

Ethno-Religious Conflict and the Duration of Peace:

Autonomy, Discrimination, and Territory

by

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ABSTRACT

How do religion and ethnicity shape the sustainability of peace after civil wars? Ethnic and religious conflicts have been rising in prevalence over the last half-century, generating larger headlines as they influence every corner of the world. These conflicts occur across faiths, sects, and nations, and they appear to reignite in intervals, devolving into conflict again and again with spells of relative peace in between. With some notable exceptions, previous research on conflict recurrence has focused primarily on either ethnicity or religion, resulting in limited understanding of the ways that religion and ethnicity may interact. Moreover, many studies simplify the study of religion, ethnicity, and conflict by reducing it to an issue of shared identity, i.e., whether the two warring parties are from the same nominal religious or ethnic group. This project explores the role that religion and ethnicity play in three major causes of conflict recurrence: post-war autonomy, peacetime discrimination, and territorial claims. The primary argument is that religious and ethnic identities drive conflict recurrence through territorial claims, achieving autonomy, and their reactions to discrimination. Using a stratified Cox Proportional Hazard model, I analyze global data on all post-intrastate armed conflict peace years between 1980 and 2006. The results suggest that the indivisibility of territory in religious conflicts makes conflict more likely to recur, but only in cases where the fundamental question at hand is the role of religion in government. In addition, conflicts organized around ethnicity are increasingly unlikely to respond to discrimination by returning to war. The extreme scarcity of post-war autonomy arrangements rendered robust conclusions about its effect difficult to discern.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving wife, Bridget, who has stood by me with encouragement and support throughout graduate school. These years have been difficult, and I am truly thankful for having you in my life. This work is also dedicated to my dog, Watson, who has not only provided emotional support but has intently listened to countless hours of my verbal processing of this project and the challenges it held.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2021, fighting erupted between the Israeli government and Hamas, sparking a return to conflict that had been largely static since 2014. Leading up to the conflict, Israel limited access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, for certain Palestinians leading up to Ramadan. That was paired with an imminent Israeli Supreme Court ruling over the right to evict Palestinians living in the historic Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem. These two events, paired with the simmering tensions between the two sides, encouraged Hamas to launch a rocket campaign from Gaza against Israeli population centers. Israel then launched air strikes across Gaza, and over the next eleven days more than 300 people were killed and nearly 100 buildings were destroyed. After those eleven days, the two sides agreed to a ceasefire that was short-lived and led to additional fighting a month later. The deep religious and ethnic dimensions of the conflict cannot be understated. Control over deeply religious territory in Jerusalem, the blockade of Gaza, economic and housing restrictions, and more; there are several facets to the conflict that could prime the religious and ethnic divides and lead to conflict renewal.

Recurring ethnic and religious civil wars dominate media headlines with each new cycle of violence, creating perceptions that they are inexorable, natural hostilities. In places like Northern Ireland, Nigeria, and Lebanon, religious and ethnic groups have engaged in sustained violence. And in some of these cases, conflict stops and restarts. One can see evidence of religion and ethnicity playing a key role in protracted and repeating conflicts around the globe.

Just as ethnic conflicts have become dominant in the political landscape, religious conflicts have been rising in prevalence over the last half-century, generating larger headlines as they influence every corner of the world (Fox 2004; Toft 2006). These conflicts occur across faiths, sects, and nations. They appear to reignite in intervals, devolving into conflict again and again with spells of relative peace in between. In many of these conflicts, religious groups have identities that *overlap* with ethnic identities, leading countries to face battle with distinct lines drawn across religion, language, ethnicity, and region.

Battle lines drawn in civil war are difficult to forget, and the reasons that they become primed do not easily disappear. Religious and ethnic civil wars are rooted in the intractability and indivisibility. However, religion and ethnicity do not necessarily operate through the same logic or processes. Ethnicity relies on kinship-based ties, while religion provides community and shared ideals. Together, however, the concerns of both religion and ethnicity can reinforce one another rather than engendering cross-cutting cleavages that might increase the duration of post-war peace.

How do religion and ethnicity – independently and jointly - shape the possibility of renewed conflict after civil war? Questions about why these wars relapse after establishing peace has led the United Nations to create the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund. Policymakers, media members, and academics have viewed the prospects of sustained peace after civil and ethnic wars with great consternation, recognizing achieving sustainable peace as a significant quandary. However, the religious and ethnic components of these conflicts are understudied and conceptualized inadequately. Is it merely a matter of differences between the two sides that drives them,

or does the purpose of the conflict and group organizational patterns fundamentally alter the duration of the post-war peace?

Drawing and building on the literature about the role and effect of identity in peace and conflict, and specifically on how religion and ethnicity may influence post-war peace, this project develops a theory to explain the effects of religion and ethnicity on peace that emphasizes cleavages, grievances, and indivisibility through autonomy, discrimination, and territory.

Adopting a quantitative approach, this project seeks to illustrate the broad global effects of indivisibility and grievance in religious and ethnic conflicts on post-war conflict recurrence. I utilize a dataset with all post-conflict peace years between 1980 and 2006 to perform survival modeling to estimate the effects of grievances and issue indivisibility have on peace duration.

To accomplish this goal, I disaggregate religion and ethnicity into their component parts and study the ways that these dimensions influence three of the most commonly theorized causes of conflict recurrence. Religious and ethnic conflicts can be fought over whether the identity is central or peripheral; in other words, the role of the identity in government or by how each side organizes themselves. In this project, I separate the concepts of organizational structure from the question of what issues the group fights for. Rather than differences in identity and incompatibility, this approach provides a more nuanced account of the role that religion and ethnicity play in conflict recurrence.

First, identity distinctions and representation draw groups to seek autonomy. Second, specific grievances against the state over discrimination or the lack of self-

determination draw rebel groups into conflict recurrence. Finally, issue indivisibility in territorial claims is driven primarily by religious ideology and historical ethnic ties. Religion and ethnicity influence each of these three causes of conflict recurrence differently.

