008), accessed at <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/February2008.pdf>, 23 March 2019; and C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Democratic Values and Support for Militancy: Evidence From a National Survey of Pakistan," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58 (August 2013): 743–770.

<sup>33</sup>Simon Haddad and Hilal Khashan, "Islam and Terrorism: Lebanese Muslim Views on September 11," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (December 2002): 812–828.

<sup>34</sup>Fair, Hamza, and Heller, "Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?"



**Hypothesis 3:** Secularism is negatively correlated with support for Islamist violence, all else held constant.

*State Characteristics (Level 2)*

*Influence of exposure to violence on support for Islamist violence.* The relationship between exposure to terrorism and political violence and support for political violence remains contested. Graeme Blair and colleagues<sup>35</sup> found that the urban poor were most opposed to Islamist militant groups, in part because they bore most of the negative externalities of that violence. Jason Lyall, Graeme Blair, and Kosuke Imai<sup>36</sup> studied Afghans' exposure to violence and similarly found that respondents who had experienced harm from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) exhibited diminished support for the ISAF and more support for the Taliban than those who had not. However, they found that Taliban-inflicted harm did not translate into greater ISAF support and only slightly diminished support for the Taliban.

Bernd Beber, Philip Roessler, and Alexandra Scacco,<sup>37</sup> looking at the case of Sudan and the January 2011 referendum in which four million South Sudanese voted to decide whether their region should become an independent state or remain within a unified Sudan, concluded that exposure to episodes of political violence increased people's support for separation because it made them less willing to live in a multiethnic setting. Similarly, Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and colleagues<sup>38</sup> using data from Israelis and Palestinians, found that individual-level exposure to terrorism and political violence rendered people less likely to support peace efforts. Daphna Canetti<sup>39</sup> averred that individual-level exposure to political violence can elicit emotional distress, which, in turn, may galvanize greater support for militant groups stemming from, among other things, trauma, threat, or even a desire for revenge.<sup>40</sup> This literature's discordant findings suggest the following testable (null) hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4:** Exposure to Islamist violence is not correlated with individual support for Islamist violence, all else held constant.

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<sup>35</sup>Blair et al., "Poverty and Support for Militant Politics."

<sup>36</sup>Lyall, Blair, and Imai, "Explaining Support for Combatants during Wartime."

<sup>37</sup>Beber, Roessler, and Scacco, "Intergroup Violence and Political Attitudes."

<sup>38</sup>Hirsch-Hoefler et al., "Conflict Will Harden Your Heart."

<sup>39</sup>Canetti, "Emotional Distress, Conflict Ideology, and Radicalization."

<sup>40</sup>Reviewed in Canetti, "Emotional Distress, Conflict Ideology, and Radicalization."

In this study, we treat exposure to violence as a state-level variable because Pew provides no means for us to exploit intracountry variation in violence, with the exception of noting whether the respondent lives in a rural or urban area, although there is no explanation of the basis of that coding.

*Characteristics of the polity.* Several studies suggest that the percentage of Muslims who live in a country may influence individual attitudes toward Islamist political violence there. We posit that there are at least three possible mechanisms by which the percentage of Muslims in a country could influence an individual Muslim's opinions about Islamist violence. The first mechanism, derived from the work of Karl Deutsch,<sup>41</sup> Ernest Gellner,<sup>42</sup> and Benedict Anderson,<sup>43</sup> suggests that economic modernization and the development of the modern state make upward social mobility possible, provided that people participate in the culture of the dominant group. If the state or society erects cultural barriers that hinder upward mobility for minority groups, minorities may develop separatist nationalist tendencies, which will be more pronounced in states or societies with larger preexisting cultural differences between the minority and the dominant groups. (When the preexisting differences are slight, scholars contend that assimilation is more likely.) This scholarship has generally sought to explain the emergence of civil war based upon ethnic mobilization; yet when subjected to empirical tests, it has not held up consistently.<sup>44</sup> While James Fearon and David Laitin's work examines ethnicity rather than religion per se, there is no reason a priori to reject its relevance to identities that are structured around a religious identity, such as Islam. (Judaism, for example, is often treated as an ethnic identity as well as a religious identity despite the ethnic and linguistic variation among Jews.<sup>45</sup>) Even if the ethnic mobilization argument does

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<sup>41</sup>Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1953).

<sup>42</sup>Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>43</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>44</sup>James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97 (February 2003): 75–90.

<sup>45</sup>Jonathan Webber, "Jews and Judaism in Contemporary Europe: Religion or Ethnic Group?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20 (1997): 257–279; and Valeriy Chervyakov, Zvi Gitelman, and Vladimir Shapiro, "Religion and Ethnicity: Judaism in the Ethnic Consciousness of Contemporary Russian Jews," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20 (1997): 280–305.

not explain civil war, it may still be relevant in fomenting a sense of otherness among Muslim minorities.<sup>46</sup>

A second and similar mechanism, drawing from the social psychology literature, dilates on the formation of collective identity and intergroup relations, particularly the formation of people into in-groups and out-groups.<sup>47</sup> This literature argues that the “processes of social categorization and collective identity have systematic consequences that contribute to the development of intergroup bias and competition.”<sup>48</sup> This literature is particularly important to our query because it finds that when group identities and their attendant cultural values are highly salient to member’s functioning and/or when their identities are tightly associated with highly visible cues, demands that they relinquish this identity for a new superordinate identity (as in calls for “integration”) may “produce identity threats that impedes the development of a common group identity and exacerbates intergroup bias.”<sup>49</sup> Additionally, scholars who have focused on the response of Muslims after 11 September 2001 and the increasing perception of Muslims as security threats and other manifestations of Islamophobia have found that Muslims in Muslim-minority states develop varying strategies to manage the discrimination they perceive from the majority community.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, much of this literature focuses on Muslims who migrate to Muslim-minority countries rather than those who live in Muslim-minority countries.

A third mechanism, rooted in the theory of symbolic politics by Stuart Kaufman,<sup>51</sup> suggests that persons in more homogeneous societies may

<sup>46</sup>Nick Hopkins, “Dual Identities and Their Recognition: Minority Group Members’ Perspectives,” *Political Psychology* 32 (April 2011): 251–270.

<sup>47</sup>Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954); Henri Tajfel, “Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice,” *Journal of Social Issues* 25 (Autumn 1969): 79–97; Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,” in William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, eds., *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 33–48; Marilyn B. Brewer, “Social Identities and Social Representations: A Question of Priority?” in Kay Deaux and Gina Philogène, eds., *Representations of the Social: Bridging Theoretical Traditions* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 305–311; and John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, and Tamar Saguy, “Another View of “We”: Majority and Minority Group Perspectives on a Common Ingroup Identity,” *European Review of Social Psychology* 18 (2008): 296–330.

<sup>48</sup>Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy, “Another View of “We,”” 298.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>50</sup>Lori Peek, “Becoming Muslim: The Development of A Religious Identity,” *Sociology of Religion* 66 (Fall 2005): 215–242; and Jonas R. Kunst, Hajra Tajamal, David L. Sam, and Pål Ulleberg, “Coping with Islamophobia: The Effects of Religious Stigma on Muslim Minorities’ Identity Formation,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 36 (July 2012): 518–532.