The rest of this project is presented as follows. In the next chapter, I synthesize the existing literature on civil war recurrence and identity in conflict, providing a background of the discussions within which this project will rest. The third chapter presents the theory and discusses six hypotheses on how religion and ethnicity impact civil war recurrence through three primary mechanisms: post-war autonomy, peacetime discrimination, and territorial claims. The fourth chapter provides a detailed empirical strategy for the analysis of the six hypotheses developed in the previous chapter. The last chapter discusses some of the implications of the project and ways it could develop into a broader research agenda.

CHAPTER 2

CIVIL WAR, ETHNICITY, AND RELIGION

A variety of approaches have been developed to explain the behavior of religious and ethnic groups after civil wars, and how identity divisions among them shape group behavior. In this section, I first define civil wars and then both religion and ethnicity. Next, I discuss some of main approaches to studying how religion and ethnicity influence the likelihood of civil war recurrence. Last, I focus on how the existing literature has discussed three of the main causes of civil war recurrence: autonomy, discrimination, and territory.

What is Civil War?

In examining peace after civil wars, it necessary to first define what makes a civil war. Sambanis (2004) takes up this question explicitly in his article, “What is Civil War?”, where he describes three major distinctions across the various available definitions and the consequences of each choice. First is the threshold of violence necessary to be considered a civil war; second is the start and end date of the conflicts; and third is the distinguishing characteristics of interstate, intrastate, and extrastate conflict. A civil war must be intrastate, occurring within a single country between the state and a group within it, at least 25 battle deaths within a year.

Tilly (2003) agrees that civil war is a specific form of political violence, centered on short-run damage and coordinated actors, and distinguishes it from coups, organized crime, international war, and other forms of political violence. Bara et al (2021) reframe this, articulating four required components of a civil war: a stated political

incompatibility, intensity of violence reaching some stated threshold, the non-state actor must be organized, and the state is a part of the conflict. After reviewing these approaches, I adopt the following definition of a civil war as a conflict between the state and a domestic non-governmental actor that results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year (Gleditsch et al., 2002; Kreutz 2010; Pettersson & Öberg, 2020). This broad definition is utilized by the Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP), the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset, and dozens of individual studies.

Defining Identity and Identity Conflicts

The way scholars define religion and ethnicity in the context of conflicts is of considerable consequence. Are conflicts religious or ethnic simply because of an identity-based difference between the two parties? Many authors use this distinction in coding, if not theoretically, to define what constitutes a religious or ethnic conflict. However, this approach fails to address whether or why these identities are salient or relevant. Moreover, religion is often subsumed under ethnicity (Brubaker 2013; Horowitz 1985). As a component of ethnicity, religion is thought to act like language and color in distinguishing the group from others.

Defining Ethnicity. Although religion and ethnicity are deeply related, they are neither synonymous nor nested. I define ethnicity as a conception of nationhood reliant on a shared history that has been activated within the conflict. Ethnicity functions as a kinship-based relational system, providing distinct ties between individuals of shared but indirect descent. The expanded definitions of kin or family provide people with shared culture, race, language, and more. Ethnicity is intrinsically interwoven with conceptions

of the nation. Some authors choose to differentiate between national and ethnic conceptions of kinship through locale and access to the state (Hechter 2000), others define ethnicity within the confines of genetics and birth (Connor 1990). At dispute is essentially the extent to which authors emphasize fluidity, the constructed and manicured history of nations and ethnicity that leads to shared culture within a community (Connor 1990; Gellner 1983).

Kaufman (1996) and Sambanis (2001) adopt a definition of ethnic civil war that asserts an ethnic group's desire is to alter the power relationship between their ethnic group and the state. These wars are largely rooted in altering the state's definition of citizenship and modifying the state's identity (Kaufman 1996)¹. Sambanis (2001), along with others, express that, much as we see in religion, not all wars where ethnic divisions exist should be considered ethnic wars. Rather, the explicit goals must be considered. Religious and ethnic wars cannot be defined as merely a difference in identity, but rather focus on the substantive nature of the dispute and the goals of the actors within it.

Simple differences of language or kin are therefore not sufficient for a civil war to be considered an ethnic civil war. Without the political activation of these cultural factors, the raw differences make little difference to how the post-conflict period unfolds. When groups actively build the conflict up as a clash of history, a clash of ethnic nationalities, ethnic identity becomes relevant to the actors within the conflict. Ethnic identity must be activated to connect to their heritage (and usually the threat to it) to their willingness of individuals to fight and potentially die for it. A conflict is an ethnic

¹ Kaufman (1996) argues that all ethnic civil wars ultimately end in self-governance or military victory, as the two ethnic communities cannot live peacefully together.

conflict when a shared history informs a conception of nationhood different from that of the state, and the sub-national group deploys violence to alter the state power structures to their benefit. This definition explicitly includes groups whose goals encompass overtaking the state, regional or group-level autonomy, and outright independence movements.

Defining Religion. In contrast to ethnicity, religion relies on a belief structure, rather than kinship per se, and has been viewed primarily as a series of symbols, motivations, and conceptions that have importance in people's lives (Geertz 1966). However, that definition has received extensive criticism for being reductionist and Protestant-centric, leaving us to seek a definition that is more inclusive to terrorist groups and transnational actors that one might consider religious. Lincoln (2003) instead contends that religion is best understood as having four domains: a discourse concerning transcendency, a set of practices designed to lead people and the world to being more perfect, a community defined by discourse and practices, and institutions meant to codify that community and regulate the discourse and practices.

While Lincoln is more concerned with the discourse and practices, this project focuses more on the community and identity created by those practices and the discourse that sustains and pushes them to action. The community is the central frame of identity, but that identity and community are defined by the practices and discourse, the way in which the community frames its message and goals. Looking at a subcommunity, one engaged in a conflict but not descriptive of an entire religious community, the discourse in question should be key in explaining why violence becomes legitimate. Discourse

allows for violent religious groups to attract like-minded individuals to their cause, to promote themselves, and to rally support more widely.

Grzymala-Busse (2012) contends that religion serves as both an identity and ideology. Philpott (2007) argues that religion enters the political sphere via the unique properties of their organizations as quasi-statist with capabilities such as taxation, while failing to exist as formal state institutions. Religion extends far beyond the role of simply being an identity, instead having authoritative structures and acting as a pseudo-state.

Toft's (2007) definition of religious civil war centers on whether either belief or practice is central (versus peripheral) to a conflict. Religion functioning as 'central' requires that combatants actively pursue a state or region to be ruled according to a specific religious tradition. Religion as a peripheral issue in a conflict requires groups to utilize religion as a key identity in distinguishing themselves from their opponents. Svensson (2007) shares the spirit of this typology and claims that a goal to pursue rule by a religious tradition or calling upon a religious tradition to organize and mobilize, means that religion is central to the civil war.

Tezcur (2022) claims these definitions are too limited. Where a focus on religion *issues* sought to overcome the shortcomings of a religious *identity* approach, the use of religion as a tool of manipulation rather than as a central belief structure is still missing. Group leaders can claim a religious validation for conflict in order to obfuscate their more selfish, political and economic aims. Leaders may also use religion in an effort to 'outbid' their political opponents for greater mass support (Goddard 2006; Isaac 2017; Toft 2007). Only through the lens of other motivations such as greed or hatred, according to Tezcur (2022), can religion be made viable as a relevant component of conflict. This

approach focuses solely on the role of elites in framing conflict, not how framing influences the combatants in the conflict. By focusing solely on the motivations of elites, Tezcur (2022) ignores the central role that religious framing has on individuals.

Building upon these approaches, this project sees religion as distinct from ethnicity, as it contains an ideological and identity dimension, and thus views religious conflict as distinct from ethnic conflict. Religious conflict requires a specific belief that the conflict is one ordained by a transcendental or higher power, and that belief must inform actors of at least one side of a conflict. This definition provides two major improvements on the conceptions of religious conflict above. First, it distinguishes what is explicitly religious: a discourse of the transcendental components of conflict. Second, it allows for religious conflicts to occur within one faith as a conflict of interpretation, rather than merely as a conflict of identity mismatch. Due to the unique process religion plays in politics and conflict, religious civil wars are a distinctive subset worthy of study.

Having established definitions for ethnicity and religion, along with ethnic and religious conflict, we can turn to discussing the factors that studies have shown may shape peace duration and conflict recurrence.

The Causes of Conflict Recurrence

What do some ethnic and religious conflicts recur? There have been four primary levels at which theorizing on this complex question has occurred: system-level, state-level, conflict-level, and group-level.²

² While some authors consider the individual-level reasoning behind peace and a return to conflict by dissidents themselves (Walter 2004), this project is more interested in group-level and conflict-level dynamics that lead to peace.

System- and State Level Causes. Systemic-level factors focus on the international system, theorizing that the bipolar Cold War led to greater instability in peace due to the involvement of the US and USSR in arming and supporting a side in the war (Hartzell et al 2001). They also consider the role of external, third-party enforcement of peace, both broadly (Hartzell et al 2001; Karlen 2017; Mross et al 2022; Werner 1999), and specifically UN Peacekeepers (Beardsley 2011; Collier et al 2008; Fortna 2004; Gilligan & Sergenti 2008; Quinn et al 2007). Some studies of international actors even contend that cultural factors such as religion and ethnicity reduce the tension through third-party mediators, such as international religious leaders or organizations that both sides accept the legitimacy of (Inman et al 2014).

Further, state-level analysis theorizes that a history working with and within democratic institutions provides groups with knowledge of coalition building (Hartzell et al 2001), which may assist them in the bargaining process. Other approaches consider the role of natural resources in motivating groups to re-engage in conflict for access to those resources (Rustad & Binninsbo 2012). These factors address the causes of conflict recurrence by emphasizing the power of - and relationships with - state institutions. However, systemic-level and state-level analyses leave little explanatory space for considerations of identity in the explanation of why conflicts recur.

Group- and Conflict Level Causes. Identity is one of the primary group-level and conflict-level concerns in relation to conflict recurrence. However, much of the literature does a poor job conceptualizing and operationalizing identity within this four-level framework. Religion and ethnicity are seen most commonly through the lens of (in)compatibility, or whether the two primary actors in a civil war share the same

religious or ethnic identity. This approach focuses on the differences in descriptive identity between warring parties but fails to address the specific roles that religion and ethnicity play in framing the necessity for conflict. It both includes cases it shouldn't, where identity differences are secondary to other causes of conflict, and excludes cases it shouldn't, such as those conflicts about different interpretations of the same faith.

This project identifies and examines several mechanisms through which identity and issues may influence conflict recurrence. Hartzell et al (2001) and Werner (1999) both theorize two conflict-level reasons for why conflicts recur: duration and intensity. Hartzell et al (2001) in particular argues that the properties of the conflict itself lead to changes in the likelihood of a lasting peace, contending that lower-intensity and longer conflicts will both lead to more sustainable peace, as long-lasting conflicts provide both sides evidence that they cannot win outright, and their war goals are unachievable.

Although some work disputes the relevance of religion and ethnicity in civil war (Pearce 2005), most research on intensity and duration of civil wars emphasize one or both identity (Basedau et al 2011; Eck 2009; Lindberg 2008; Toft 2007). Religion can render civil wars longer and more intense (while potentially making the post-war peace more durable). In addition to its mobilization potential (Basedau et al 2011), religious beliefs themselves are frequently intractable, and the issues religious groups espouse are less amenable to compromise (Toft 2007). Some scholars have argued that religious and ethnic fractionalization work against a durable peace (Call 2012).³

³ Fractionalization measures inherently ignore the groups fighting in the conflict and care only about national makeup. Fractionalization is not the same thing as identity and suffers many of the issues of a compatibility definition. It instead measures how much similarity individuals within the country share on ethnic or religious grounds, only measuring the level of diversity within the country.