<sup>51</sup>Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

feel less threatened and, consequently, may be more averse to any kind of political violence because it would disrupt their own perceptions of safety.

A country's demography may also predict the relationship that the state has with the religions of the majority and minority communities for a variety of reasons, which may also condition individual support for Islamist violence.<sup>52</sup>

Given the ambivalence in the literature that addresses identity mobilization, along with the specificity of Pew's question, we pose the following null hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5:** The proportion of Muslims in the population is not associated with individual support for Islamist violence, all else held constant.

*The state's relationship with Islam.* Another cluster of variables that may shape individual views of violence pertain to the relationship between the state and religion. While most—but by no means all—Muslim-majority states identify Islam as their state religion, a subset of them formalize the role of a statist Islam by constituting themselves as Islamic republics. The motivations for states to do so are varied, many of which are tied to processes by which the states were founded. It is beyond the scope of this article to review the histories of Muslim-majority states to delineate when and why they embraced Islam as a state religion. What is most relevant for our purposes is how these states today instrumentalize Islam in their foreign and domestic policies.

States such as Iran and Pakistan deliberately cultivate Islamist militant groups as tools of foreign policy and prosecute domestic policies at home to ensure public support for these proxies and their activities.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, autocratic states such as the Gulf State monarchies, the

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<sup>52</sup>Roger Finke and Robert R. Martin, "Ensuring Liberties: Understanding State Restrictions on Religious Freedoms," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53 (December 2014): 687–705; and Jonathan Fox and Deborah Flores, "Religions, Constitutions, and the State: A Cross-National Study," *Journal of Politics* 71 (October 2009): 1499–1513.

<sup>53</sup>Dan Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Central Asian republics, Bangladesh, and Iran use state-sponsored versions of Islam to stabilize and legitimize their governments amid rising calls for democratization and/or greater compliance with Islamists' demands to implement Islamic law.<sup>54</sup> Praetorian states such as Pakistan use a highly stylized version of Islam to garner popular support for using jihad and Islamism as tools of foreign policy, as well as to suppress competitive ethnic and sectarian identities.<sup>55</sup> Islamic republics in particular invest in educating their citizens about the role of Islam in their state and will invest in cultivating support for the state's preferred notion of Islam. This may involve enlisting education, civil society, and media to promote narratives that may be empirically dubious but that marshal a historical narrative that legitimizes the nature of the state by making specific appeals to the regime's relationship with Islam.<sup>56</sup>

As Fox explains,<sup>57</sup> this is not the only or even the best measure of the relationship that exists between the state and religion. There are many ways apart from declaring a state religion through which a state can evince preferences for a specific religion. States can engage in a range of behaviors that explicitly discriminate against a faith or faiths and their adherents, including adopting measures that restrict all religions or the majority religion, enacting legislation to enforce religious precepts as law, or providing financial support to some faith groups or otherwise privileging the majority religion. Several scholars have sought to develop databases that capture the multifaceted nature of the relationship between states and religions (reviewed critically by Fox). While these

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<sup>54</sup>Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Annelie Sheline, "Middle East Regimes Are Using 'Moderate' Islam to Stay in Power," *Washington Post*, 1 March 2017, accessed at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/01/middle-east-regimes-are-using-moderate-islam-to-stay-in-power/?utm\\_term=.0b1a0e2635db](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/01/middle-east-regimes-are-using-moderate-islam-to-stay-in-power/?utm_term=.0b1a0e2635db), 23 March 2019; and Jillian Schwedler, "Islamists in Power? Inclusion, Moderation, and the Arab Uprisings," *Middle East Development Journal* 5 (1) (2013).

<sup>55</sup>C. Christine Fair, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>56</sup>A. H. Nayyar and Ahmad Salim, eds., *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2003), accessed at <http://www.sdpi.org/publications/files/State%20of%20Curr&TextBooks.pdf>, 23 March 2019; Sami Adwan, "Schoolbooks in the Making: From Conflict to Peace, a Critical Analysis of the New Palestinian Textbooks for Grades One and Six," *Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 8 (2001): 86–93; Eleanor Abdella Doumato and Gregory Starrett, eds., *Teaching Islam: Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007); Jocelyne Cesari, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: Religion, Modernity, and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Raz Zimmt, "Iranians Against the 'Other': Iranian Identity in the Social Media," in Ronen A. Cohen, ed., *Identities in Crisis in Iran: Politics, Culture and Religion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 131–152.

<sup>57</sup> Jonathan Fox, "Building Composite Measures of Religion and State," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 7 (2011): Article 8.

varied data sets have been used to explore the emergence of violence, scholars have not availed of these important data to explain why some individuals within specific countries would be more inclined to support Islamist violence. This gives rise to a sixth testable hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 6:** Respondents in countries that privilege Islam are more likely to support Islamist violence, all else held constant.

The foregoing discussion of religious freedoms and state support for religion suggests potential interaction effects of state-level with individual-level variables. For example, we may expect the degree to which a state embraces one religion may mediate the effect of religiosity, secularism, or preferences for Islamic law. The same is true for the degree to which a state protects individual liberties.

## DATA AND RESEARCH METHODS

Here we describe the five data sources that we employ in this article to empirically test the six hypotheses as well as a detailed description of the various estimation procedures we use to do so.

### *Data and Instrumentalization of Variables*

We derived our dependent and all of our Level 1 independent variables from the Pew Research Center's World's Muslims survey, which was fielded between October 2011 and November 2012. Pew surveyed more than 30,000 self-identified Muslims, using face-to-face interviews in local languages, in 26 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. This public opinion survey aimed to compare and gauge respondents' religious beliefs, practices, and attitudes. Country samples are nationally representative for most countries surveyed, and sample sizes vary from 788 to 1,918 respondents.<sup>58</sup>

We used questions that were posed in all countries to maximize the scope of comparison and to ensure as much uniformity of variables for each country as possible. (It should be kept in mind that because of nuances in translation and local social and political conditions, it is possible that respondents *interpret* these questions differently even though we are unable to identify, much less triage, such eventualities.)

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<sup>58</sup>Pew Research Center, "The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society," 30 April 2013, accessed at <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>, 23 March 2019.