However, the peace literature finds these connections to be more tenuous than the broader conflict literature. Hartzell et al (2001) find that identity does not appear to have a statistical impact on conflict recurrence, leading them to argue that politico-economic conflicts are just as impactful on conflict recurrence as identity once the group has engaged in deadly conflict. The authors claim that identity conflicts are those with religious or ethnic interests is not supported by any definitions of ethnicity, religion, or interest, nor tells us what dataset they use to derive the measurements. Others have approached the impact of identity on peace through a more refined lens.

Gurses and Rost (2013; 2017) investigated how peace is made durable in ethnic conflicts and found that political and economic discrimination against ethnic minority groups explain a great deal of why conflicts recur. In addition, disagreeing with the expectation that different religious groups will engage in conflicts, they found that that co-religiosity between ethnic groups in power and the opposition group actually leads to longer conflicts rather than shorter ones (Gurses and Rost 2017), and conflict duration is related to peace duration. Liklider (1995) found that power-sharing governments are more likely to lead to war recurrence, challenging some conventional wisdom, and showed that this is true only in cases of ethnicity and religion.

While identity acts as an important factor on conflict recurrence, few works have explored what about religion and ethnicity affect civil war recurrence. Rarely do scholars explore the ways in which religion and ethnicity act within the conflict beyond conceptions of othering, of mere differences in the identities of the two sides, and scholarly research remains in fundamental disagreements over whether religious and ethnic identities have any impact on the likelihood of conflict recurrence.

The Three Causes of Conflict Recurrence. Bringing all of the above literature together, three key factors stand out at the conflict level: autonomy, discrimination, and territorial claims. Autonomy is a solution to many of the central causes of civil war. Most civil wars recur due to the lack of political inclusion (Call 2012), and autonomy is an important way of accommodating groups who are fighting over their perceived exclusion. Quinn et al (2007) find that autonomy, which they refer to as ‘dual sovereignty’, can lead to greater peace if created within the framework of a peace agreement.

Theories of discrimination, for example relative deprivation theory, explains how discrimination can lead to armed conflict (Gurr 1970; Hechter et al 2016; Horowitz, 1985; Regan & Norton 2005; Siroky et al 2020). Grievances encourage mobilization and organization. These grievances often build upon shared identities, especially ethnicity and religion (Gurr 1993; Gurr & Moore 1997; Lindström & Moore 1995; Saxton 2005). Grievance also functions as one of the common causes of civil war in general alongside greed (Collier & Hoeffler 2004; Collier et al 2008). Longstanding grievances and relative disparities between expectations and reality lead individuals through the frustration-aggression mechanism towards violent behavior (Gurr 1970).

Horizontal inequalities are those economic inequalities *across* groups rather than within them. When power or wealth is unequal across ethnic or religious (or other) groups, feelings of being cheated are more likely to take root and activate the frustration-aggression mechanism (Weidmann et al 2011). Stewart (2000) contends that groups mobilize more easily when they can rely on feelings of relative deprivation to motivate potential recruits. Ultimately, perception matters more than the reality of cross-group

status, whether economic, political, or social, in the development of grievances (Siroky et al 2020).

When civil wars have already taken place, the conflict can easily recur in the face of persistent ethnic discrimination (Gurses & Rost 2013). Religious discrimination is also positively correlated with extended armed religious conflict (Basedau & Schafer-Kehnert 2018). However, religious discrimination has no effect on non-religious conflicts. Religious discrimination raises the likelihood of civil war only when it is moderate, but not when it is extreme (Kim and Choi 2017). In fact, civil war is frequently a cause of further religious restrictions and discrimination, as states are more likely to repress religious minorities immediately after a religious conflict (Henne and Klocek 2017).

Territory - and specifically territorial claims – serves as the third major cause of conflict recurrence. Some authors imply that religious claims of territory are a product of the sacralization of the secular (Atran & Ginges 2012), the idea that territorial claims are not religious but are made religious by those in power to create a framing for the conflict. However, Hassner (2009) and others refute this, clearly articulating the role that sacred sites have on religious narratives. Others have sought a middle ground, arguing that territorial conflicts are only affected by religion when the issue at hand is religious (Pearce 2005). While ethnic groups are often associated with a specific territory, a ‘homeland’ (Chandra 2006), religious groups see certain territory as being inherently sacred. As such, territory becomes a valuable explanation for conflict recurrence for both ethnic and religious groups. The symbolic attachment to territory, whether for transcendent purposes or for historical ones, is directly linked to higher rates of

mobilization and thus a greater capacity to engage the state in conflict (Kelle 2021). Territory has a notable role therefore both in conflict onset and in the chance for post-war recurrence.

Having reviewed what we know through scholarly studies about the role of ethnicity and religion in post-war peace, I then identified gaps in that scholarship. The next chapter introduces my theory and approach to studying how ethnicity and religion influences conflict recurrence, before proceeding to the empirical testing.

CHAPTER 3

THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY ON PEACE

This section lays out my approach to studying how religious and ethnic identities influence civil war recurrence. I suggest that religion and ethnicity have separate pathways to impacting conflict recurrence, as group goals and root ideologies differ. Through three primary mechanisms, we can see the distinct roles of religion and ethnicity on the likelihood of conflict recurrence. Religious and ethnic groups have different approaches to post-war governance, leading to different preferences for autonomy. Post-war discrimination affects religion and ethnicity differently and creates a process by which new grievances are developed or old ones inflamed, leading to new bouts of violence. Finally, continued frustration over territorial disputes can cause conflict to renew in both religious and ethnic conflicts.

Religious and Ethnic Conflict

Focusing on the religious and ethnic dimensions of conflict, I can create a 2x2 typologies covering the four types of civil war that I examine in this dissertation: non-religious and non-ethnic conflicts, religious but non-ethnic conflicts, ethnic but non-religious conflicts, and ethno-religious conflicts.

To define whether a conflict is religion, ethnic, both or neither, I build on Toft (2007; 2021), who refers to religion as a peripheral or central according to whether the issue at hand was about religion's role in state governance or religion acting as an organizational framework. I model ethnicity using this same approach for comparability,

allowing us to consider whether a conflict is about an ethnicity’s role in governance or whether the differentiation is ethnic based.

	Non-Ethnic	Ethnic
Non-Religious	Non-religious and non-ethnic civil wars (Shining Path in Peru)	Ethnic, but not religious civil wars (Iraqi-Kurdish Civil War)
Religious	Religious, but not ethnic civil wars (Afghan Civil War)	Ethno-religious civil wars (Israeli/Palestinian conflict)

Figure 1. The Types of Religious and Ethnic Conflicts.

Toft (2007; 2021) contends that peripherally religious conflicts are rooted in the identity of the warring parties, as combatants seek to identify as a separate religious tradition from their opponent. This patterns closely after the traditional measure of incompatibility, of whether the two warring parties fail to share a religious tradition and the values, history, and experiences of those.⁴ She defines a centrally religious conflict as one in which the question at hand is religion’s role in the state. This definition requires detailed information about the role of identity in each individual conflict, and how identity shaped the goals of the group. This typology can also be expanded upon, as recruitment and identity are not necessary for the conflict at large to be about religion’s role in government. In addition, ethnicity can also be considered using such a framework, differentiating those conflicts where ethnic identity is an organizational structure from

⁴ Toft (2007) directly references the topics of recruitment techniques and elite bidding, tying those issues into this measure explicitly.

those about the role of ethnicity in government. Ethnic groups often include ethnic rule as a stated goal of many rebel groups. Both ethnicity and religion can influence civil war recurrence based on the peripheral or central roles they play in the conflict.

Toft's (2007) approach is useful as a framework for defining religion and ethnicity along two grounds: *identity* and *issue*. Peripherally religious conflicts are rooted around how a group organizes, as the group relies on identity to form a common bond between members in shared cultural aspects. The peripheral, rooted in how they identify themselves in opposition to the state, mimics the model that many scholars use of mere incompatibility. Alternatively, centrally religious conflicts are those rooted in conflict over religious issues. Issue-based approaches to religious civil wars are uncommon, though some do explore the role of religion in conflict (Svensson and Nilsson 2017; Toft 2007). However, these existing works focus heavily on exploring differences between each religious tradition, rather than exploring the process through which religion or ethnicity act on civil war onset and recurrence.

Groups organized on an identity-basis and issue-basis are not mutually exclusive, nor are they inherently inclusive of one another. Groups who seek conflict over a religious or ethnic issue are justifying conflict through a religious or ethnic lens, seeking the betterment of the group on the basis of transcendental beliefs or shared history. When groups seek conflict over a religious or ethnic identity, they rely on othering to differentiate between those who receive material benefits at the end of the conflict and those who do not. The two can overlap, and often do. Toft (2007) assumes a *nested* understanding of issue and identity, that all groups fighting for a religious issue must also be organized by religious identity. However, ethnic groups and religious groups fighting

for issues occasionally open their organizations to non-members from allied communities. Therefore, in my analysis, I consider identity-based and issue-based groups as related yet distinct. By focusing on the issue within the conflict, I incorporate the motivations inherent in religious and ethnic conflicts and explore how they create different outcomes between identity-based and issue-based dimensions of religion and ethnicity in conflict.

The next section discusses how autonomy, discrimination, and territory shape the likelihood of conflict recurrence in ethnic and religious civil wars.

Autonomy

Autonomy is defined as whether a group achieved control over territory, executive and legislative authority, and fiscal control over a specific territory (Pettersson & Öberg 2020). Ethnic groups may seek to pursue greater autonomy if they are unhappy with their ability to promote development and opportunity for their ethnic brethren in the state. If the status quo is untenable, groups can pursue two possible pathways to compel change. The first path involves non-violent attempts to alter the law, and the second entails violence. The ultimate goal is to increase the group's self-determination in defining its own destiny – often this takes this form of demanding greater autonomy. Groups also seek autonomy in part to protect themselves from future oppression and discrimination. Ethnic groups who achieve some level of autonomous control over their own regional affairs are going to be more invested in sustaining peace, lack incentives to mobilize, and lack some ability to address grievances with the state (Siroky & Cuffe 2015).

As ethnic groups are formed over shared kinship, they are often geographically bounded by the territory in which the people sharing those ties reside. As such, that land may hold special concern as a natural homeland, oftentimes with concentrated membership of the ethnic group residing within it (McCauley 2014; 2017). This geographical location becomes the natural area in which an ethnic group aims for more regional control, whether through an independence movement or as an autonomous zone. The purpose of gaining more control is to promote indigenous development through excludable public goods (McCauley 2014; 2017). There is therefore a compelling economic logic for ethnic groups that are geographically concentrated to pursue greater autonomy.

Religious groups are often more geographically widespread than locally concentrated like ethnic groups. In addition, their priorities do not often entail acquiring development for their community, but rather focus on behavioral policies to enact a moral system over society (McCauley 2014; 2017), including major policy shifts, and rarely seek territorial autonomy. More democratic states are associated with more rights for minority groups (Sarkissian 2012).

Ethnic groups actively fight on behalf of a desire for some form of autonomy in the state, but religious traditions often eschew direct political control, instead preferring indirect influence on decision-makers (Gill 1998; Grzymala-Busse 2016; Htun 2003; McCauley 2014; Meier 2001; Warner 2000). The corruptibility of politics and long-standing histories with abuse of power that created questions about the legitimacy of faith leaders often lead religious groups to avoid gaining direct political power. Religious groups prioritize global policies that focus on behavior-based policies, choosing to avoid

political contestation over access to resources (McCauley 2014). Therefore, I find it reasonable to expect that the duration of peace after conflicts in which religion was central is not shaped by whether the group achieved autonomy at the end of the last conflict episode.