TABLE 1  
Country-Level Variables

| Country                    | % of Muslim<br>(Pew 2015) | Average<br>Fatality<br>(GTD) | Islam as a State<br>Religion (SAR II,<br>Manual Update) | Religion<br>Index<br>(SAR II) | Political Rights and<br>Civil Liberties<br>Average (Freedom<br>House) |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Afghanistan                | 99.00                     | 2.64                         | Yes   | 0.98                          | 5.73  |
| Albania                    | 80.30                     | 0.00                         | No  | 0.13                          | 3.05  |
| Algeria                    | 97.90                     | 2.39                         | Yes   | 0.83                          | 5.50  |
| Azerbaijan                 | 96.90                     | 1.20                         | No  | 0.71                          | 5.50  |
| Bangladesh                 | 90.40                     | 1.11                         | Yes   | 0.50                          | 3.86  |
| Bosnia and<br>Herzegovina  | 45.20                     | 0.27                         | No  | 0.44                          | 3.64  |
| Egypt                      | 94.90                     | 5.56                         | Yes   | 1.24                          | 5.64  |
| Indonesia                  | 87.20                     | 2.60                         | No  | 1.11                          | 2.86  |
| Iraq                       | 99.00                     | 3.51                         | Yes   | 0.42                          | 6.00  |
| Jordan                     | 97.20                     | 7.44                         | Yes   | 0.87                          | 5.00  |
| Kazakhstan                 | 70.40                     | 2.33                         | No  | 0.47                          | 5.50  |
| Kosovo                     | 93.80                     | 0.23                         | No  | –                             | 4.50  |
| Kyrgyzstan                 | 88.00                     | 0.36                         | No  | 0.39                          | 5.05  |
| Malaysia                   | 63.70                     | 0.00                         | Yes   | 1.33                          | 4.23  |
| Niger                      | 98.40                     | 4.12                         | No  | 0.25                          | 3.68  |
| Pakistan                   | 96.40                     | 2.35                         | Yes   | 1.28                          | 5.14  |
| Palestinian<br>Territories | 97.60                     | 1.12                         | No  | –                             | 5.75  |
| Russia                     | 10.00                     | 2.07                         | No  | 0.91                          | 5.36  |
| Tajikistan                 | 96.70                     | 1.25                         | No  | 0.54                          | 5.55  |
| Tunisia                    | 99.00                     | 6.12                         | Yes   | 0.83                          | 5.50  |
| Aggregate mean             | 85.10                     | 2.33                         | 0.45  | 0.73                          | 4.85  |
| N                          | 20                        |                              |   |                               |   |

This selection process left us with 20 countries in our sample: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, and Niger, which represent five regions with significant Muslim culture and population: Southern/Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East/North Africa.<sup>59</sup> We provide details about these 20 samples in Table 1.

We derived our dependent variable from the following question: “Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is: often justified, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?” We

<sup>59</sup>Pew Research Center, “The World’s Muslims.”

recoded observations with “don’t know” or “refused” as “missing.” (The don’t know/refused rate was well below 6 percent across the sample, thus ruling out systematic selection bias in our dependent variable.) We examined this variable in two ways. First, we recoded it as a dichotomous variable for support, which we coded 1 for any measure of support and 0 if the respondent indicated “never justified.” Second, we retained the variable in its ordinal state for multilevel, ordered logistic regression. As Fair, Hamza, and Heller<sup>60</sup> note, because Pew ties the tactic to defending Islam, this question may elicit more support than a question about the tactic denuded of such emotive language.<sup>61</sup>

To evaluate Hypothesis 1, which pertains to the relationship, if any, between personal religiosity and support for suicide bombing, we created an additive index for religiosity ranging from 0 (least religious) to 8 (most religious) from eight survey items measuring the respondent’s self-reported observance of religious practices, modifying the coding scheme of Fair, Hamza, and Heller<sup>62</sup> These survey items asked respondents about their frequency of prayer, frequency of reading or listening to the Koran, whether they fasted during Ramadan, whether they gave zakat, and reflection on the importance of religion in life. The religiosity index reflects adherence to religious practices in daily life. For information about how we constructed this and other indices, see Table 2.

To test Hypothesis 2, the relationship between support for literalist interpretations of Islamic law and support for suicide bombing, we created an additive Hudood index, modifying that used by Fair, Hamza, and Heller<sup>63</sup> We used seven survey items that we judged to reflect the individual’s support for literalist interpretation of Sharia law as the official law in the country and approval of physical punishments prescribed by Sharia. We used these questions to construct a Hudood index, which included measures of individual support for physical punishments for apostasy, theft, robbery, and adultery; support for making Sharia law the law of land; and giving Muslim leaders and religious judges the power to decide family and property disputes. The Hudood index ranges from 0 to 7, with 0 being not supportive of Hudood restrictions and 7 being most supportive (see Table 2). Note that

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<sup>60</sup>Fair, Hamza, and Heller, “Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?”

<sup>61</sup>Steven Kull et al., “Public Opinion in Iran and America on Key International Issues,” WorldPublicOpinion.org, 24 January 2007, accessed at [http://worldpublicopinion.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Iran\\_Jan07\\_rpt.pdf](http://worldpublicopinion.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Iran_Jan07_rpt.pdf), 23 March 2019.

<sup>62</sup>Fair, Hamza, and Heller, “Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?”

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.



TABLE 2  
*Index Descriptions and Component Questions*

| <i>Index</i>      | <i>Description</i>   | <i>Survey Questions Used</i>   |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Hudood index      | This is a positive index to measure the support for Hudood laws. Missing values and “don’t know” and “refused” answers are coded as 0. The index is based on seven survey questions. Possible values range from 0 to 7. Higher values indicate higher support for Hudood laws. | <p>Q57. Please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views—even if neither is exactly right. (READ RESPONSE CATEGORIES: 1 = There is only ONE true way to interpret the teachings of my religion, 2 = There is MORE than one true way to interpret the teachings of my religion, 3 = Neither/both equally.)</p> <p>Q66: Sharia is the revealed word of God or Sharia is developed by men, based on the word of God (1 if Sharia is the revealed word of God).</p> <p>Q79a: Do you favor or oppose making the Sharia, or Islamic law, the official law of the land? (1 if favor).</p> <p>Q92a: Do you favor or oppose religious leaders or judges to have the power to dismantle family or property disputes? (1 if favor).</p> <p>Q92b: Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for people who leave the Muslim religion? (1 if favor).</p> <p>Q92c: Do you favor or oppose punishments like whippings and cutting off of hands for crimes like theft and robbery? (1 if favor).</p> <p>Q92d: Do you favor or oppose stoning people who commit adultery? (1 if favor).</p> |
| Religiosity index | This is a positive index to measure religiosity. Missing values, “don’t know and refused” answers are coded as zero. It is based on 8 survey questions and possible values range from 0 to 8. Higher values indicates higher personal religiosity.                             | <p>Q59: How much, if at all, does the way you live your life reflect the Hadith and Sunna, that is, the sayings and actions of the Prophet—a lot, a little, not too much, or not at all (0 if not at all and 3 a lot).</p> <p>Q61: People practice religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, do you pray several times a day, once a day, a few times a week, once a week, a few times a month, seldom, or never (0 if never and 7 several times a day).</p> <p>Q62. Do you pray all five salah every day, or not? (1 if yes, 2 if no)</p> <p>Q63c. Have you ever made a pilgrimage to Mecca? (1 if yes, 2 if no)</p> <p>Q64e: do you give <i>zakat</i> (that is to give a set percentage of your wealth to charity or the mosque)? (1 if yes).</p> <p>Q64f: Do you fast, that is avoid eating, during the daytime, during the holy month of Ramadan? (1 if yes).</p>   |

(Continues)