This leads to the following hypotheses concerning the role of autonomy in the duration of peace after religious and ethnic civil wars:

Hypothesis 1a: Ethnic conflicts that produce post-war autonomy are more likely to be followed by a lower risk of conflict recurrence than ethnic conflicts that do not produce post-war autonomy.

Hypothesis 1b: Religious conflicts are not affected by whether the group in the dyad achieved post-war autonomy.

Groups and wars may have *both* religious and ethnic dimensions. Gubler and Selway (2012) contend that when religion overlaps with (and thus reinforces) ethnicity, civil wars are more likely than when ethnicity and religion cross-cut each other (do not overlap). In ethnic wars, groups that include multiple crosscutting cleavages will make it harder for rebel leaders to organize their forces (Gubler & Selway 2012). I theorize above that religion and ethnicity's impact on conflict recurrence are affected differently by autonomy. As religious mobilization is not affected by goals of achieving autonomy and

ethnicity is, the additional primed identity can weaken ethnic mobilization efforts in cases of failed autonomous goals. Therefore, I further hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Conflict dyads with reinforcing ethnic *and* religious identities that fail to achieve autonomy are at lower risk of conflict recurrence than conflicts with reinforcing ethnic *and* religious identities that do not achieve post-war autonomy.

Many ethnic groups express the desire for autonomy and self-rule over a community with a shared history and tradition that is territorially bounded. That history may be rooted in distrust and poor relations at the hands of others. The lack of control over their own affairs creates a grievance that may lead to conflict if not addressed. When it remains unresolved, then the group may seek further opportunities to press their claim, leading to conflict recurrence.

Discrimination

The previous section discussed how the effect of autonomy on conflict recurrence across ethnic and religious conflicts is rooted in theories of grievance and relative deprivation. Now I turn to state discrimination against an ethnic group, which naturally also tends to increase the likelihood of conflict recurrence (Gurses & Rost 2013). As McCauley (2014; 2017) argues, ethnic groups prioritize resources that are key for their own development. Since these goods are often excludable goods, state discrimination

against ethnic groups hinders their economic development and reinforces their grievance against the state.

While discrimination on ethnic grounds is a predictor of civil war recurrence, discrimination on religious grounds is not (Cederman et al 2010; Gurses and Rost 2013). Religion is generally more focused on achieving rules-based policies, legislating behavior in society rather than prioritizing excludable goods, like ethnic groups. The economics of religion approach, headed by Iannaccone (1992), argues that religious groups provide public goods and the level of strictness required for membership in the sect is used as a tool to limit access. However, these theories do not view the state as an alternative provider of club goods, nor do they theorize the state as a way to acquire goods to distribute. As such, religious groups will not seek these goods through the state. Therefore, discrimination against religious groups would be less impactful on their desire to recur civil war, as denying access to economic opportunity would not prime religious priorities (McCauley 2014).

States engage in post-war discrimination to ensure other groups are not in a position to contest the state in any future civil wars. With shrinking capacity, the group's probability of success when fighting the state decreases, making it more difficult to re-engage in conflict, and thereby improving their own safety in the post-war period.

When faced with state discrimination, ethnic and religious groups have two broad choices: either use existing state institutions to change laws or engage in violence to force a policy change. Ethnic groups that face discrimination are likely to develop an issue-based approach to conflict based on the targeted identity, for their aim is to place their

ethnic group in a more prominent and direct role in governance. This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Conflict dyads with discriminated ethnic groups are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence compared to ethnic groups that do not experience postwar discrimination.

Hypothesis 3b: Conflict dyads with discriminated religious groups are *not* at higher risk of conflict recurrence compared to religious groups that do not experience postwar discrimination.

Discrimination can often be applied broadly, rather than targeted at members of the ethnic or religious group explicitly. As the group faces discrimination, what was once an organizational structure by which the group derived its membership from a specific religious or ethnic group shifts into a group advocating for policy change on behalf of the religious or ethnic group. That is, the conflict shifts from identity-based to issue-based, which includes advocating for minority group inclusion in the government in some form to stop further discrimination against their communities and to gain representation.

Through post-war discrimination, the conflict can become a central part of the group's identity, thereby reigniting the fervor for the conflict and causing a recurrence of violence (Basedau et al 2017; Gurses & Rost 2013). This appears more difficult in religious cases, as the broader religious community or tradition may find other countries more friendly to their religious traditions (McCauley 2017). Religious discrimination

does not cause religious conflicts (Basedau & Schaefer-Kenert 2018), whereas ethnic discrimination does increase the likelihood of conflict recurrence. Ethnic groups are bound together by adopting the grievances caused by discrimination into their shared historical narrative.

Discrimination against ethnic communities can drive conflict but not religious communities, but groups with strong ethno-religious identities may be unevenly affected by discrimination depending on which identity is primed (Basedau et al 2017; McCauley 2014; 2017). However, states may choose to discriminate against both identities. To test theories about how reinforcing and crosscutting cleavages may shape conflict recurrence, I examine the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a: Conflict dyads with groups that are either ethnic or religious, but not both, that experience postwar discrimination are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence than ethno-religious groups that experience postwar discrimination.

Hypothesis 4b: Conflict dyads with issue-based ethno-religious groups facing postwar discrimination are at higher risk of conflict recurrence than conflicts without postwar discrimination.

Territory

Territory and its perceived indivisibility are often given as a reason for why religious conflicts last longer, and the same may be said about why peace may be harder to sustain. Svensson (2013) contends that issue indivisibility is a core reason for why religion shows up as a central component of more than half of all conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, a claim repeated by several other scholars (Isaacs 2017; Sweijts et al 2015; Turkmen 2019). Indivisible claims, the idea that those claims centered in substantive areas of faith are less likely to be reversed or compromised on, are a defining characteristic of religious conflict.