TABLE 2  
(Continued)

| <i>Index</i>     | <i>Description</i>   | <i>Survey Questions Used</i>   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Secularism index | This is a positive index to measure secularism. Missing values, “don’t know and refused” answers are coded as zero. It is based on 3 survey questions and possible values range from 0 to 3. Higher value means a person more secular) | Q65: Please tell me how often you read or listen to the Koran. Would you say every day, at least once a week, once or twice a month, seldom, or never? (0 if never and 4 if every day).<br>Q36: How much does religion matter in your life? (0 if not at all and 3 if a lot)<br>Q15: In your opinion, how much influence should religious leaders have in political matters? A large influence, some influence, not too much influence or no influence at all? (1 if no influence).<br>Q68: How closely the laws in your country follow Sharia? And Q69: Is this a good or bad thing? (1 if respondents say that his or her country is very/somewhat closely follows (Q68) and that it is a bad thing (Q69); or the respondents say that the country doesn’t follow Sharia law (Q68) and that is a good thing (Q69). |

*Note:* The Q67 data are missing for Egypt and Jordan because of an administrative error. We used Q57, which asked about the openness of respondents to multiple interpretations of their religious teachings, as a proxy component of the Hudood index for Egyptian and Jordanian respondents.

we also replicated the other possible dimensions of Sharia using the procedure used by Fair, Hamza, and Heller<sup>64</sup> in their work with this data set, namely, respondent belief that Sharia is about the provision of governance and restricting women. However, consistent with both studies,<sup>65</sup> neither of those variables was significant, and we dropped them from our discussion for purposes of brevity.

To examine Hypothesis 3, which posits a relationship between secularism and support for suicide bombing, we created an additive secularism index also following Fair, Hamza, and Heller.<sup>66</sup> This index measures respondent support for secular forms of government based on three questions asking the respondent’s opinion about religious leaders’ influence in political affairs and his or her attitude about the country’s secular law. This index ranges from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating the least

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, “Conceptions of Shari’a”; and Fair, Hamza, and Heller, “Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?”

<sup>66</sup>Fair, Hamza, and Heller, “Who Supports Suicide Terrorism in Bangladesh?”

support of secularism and 3 the most supportive. See Table 2 for more information about this index.

To evaluate Hypothesis 4, which concerns the discordant empirical findings about the relationship between exposure to Islamist violence and support for the same, we employed data from the Global Terrorism Database maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland.<sup>67</sup> While the Global Terrorism Database likely underestimates violence given the way in which it collects data, it is the most comprehensive database of terrorist events around the world between 1970 and 2016.<sup>68</sup> For the purposes of this study, there is no data set that is superior to the Global Terrorism Database.

We calculated the average fatalities from terrorist attacks for the past decade. To do so, we first calculated the cumulative attacks and casualties within 10 years prior to the 2011–2012 Pew survey for each of the 20 countries. We calculated the average fatalities per attack by dividing the cumulative fatalities by the number of terrorist attacks with confirmed fatality information.<sup>69</sup> In Table 1, we show the country-wise average terrorist fatality between 2002 and 2011.

To evaluate Hypothesis 5, the relationship between the percentage of Muslims in the population and support for Islamist violence, we used demographic data for 2010 provided by Pew.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, to assess Hypothesis 6, the relationship between a state's relationship with religion and individual support for suicide bombing, we used two measures. First, we employed a dichotomous variable indicating whether Islam was the state's official religion in the period during which the survey was fielded. However, as Fox and others note, this measure alone is inadequate to capture the myriad dimensions of the state's relationship with religion.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, the RAS2 data set is current to 2008. For this reason, we created an additive index from the three indices in RAS2 for 2008, namely, the composite measures for religious discrimination, derived from 30 variables that capture restrictions on minority religions but not majority faiths; religious restrictions, composed of nine elements that capture restrictions on all religions

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<sup>67</sup>LaFree and Dugan, "Introducing the Global Terrorism Database."

<sup>68</sup>Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan, et al., "Measuring Political Violence in Pakistan: Insights From the BFRS Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32 (2015): 536–558.

<sup>69</sup>LaFree and Dugan, "Introducing the Global Terrorism Database."

<sup>70</sup>Pew Research Center, "Religious Composition by Country, 2010–2050," 2 April 2015, accessed at <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projection-table/>, 23 March 2019.

<sup>71</sup>Fox, "Building Composite Measures of Religion and State."

and/or the majority faith; and religious legislation, based on 51 components that reflect state financial support, legislative preferences, or other legal dimensions reflecting state bias toward the majority religion.<sup>72</sup> We validated this superindex through factor analysis. Because RAS2 excludes the Palestinian territories and Kosovo, models with this index include eight countries.

In addition, in several models, we introduced interaction variables between the state-level and individual-level study variables by interacting the dichotomous variable for Islam as a state religion with individual support of literal interpretations of Sharia, as well as with the secularism and religiosity indices.

Finally, we included several control variables. Our Level 1 control variables derive from survey items querying whether the respondent has access to the internet, is male, and lives in a rural or urban area, as well as his or her perceived socioeconomic status, marital status, and gender. Note that we cannot use actual measures of income because of the ways in which Pew inconsistently bins information on income across the different countries in the survey. For this reason, we included the respondent's perceived socioeconomic status using a question that asked individuals to describe their personal economic situation on a four-level scale, ranging from "very bad" (0) to "very good" (3).

Additionally, we used one Level 2 control variable: the degree to which citizens of a given country enjoy civil and political rights or, alternatively, the kind of regime under which one lives. The presence or absence of such liberties may ameliorate or exacerbate the potential for violence against majority communities perpetrated by religious minorities who feel aggrieved by state-imposed religious restrictions.<sup>73</sup> Brian Grim and Roger Finke<sup>74</sup> and Nilay Saiya and Anthony Scime,<sup>75</sup> among others, suggest that religious freedom may mitigate the likelihood of religious violence by helping eliminate

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Jonathan Fox, Patrick James, and Yitan Li, "State Religion and Discrimination against Ethnic Minorities," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 15 (2009): 189–210; Jonathan Fox, "The Ethnic-religious Nexus: The Impact of Religion on Ethnic Conflict," *Civil Wars* 3 (Autumn 2000): 1–22; Jonathan Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Matthias Basedau, Birte Pfeiffer, and Johannes Vüllers, "Bad Religion? Religion, Collective Action, and the Onset of Armed Conflict in Developing Countries," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60 (2016): 226–255; Brian J. Grim and Roger Finke, "International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation, Government Favoritism, and Social Regulation of Religion," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 2 (2006): Article 1; and Yasemin Akbaba and Zeynep Taydas, "Does Religious Discrimination Promote Dissent? A Quantitative Analysis," *Ethnopolitics* 10 (2011): 271–295.

<sup>74</sup>Grim and Finke, "International Religion Indexes."

<sup>75</sup>Nilay Saiya and Anthony Scime, "Explaining Religious Terrorism: A Data-Mined Analysis," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32 (November 2015): 487–512.

such grievances in the first place. To account for this, we constructed averaged measures of civil and political rights from Freedom House data for the decade prior to the survey (2001 and 2011).