The question of indivisibility has been hotly contested by civil war scholars, however. Goddard (2006), Reiter (2003), and others, have claimed that indivisible goals are not truly indivisible, but rather a distinct bargaining position that groups take in an attempt to receive greater value in negotiations and to assist in group fervor, making it an ultimately constructed position. However, the religious conflict scholarship tends to give more weight to indivisibility in comparison to the secular conflict scholars. Hassner (2009) contends that indivisibility is a key component of territorial disagreements between religious communities and cites the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary as a key case of indivisibility. Indivisibility can also function as a key rallying cry for these communities in recruitment and conflict definition and become a central belief defining the group's identity (Svensson 2007; Toft 2006).

These existing research paths have primarily understood religion as a tool for division. While some authors do explore religion as a multifaceted belief system, too many others oversimplify religion as a component of ethnicity, a shared history that

informs a community, but not as ideological and spiritual belief structures. This reductive view of religion fundamentally loses sight of why it matters in the first place. Groups with religious grounds for their claims and have complex and historically founded claims engage in competition with the state. Religious groups are characterized by ideological claims that are intrinsically unalterable and indivisible. As a result, indivisible claims should lead to less agreement and thus shorter peace. Religious groups are more likely to make indivisible claims due to the nature of their belief structure. How can a group allow the divine, the sacred, to be compromised on a split after finding it important enough to risk their lives for? When religious groups are forced to compromise, having failed to achieve a complete victory over their indivisible territorial claims, they are more likely to seek new opportunities to undo divisions of the sacred. In cases where territorial claims are made in conflicts in which religion was central, those conflicts will see greater recurrence when the religious groups believe it has the power to contest the previous agreements.

Hypothesis 5a: Conflict dyads over religious issues are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence than those conflicts not over religious issues.

When ethnic groups make claims over a territory, it is often rooted in historical narratives over the space, sometimes dating back thousands of years. Ethnic claims over a territory are rooted in historical relationships or where the ethnic community currently lives. Ethnic communities generally live in geographically centralized areas, where

kinship ties and historical narratives are tied together (McCauley 2014; 2017). Territorial claims are rooted in emotional ties to land viewed as the collective belonging of the group (Dustmann & Preston 2001; Green 2006; McCauley 2014; Toft 2005). Ethnic groups then make claims on this territory, leading us to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5b: Conflicts over ethnic issues are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence than those conflicts not over ethnic issues.

Religious territory is often viewed as hallowed and sacrosanct. While ethnicity is built on feelings of ownership, religious claims over territory are imbued with a transcendent nature. Religious groups make territorial claims when they view a territory through some important narrative drawn from their beliefs or narratives rooted in religious discourse. Therefore, religious and ethnic ideals driving these claims can cooperatively reinforce one another.

Hypothesis 6a: Conflict dyads with territorial claims are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence in religious conflicts than ethnic conflicts.

Hypothesis 6b: Conflict dyads with territorial claims that are both religious and ethnic are at a higher risk of conflict

recurrence compared to conflicts without territorial disputes
that are both religious and ethnic.

These hypotheses point to clear differences in expectations about conflict recurrence for ethnic, religion and ethno-religious groups. Religion and ethnicity have important effects on post-civil war peace. In the following section, I lay out a methodological approach to test these hypotheses and then discuss the results.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

This project uses a dataset derived from the UCDP-PRIO Dyadic Dataset to create a dataset of peace spells after conflicts ending between 1980 and 2006. Building on Karlen (2017), who used this approach to explore the role of external actors in conflict recurrence, the unit of analysis is the dyadic peace year. The result is 4,403 unique dyadic peace years across 296 dyads in 88 countries, experiencing 385 different peace spells. Of the 296 dyads, 60 of them experienced at least one conflict recurrence.

Variables

Dependent variables. The dependent variable for my model is a binary indicator of whether the armed conflict recurred in a particular year, which represents ‘a failure event’ utilizing the terminology of survival modeling. The UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset’s measure armed conflict as a contest where armed force between a government and a non-state actor that results in 25 battle-related deaths in a year (Pettersson et al 2021), which is common operationalization within the civil war literature (e.g., Braithwaite 2010; Buhaug and Gates 2002; Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008).

Independent variables: religion and ethnicity. The key explanatory factors capture the ethnic and religious dimensions of the conflict. I conceptualize and measure ethnicity and religion along two dimensions - the first focuses on whether the group organizes themselves on religious grounds. Comparable to Toft’s (2007) definition of a peripherally religious conflict, this variable takes a value of ‘1’ if the group defines itself or recruits using its religious identity, and ‘0’ if the group does not. The same variable is

then constructed for ethnicity, asking if the group defines itself or recruits on its ethnic identity. The second dimension of ethnicity and religion that I capture emphasizes the purpose for the conflict itself. Related to Toft's (2007) definition of a centrally religious conflict, I created a dichotomous indicator for whether the issue at hand is religious in nature. If the conflict is inherently about religion's role in government, then it was coded as a '1', and otherwise 0. I repeat this process for ethnicity, asking if the conflict is about ethnicity's role in government, including conflicts seeking a form of self-rule on ethnic grounds. This results in *four* distinct indicators of the religious and ethnic dimensions of the conflict.

To determine the religious and ethnic components of each group, I utilized a combination of UCDP reports on the group and peer-reviewed sources. Groups that were determined to draw their members from a specific group, to actively recruit from them or claim to speak on behalf of the ethnic or religious group, were coded as having an ethnic or religious identity. Groups that explicitly seeking to include or increase ethnic or religious participation in government, whether in a disputed territory or in the national government they fought against, were coded as fighting for an ethnic or religious issue.

Civil wars are not evenly distributed across typologies in this way. Nearly one third of all peace years (1,714) experienced conflicts that are neither ethnic nor religious, with another 30% being based on ethnic issues and organizations, but not religious issues and organizations. That is compared to only 3.7% of cases being based on religious issues and organization but are not ethnic. The remaining 40% are distributed more across the other types, ranging from over 13% of observations to less than 0.1% for groups that are ethnically organized and fighting over religious issues.