While some scholars prefer to use POLITY for such purposes, we use Freedom House data for two reasons. First, we disagree with some of POLITY's coding decisions. For example, POLITY declines to code countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan because of the ongoing conflict there; however, people in both countries enjoy some kinds of freedoms.<sup>76</sup> Second, if we restricted ourselves to the intersection of our sample of the Pew data and POLITY, we would have a diminished sample size, which is unjustified in our estimation because of the problems with the POLITY coding decisions. However, out of an abundance of caution, we conducted the analysis with POLITY data in lieu of Freedom House data, with a diminished set of countries, and found the POLITY variables to be statistically insignificant.

Summaries of our state-level variables are presented in Table 1, while Tables 3 and 4 contain the descriptive statistics for our dependent variables and individual-level independent variables, respectively.

### *Estimation and Robustness Checks*

To test these hypotheses, we estimated all models using hierarchical generalized linear modeling (also known as multilevel modeling or mixed-effects generalized linear modeling) for a dichotomous dependent variable. We also retained the dependent variable in its original form and estimated the models using hierarchical generalized linear modeling for an ordinal dependent variable (using an ordered logit).

We employed multilevel modeling because we have variables at two different levels of analysis: the individual level (Level 1) and the country level (Level 2). The use of a multilevel model is justified because we are estimating a Level 1 dependent variable using both Level 1 and Level 2 independent variables and because doing so produces unbiased parameters. (NB: When there are multiple levels of analysis, the independence of observations, which is necessary for traditional generalized linear models, is violated and produces biased parameters. Multilevel models correct the biases in parameter

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<sup>76</sup>Fair fieldwork over numerous years.

TABLE 3  
*Dependent Variable: Proportion of Support for Suicide Bombing (0 = No, 1 = Yes) by Country*

| <i>Country</i>          | <i>N</i> | <i>Unweighted</i> | <i>Weighted</i> |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Afghanistan             | 1,440    | 0.58              | 0.59            |
| Albania                 | 755      | 0.14              | 0.16            |
| Algeria                 | 974      | 0.34              | 0.34            |
| Azerbaijan              | 944      | 0.06              | 0.06            |
| Bangladesh              | 1,828    | 0.47              | 0.48            |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina  | 977      | 0.12              | 0.13            |
| Egypt                   | 1,720    | 0.59              | 0.59            |
| Indonesia               | 1,816    | 0.19              | 0.19            |
| Iraq                    | 1,353    | 0.15              | 0.14            |
| Jordan                  | 917      | 0.46              | 0.45            |
| Kazakhstan              | 949      | 0.04              | 0.04            |
| Kosovo                  | 998      | 0.30              | 0.24            |
| Kyrgyzstan              | 1,181    | 0.27              | 0.28            |
| Malaysia                | 1,101    | 0.32              | 0.31            |
| Niger                   | 739      | 0.57              | 0.58            |
| Pakistan                | 1,232    | 0.18              | 0.18            |
| Palestinian Territories | 897      | 0.62              | 0.62            |
| Russia                  | 929      | 0.10              | 0.09            |
| Tajikistan              | 1,252    | 0.12              | 0.13            |
| Tunisia                 | 1,359    | 0.24              | 0.24            |
| Total                   | 23,361   | 0.30              | 0.30            |

TABLE 4  
*Descriptive Statistics of Individual-Level Independent Variables*

|   | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>Median</i> | <i>Unweighted</i> |                           | <i>Weighted</i> |                           |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
|   |             |             |               | <i>Mean</i>       | <i>Standard Deviation</i> | <i>Mean</i>     | <i>Standard Deviation</i> |
| Sharia index                              | 0           | 7           | 4.0           | 3.68              | 2.17                      | 3.68            | 2.19                      |
| Religiosity index                         | 0           | 8           | 5.3           | 4.94              | 1.84                      | 4.94            | 1.86                      |
| Secularism index                          | 0           | 2           | 0.3           | 0.60              | 0.55                      | 0.60            | 0.56                      |
| Age                                       | 18          | 97          | 35.0          | 37.01             | 13.95                     | 37.33           | 14.62                     |
| Gender (1 = male, 0 = female)             | 0           | 1           | 1.0           | 0.51              | 0.50                      | 0.52            | 0.50                      |
| Urban (1 = yes, 0 = no)                   | 0           | 1           | 0.0           | 0.49              | 0.50                      | 0.49            | 0.50                      |
| Internet (1 = yes, 0 = no)                | 0           | 1           | 0.0           | 0.28              | 0.45                      | 0.27            | 0.45                      |
| Education                                 | 0           | 4           | 2.0           | 1.59              | 1.31                      | 1.53            | 1.28                      |
| Perception of personal economic situation | 0           | 3           | 2.0           | 1.61              | 0.81                      | 1.61            | 0.81                      |
| Observations                              | 23,361      |             |               |                   |                           |                 |                           |

estimates, including standard errors, and generates correct confidence intervals and significance tests.<sup>77</sup>)

The general specification of the individual-level (or Level 1) model is as follows:

$$\log\left(\frac{p_{ij}}{1 - p_{ij}}\right) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} \times \text{Sharia} + \beta_{2j} \times \text{Religiosity} \\ + \beta_{3j} \times \text{Secularism} + \text{Level 1 Controls} + r_{ij}, \quad (1)$$

where  $p_{ij}$  is the probability that respondent  $i$  in country  $j$  supports suicide bombing (dependent variable = 1). For the purposes of this estimation, we assume that Sharia, religiosity, and secularism are fixed effects—that is, that they have the same effect in all 20 countries. Note that when we tested for random effects of these variables, the results were statistically insignificant. For this reason, we use fixed effects for our primary Level 1 independent variables of interest.

The general specifications of the country level (or Level 2) model are as follows:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \times \text{Muslim Proportion} + \text{Level 2 Control} + u_{0j}, \\ \beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}, \quad (2) \\ \beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}, \dots$$

where  $\beta_{0j}$  is the observed aggregate support for terrorism in each of the 20 countries.

In the Level 2 model specified here, this aggregate mean is hypothesized as a function of the proportion of Muslims in each country plus a stochastic error term ( $u_{ij}$ ). Subsequent models include additional hypothesized aggregate-level predictors. For instance, Model 5 is estimated as a function of Muslim proportion, fatality rate, and Islam as a state religion and a stochastic error term.

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<sup>77</sup>G. Gua and H. Zhao, "Multilevel Modeling for Binary Data," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 441–462; Marco R. Steenbergen and Bradford S. Jones, "Modeling Multilevel Data Structures," *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (January 2002): 218–237; and Stephen W. Raudenbush and Anthony S. Bryk, *Hierarchical Linear Models: Applications and Data Analysis Methods*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

Combining Equations (1) and (2) produces the following multilevel model:

$$\log\left(\frac{p_{ij}}{1-p_{ij}}\right) = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10} \times \text{Sharia} + \gamma_{20} \times \text{Religiosity} \\ + \gamma_{30} \times \text{Secularism} + \gamma_{01} \\ \times \text{Muslim Proportions} + \text{Controls} + r_{ij} + u_{ij}$$

To isolate the effects of our study variables, we estimated multiple models. The first model examines the effects of only the Level 1 indices including the control variables. The second through fifth models include only one of our Level 2 study variables. The sixth and seventh models include all three Level 2 variables, and the last two models include three Level 2 variables and a cross-level interaction term. We included several cross-level interaction terms in our analyses because, as discussed earlier, we anticipated that the effects of religiosity, secularism, and scriptural literalism on support for suicide bombing may be different for countries that adapt Islam as a state religion and countries that do not. (NB: In many cases, these interactions were not significant; therefore, we omitted them from the tables for purposes of concision.)

All variables in the models are grand-mean centered for ease of interpreting the intercept term. With multilevel models, the intercept and slopes in the Level 1 (all the  $\beta$ s) model become the outcome variable at Level 2 (see Equations (1) and (2)). We chose to grand center all variables because doing so only changes the magnitude of the intercept without changing the magnitude of the coefficients. Grand-mean centering in multilevel modeling permits us to interpret the intercept as the expected value of dependent variable when all the independent variables are held at the mean.<sup>78</sup>

Because the results for the logistic regression and ordered logistic regression are generally the same, we only describe the results of the

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<sup>78</sup>Omar Paccagnella, "Centering or Not Centering in Multilevel Models? The Role of Group Mean and the Assessment of Group Effects," *Evaluation Review* 30 (February 2006): 66-84; Raudenbush and Bryk, *Hierarchical Linear Models*; Tom Snijders and Roel Bosker, *Multilevel Analysis: An Introduction to Basic and Advanced Multilevel Modeling* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999); Ita Kreft and Jan De Leeuw, *Introducing Multilevel Modeling* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998); and Douglas A. Luke, *Multilevel Modeling* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004).



dichotomous dependent variable. The logistic regression results are presented in Table 5. The ordered logistic regression results are presented in Table A1 in the online appendix.

Finally, because some scholars have alleged that Pew's in-country contractors engage in data fabrication (that is, by duplicating observations<sup>79</sup>), we used an algorithm proposed by Noble Kuriakose and Michael Robbins<sup>80</sup> to detect and delete potentially fraudulent duplicate observations. (Pew oppugns the allegation as well as the algorithm.<sup>81</sup>) Kuriakose and Robbins suggest that their method is suitable for a survey instrument that is "lengthy, covers a variety of topics, and responses include five- or seven-point scales" because any two respondents have an infinitesimally small likelihood of answering with a similar response pattern.<sup>82</sup> The instrument used in this survey does not cover a variety of topics; rather, it is highly focused on religion. Out of an abundance of caution, we nonetheless used this protocol to identify and eliminate potential duplicates and reran our analyses (using both logistic and ordered logistic regression) as robustness checks. Doing so brought our sample size down to 19,024 from 23,361. (See Tables A2 and A3 in the online appendix for these estimates.)

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

We find that several Level 1 variables significantly influence respondents' assessment of suicide bombing. While we find no statistically significant relationship between individual religiosity and support for violence (Hypothesis 1), the interaction between Islam as a state religion and religiosity was negative and significant only at the incautious limit of  $p < 0.1$ . Further investigation of the relationship between religiosity and support for suicide bombing shows an insignificant negative relationship in both countries where Islam is not a state religion ( $p = 0.970$ ) and in countries where Islam is a state religion ( $p = 0.21$ ).

Turning to Hypothesis 2, the focus of this article, our analysis yields strong support for the central claim that scriptural literalism is

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<sup>79</sup>John Bohannon, "Many Surveys, about One in Five, May Contain Fraudulent Data," *Science*, 24 February 2016, accessed <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/02/many-surveys-about-one-five-may-contain-fraudulent-data>, 23 March 2019.

<sup>80</sup>Noble Kuriakose and Michael Robbins, "Don't Get Duped: Fraud through Duplication in Public Opinion Surveys," *Statistical Journal of the IAOS* 32 (August 2016): 283–291.

<sup>81</sup>Pew Research Center, "Evaluating a New Proposal for Detecting Data Falsification in Surveys: The Underlying Causes of "High Matches" between Survey Respondents," 25 February 2016, accessed <http://www.pewresearch.org/2016/02/23/evaluating-a-new-proposal-for-detecting-data-falsification-in-surveys/>, 23 March 2019.

<sup>82</sup>Kuriakose and Robbins, "Don't Get Duped," 285.

TABLE 5  
Logistic Regression Results

|                                       | Model 1           | Model 2           | Model 3           | Model 4           | Model 5          | Model 6           | Model 7          | Model 8           | Model 9            |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Sharia index                          | 0.11**<br>(0.04)  | 0.11**<br>(0.04)  | 0.11**<br>(0.04)  | 0.11**<br>(0.04)  | 0.09*<br>(0.04)  | 0.11**<br>(0.04)  | 0.09*<br>(0.04)  | 0.11**<br>(0.04)  | 0.11**<br>(0.04)   |
| Religiosity                           | -0.00<br>(0.04)   | -0.00<br>(0.04)   | -0.00<br>(0.04)   | -0.00<br>(0.04)   | 0.00<br>(0.05)   | -0.01<br>(0.04)   | -0.00<br>(0.05)  | -0.00<br>(0.04)   | -0.01<br>(0.04)    |
| Secularism                            | -0.26**<br>(0.10) | -0.26**<br>(0.10) | -0.26**<br>(0.10) | -0.26**<br>(0.10) | -0.21*<br>(0.10) | -0.26**<br>(0.10) | -0.21*<br>(0.10) | -0.26**<br>(0.10) | -0.29***<br>(0.09) |
| Age                                   | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | -0.00<br>(0.00)  | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | -0.00<br>(0.00)  | -0.00<br>(0.00)   | -0.00<br>(0.00)    |
| Male                                  | 0.14***<br>(0.04) | 0.14***<br>(0.04) | 0.14***<br>(0.04) | 0.14***<br>(0.04) | 0.15**<br>(0.04) | 0.14***<br>(0.04) | 0.15**<br>(0.04) | 0.14***<br>(0.04) | 0.14***<br>(0.04)  |
| Urban                                 | -0.12<br>(0.09)   | -0.12<br>(0.09)   | -0.12<br>(0.09)   | -0.12<br>(0.09)   | -0.14<br>(0.09)  | -0.12<br>(0.09)   | -0.14<br>(0.09)  | -0.12<br>(0.09)   | -0.12<br>(0.09)    |
| Internet                              | -0.17*<br>(0.07)  | -0.17*<br>(0.07)  | -0.17*<br>(0.07)  | -0.17*<br>(0.07)  | -0.10<br>(0.06)  | -0.17*<br>(0.07)  | -0.10<br>(0.07)  | -0.16*<br>(0.07)  | -0.16*<br>(0.07)   |
| Education                             | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.04<br>(0.03)  | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.04<br>(0.03)  | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.01<br>(0.03)    |
| Economic perception                   | 0.12** (0.04)     | 0.12** (0.04)     | 0.13** (0.04)     | 0.12** (0.04)     | 0.11** (0.04)    | 0.12** (0.04)     | 0.11** (0.04)    | 0.12** (0.04)     | 0.12** (0.04)      |
| Freedom index                         | -0.06 (0.20)      | -0.14 (0.19)      | -0.15 (0.23)      | -0.17 (0.22)      | -0.17 (0.20)     | -0.22 (0.22)      | -0.32 (0.23)     | -0.21 (0.21)      | -0.22 (0.22)       |
| % of Muslims                          | 0.02** (0.01)     |                   |                   |                   |                  | 0.01* (0.01)      | 0.01* (0.01)     | 0.01* (0.01)      | 0.01* (0.01)       |
| Fatality rate                         |                   |                   | 0.14~<br>(0.08)   |                   |                  | 0.05<br>(0.08)    | 0.15*<br>(0.07)  | 0.04<br>(0.07)    | 0.05<br>(0.07)     |
| Islam as state religion               |                   |                   |                   | 0.67 (0.47)       | 0.43 (0.59)      | 0.39 (0.46)       | 0.31 (0.57)      | 0.41 (0.44)       | 0.41 (0.45)        |
| Religion index                        |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                    |
| Islam as state religion x Religiosity |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                    |
| Islam as state religion x Secularism  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |                   |                  |                   |                    |
| Constant                              | -1.09             | -1.06             | -1.08             | -1.05             | -1.17            | -1.04             | -1.16            | -0.99             | 0.35~ (0.19)       |
| Level 2 intercept                     | 0.80              | 0.65              | 0.73              | 0.70              | 0.74             | 0.60              | 0.52             | 0.57              | -1.02              |
| ICC                                   | 0.20              | 0.17              | 0.18              | 0.18              | 0.18             | 0.15              | 0.14             | 0.15              | 0.59               |
| -2 log-likelihood                     | -12,224.4         | -12,222.4         | -12,223.5         | -12,223.1         | -11,091.6        | -12,221.6         | -11,088.5        | -12,207.4         | 0.15               |
| N (Level 1)                           | 23,361            | 23,361            | 23,361            | 23,361            | 21,466           | 23,361            | 21,466           | 23,361            | -12,208.1          |
| N (Level 2)                           | 20                | 20                | 20                | 20                | 18               | 20                | 18               | 20                | 23,361             |
| df                                    | 10                | 11                | 11                | 11                | 11               | 13                | 13               | 14                | 20                 |

~ Significant at the 0.1 level; \* at the 0.05 level; \*\* at the 0.01 level; \*\*\* at the 0.001 level.

positively correlated with support for terrorism. Compared with all the other variables in the models that were statistically significant, this variable has the largest impact on support for suicide bombing among the other Level 1 variables (marginal effects are depicted in Figure 1). While we also created an interaction term with this variable and the binary indicator for states that adopted Islam as a state religion, that interaction variable was not statistically significant (we omitted it from the tables for brevity).

Additionally, we find strong support for Hypothesis 3, that secularism is negatively correlated with support for suicide bombing (marginal effects are depicted in Figure 1). This result is potentially limited by our cross-level interaction finding: namely, when we include an interaction between the state religion and the secularism variables, the sign on this interaction variable is positive but significant only at the injudicious level of  $p < 0.1$ . While ordinarily, one would not report findings at this significance level, we do here because this finding suggests the possibility that the impact of secularism on support for violence is different in countries that have adopted Islam as a state religion. This suggests that secularism decreases support for suicide bombing in countries where Islam is not a state religion (coefficient =  $-0.29$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), whereas in countries in which Islam is a state religion, there is no relationship between secularism and support for suicide bombing. For countries where Islam is state religion, the relationship between secularism and support for suicide bombing is positive but not statistically significant (coefficient =  $0.06$ ,  $p = 0.80$ ).

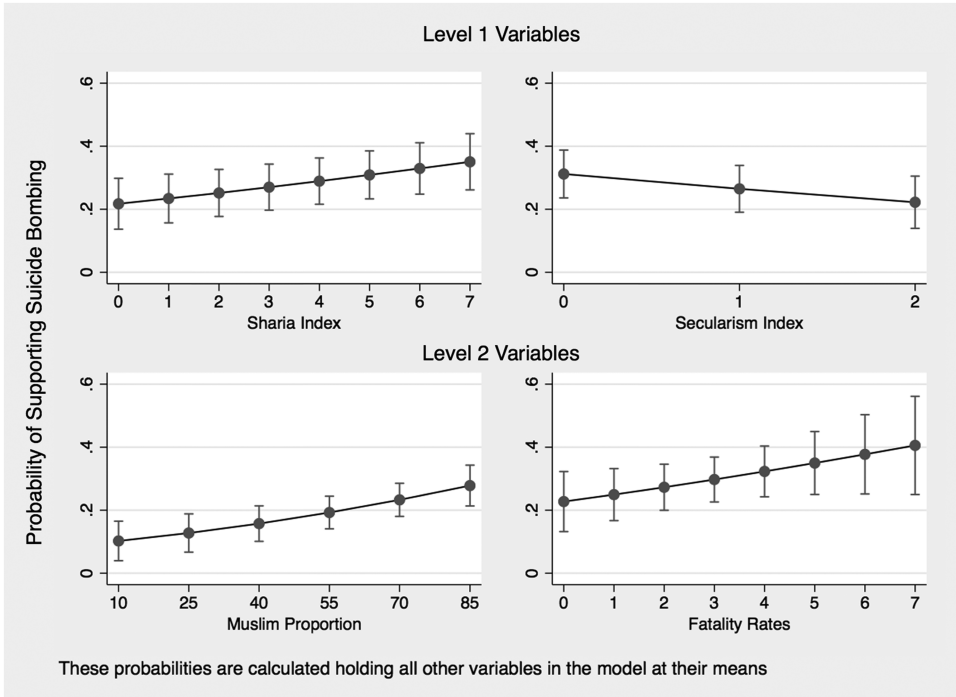
Turning to Level 2 factors, we find support for a positive relationship between exposure to Islamist violence and support for suicide bombing (Hypothesis 4), consistent with the thesis advanced by Bernadette Hayes and Ian McAllister; Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas Pepinsky, and Stathis Kalyvas; Augustin Echebarria-Echabe and Emilia Fernández-Guede; and Daphna Canetti, Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, Ehud and Eiran<sup>83</sup> (marginal effects are depicted in Figure 1).

Our estimates provide consistent evidence of a positive relationship between the percentage of Muslims in a country and individual support for suicide attacks (Hypothesis 5) (marginal effects are depicted in Figure 1). Compared with all significant Level 1 and Level

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<sup>83</sup>Hayes and McAllister, "Sowing Dragon's Teeth"; Kocher, Pepinsky, and Kalyvas, "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War"; Echebarria-Echabe and Fernández-Guede, "Effects of Terrorism on Attitudes and Ideological Orientation"; Canetti, Hirsch-Hoefler, and Eiran, "Suffer the Children."

FIGURE 1  
Marginal Effects of Significant Level 1 and Level 2 Variables



2 variables, this variable has the largest impact on support for suicide bombing. A caveat to this finding is that there are only three countries in our sample that are Muslim-minority states (Russia, Bosnia, and Malaysia). Because of the lack of variation in our Muslim population variable, we conducted two additional robustness checks by estimating additional logistic regression analyses based on Model 2 in Table 5. These estimates are presented in Table A4 in the online appendix. First, we reestimated Model 2 only for Muslim-majority countries. Second, we did so for Muslim-minority countries. As the data in Table A4 evidence, the percentage of Muslims remains significant in both, despite the diminished sample size of the latter.

With respect to Hypothesis 6, which pertained to aspects of the state’s relationship with Islam, we find little support whether we consider the crude binary variable that indicates the state’s adoption of Islam as a state religion in the year of the survey or whether we use the more sophisticated and capacious index that reflects the myriad other ways the state could interact with religion for the most current year of the RAS2

data, which was 2008. We find only nominal evidence of the predicted interactions between Level 1 and Level 2 variables.

Additionally, several control variables were statistically significant: males were consistently more likely to support violence, as were those with a higher economic perception while those with access to the internet were not.

Finally, upon removing the potentially suspect data using the methodology prescribed by Kuriakose and Robbins and reestimating the models with the reduced sample size, we find the signs of the coefficients and significance levels generally remained the same, affording some modicum of confidence in the fundamentally soundness of our results even if there was malfeasance in the collection of some survey samples as alleged by Kuriakose and Robbins.<sup>84</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We find strong supporting evidence that the intuition explicated by Fair, Littman, and Nugent<sup>85</sup> that Sharia is multivalent and should be instrumentalized as such. Specifically, we replicate their key finding, that those who understand Sharia in terms of scriptural literalism are more likely to support Islamist terrorism, in this case suicide bombing. We also replicated their finding that other aspects of respondent conceptions of Sharia as well as piety are not correlated with support for violence. However, we augmented their model to explicitly control for respondents' embrace of secularism and found that more secularly oriented respondents are less likely to support suicide attacks. This conclusion is perhaps mitigated by the statistically insignificant finding that the impact of this variable is different depending on whether the state has adopted Islam as the state religion. We identify this issue for future research. We find two state-level (Level 2) variables to be significantly and positively correlated with support for suicide bombing: the percentage of Muslims who live in the country and exposure to terrorism. Perhaps the most surprising result is that these individual predictors are not generally attenuated by country-level variables such as regime type, individual liberties enjoyed, or the multifaceted ways in which states can support religion to the detriment of religious minorities.

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<sup>84</sup>Kuriakose and Robbins, "Don't Get Duped."

<sup>85</sup>Fair, Littman, and Nugent, "Conceptions of Shari'a."

Are these findings germane to contemporary American political landscape? Recently, after considerable contestations in lower courts, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld parts of the so-called Muslim travel ban imposed by President Donald Trump by executive order. This order pertains to people from six Muslim-majority countries: Libya, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. (None of the six countries that are part of this Muslim ban is included in our sample.) Conspicuously absent from this ban are Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan which played pivotal roles in the 11 September 2001 attacks. Similarly absent are Tunisia, Russia, Turkey, Jordan (as well as Saudi Arabia), which yield the largest numbers of foreign fighters for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Controlling for overall population, Tunisia, Maldives, Jordan, and Lebanon produce the most Islamic State combatants, followed by Belgium, Austria, Sweden, and France none of which is on this list. When one controls for the number of Muslims in a population, Muslim-minority states top the list: Finland has produced 1,590 fighters per one million Muslims, while Belgium and Sweden have produced 699 and 631, respectively—despite being highly equitable and wealthy countries.<sup>86</sup>

Scholars should urgently focus on whether, and if so how, the supply of terrorist violence relates to the ostensible demand for the same. Data such as the survey data employed here only provide a measure of the latter, not the former. While our analyses suggest that people who live in countries with more exposure to violence and a higher percentage of Muslims are more likely to be sympathetic to suicide bombing—at least as measured by the emotive question posed by Pew that conflates support for the goal (defending Islam) with support for the means (suicide bombing)—overall, support for suicide bombing is low despite the priming in the question that may elicit upwardly biased estimates for support. These country-level indicators are also mitigated by respondent-level data. Before these results can be used to inform this contentious policy landscape, we require more research on how attitudes toward violence effect the supply of violence and where that violence occurs. Studies that have sought to do this are few and far between, and the mechanisms through which support for and incidents of violence are correlated remain disputed.

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<sup>86</sup>Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor, “What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?” (Working Paper 22190, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, 2016), accessed at <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22190>, 23 March 2019.

Another important point highlighted by this evolving body of research is that most surveys are inadequate for the purposes that scholars require. While the Pew data that we employ here are exceptional in the questions asked, most surveys of Muslim populations do not employ the detailed questions that make this study possible. It is simply inadequate to query respondents' support for "Islamic law" or support for Sharia with the intent of using that variable to explain support for violence; rather, scholars require more in-depth studies of how individuals in different countries conceptualize complex concepts such as Sharia.

Similarly, it would be useful if Pew and others ceased asking individuals about their support for violence to defend Islam from its enemies despite the obvious utility of benchmarking across the years in which it has been asked. For more refined analytical understanding of support for violence, scholars require a more neutral question that employs less emotive language that is less likely to prime respondents to support the tactic. These concerns about survey content and question phrasing are in addition to the more crucial concerns about the integrity of these data in the first instance. Given that many scholars use Pew's data, we need a robust communal effort to assess the legitimacy of these data. These efforts require Pew to be more transparent about how it fields its surveys (the firms they use, providing codes for enumerators, instruments in foreign language, details about enumerator training, etc.). So far, Pew has avoided being more transparent about these critical issues.

Equally important, the data set at hand and other data sets omit important Muslim-minority populations. India has the largest Muslim-minority population with 161 million Muslims, followed by Ethiopia with 28 million, China with 22 million, Russia with 16 million, and Tanzania with 13 million.<sup>87</sup> Muslim populations in India, China, and Russia are particularly important because these countries host Islamist terrorist movements and should merit urgent study and analysis. The aforementioned data on Islamic State fighter production underscore that the countries that are dispatching the highest numbers of fighters, controlling for the size of their Muslim population, are often European countries with Muslim minorities. In contrast, while India and Indonesia have some of the largest Muslim populations in the world and host a variety of

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<sup>87</sup>Pew Research Center, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population," 7 October 2009, accessed at <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>, 23 March 2019.

indigenous Islamist militant groups, they have produced the fewest numbers of Islamic State fighters.<sup>88</sup>

We recognize that this is not the end of the inquiry into the state-level and individual-level drivers of support for Islamist terrorism. We hope that this article motivates others to examine these proposed considerations in future work and motivates those who conduct surveys to rethink the questionnaires they employ and the methods with which they do so.\*

### Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

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<sup>88</sup>Benmelech and Klor, "What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?"

\*We are grateful to the perspicacious reviewers for their generous and insightful comments. We also thank Rebecca Littman, Elizabeth Nugent for being superb collaborators. We alone are responsible for errors of fact or interpretation. We also thank Junjie Chen for her early contributions to this project.