Table 1

Crosstabulation of Peace Years by Ethnicity and Religion

	Non- Religious	Religiously Organized Only	Religious Issue Only	Both Religious Issue and Organized
Non-Ethnic	1,714 (32.5%)	182 (3.4%)	131 (2.5%)	193 (3.7%)
Ethnically Organized only	49 (0.9%)	3 (0.0%)	19 (0.4%)	19 (0.4%)
Ethnic Issue only	694 (13.1%)	21 (0.4%)	10 (0.2%)	121 (2.3%)
Both Ethnic Issue and Organized	1,596 (30.2%)	387 (7.3%)	15 (0.3%)	127 (2.4%)
Total (5281)				

Independent variables: Discrimination, autonomy, and territory. My theory points to three primary causes for conflict recurrence that relate to religion and ethnicity: discrimination, autonomy and territory. To measure discrimination, I utilize an index measure from the Cingranelli-Richards dataset, combining physical integrity rights and the economic empowerment index to determine government's provisions of both personal and economic freedoms (Cingranelli et al 2014). Physical Integrity Rights are an additive index of the 0-2 measures of disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture, and political imprisonments. The Empowerment Rights Index includes 0-2 measures of foreign movement, domestic movement, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, workers' rights, electoral self-determination, and freedom of religion. The Cingranelli-Richards dataset begins in 1981, but only 108 observations occur before this period. While the Fariss (2020) dataset may provide more years to explore, it lacks the Empowerment Rights Index and therefore does not capture the full theoretical framing

necessary for this project. A value of 22 denotes full respect of these rights, and 0 denotes no government respect for these rights. These values are distributed roughly in a bell curve, with a mean of 9 and a standard deviation of 4.3. Only 55 of 4,618 peace years, or 1.2% of all observations, included values of 20 to 22.

Table 2

Summary Statistics for Independent Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Ethnic Issue	5,281	0.419	0.494	0	1
Organized on Ethnicity	5,281	0.563	0.496	0	1
Ethnic Conflict (Dummy)	5,281	0.580	0.494	0	1
Religious Issue	5,281	0.120	0.325	0	1
Organized on Religion	5,281	0.199	0.400	0	1
Religious Conflict (Dummy)	5,281	0.233	0.422	0	1
Regime Type	4,996	0.271	6.177	-10	10
Territory	5,089	0.319	0.466	0	1
Autonomy	5,365	0.153	0.123	0	1
Peace Agreement	5,352	0.112	0.316	0	1
Agreement	5,352	0.207	0.405	0	1
Discrimination	4,623	9.035	4.973	0	22
Prev. Conflict Duration	5,352	3.916	5.486	1	42
Conflict Intensity	5,343	1.256	0.436	1	2
Victory	5,352	0.302	0.459	0	1
Population (millions)	4,077	5.750	169	0.435	1,110
GDP per Capita	3,496	2,040.178	4099.444	56.46796	36274.94

The second factor is autonomy. Many groups aim for some form of self-rule, and failure to accomplish that goal can cause conflict to recur. I employ two distinct measures of self-rule in the forms of autonomy and peace agreements from the UCDP Peace Agreements Dataset. Autonomy is measured dichotomously as whether the peace agreement included “control of a specific territory, the power of primary and secondary legislation, the power of executive authority and the power of fiscal matters” (Pettersson

& Öberg 2020). 82 peace years, or 23 cases, experienced autonomy in the same, accounting for 1.5% of peace years. The secondary measure of self-rule, derived from the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset, to analyze whether the state and the rebel group found another way to gain some measure of self-determination (Kreutz 2010). 601 observations, or 11% of all peace years, include conflicts that ended in a peace agreement.

The final cause of interest is territory. I adopt the measure from the UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset regarding the existence of a territorial incompatibility, which measures whether the conflict has an explicit territory being contested by the two warring parties. One third of all observations, totaling 1,813 peace years, included some form of territorial claims. That includes 113 dyads, adding up to 35% of all dyads.

Control variables. The existing literature on conflict recurrence commonly includes a number of control variables. The first is whether the group is Islamist, as others have theorized about the intractability of conflict involving groups focused on imposing political Islam (Svensson and Nilsson 2017; Toft 2007). Second, to account for long-lasting conflicts recurring multiple times, I include controls for how many years the prior conflict was, as well as the number of prior conflict recurrences. Third, I include GDP per capita⁵, population⁶, and regime type.⁷

⁵ World Bank Indicators, pulled from Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel. 2010. "Civil War". *Journal of Economic Literature* 48:1 (3). 3-57. Available at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/27433>.

⁶ World Bank Indicators, pulled from Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel. 2010. "Civil War". *Journal of Economic Literature* 48:1 (3). 3-57. Available at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/27433>.

⁷ Marshall, Monty G., Ted Robert Gurr. 2020. "Polity5: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2018". Dataset Users' Manual. Center for Systemic Peace. Available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p5manualv2018.pdf>.

Model Choice

To assess the effects of discrimination, territory, and autonomy on the risk of conflict recurrence, I utilize a repeated measurement extension of the Cox proportional hazard model. Sometimes called the Prentice, Williams and Peterson Gap Time (PWP-GT) model, this approach measures repeated failures by stratifying the data by conflict period to allow a separate baseline hazard within each peace spell (Prentice et al 1981). As a dyadic pairing experiences conflict recurrence and returns as a new peace spell to the dataset, the model assumes an increased probability of the peace spell ending, and therefore changes its baseline hazard to accommodate this. In other words, this model assumes that a peace spell ending increases the risk of a future peace spell ending.

The more basic Cox model was determined to be inadequate based on the fully inclusive model failing the proportional hazard assumptions, as tested by the Schoenfeld residuals. To account for covariation across time, I stratified the model by conflict duration and conflict intensity, to go along with the conflict episode required by the PWP-GT model. The variables for religious organization and religious issue also failed the original Schoenberg test but removing them from the model and stratifying by them would have denied access to coefficients to interpret. Instead, stratifying by the other variables corrected the Schoenfeld residuals for the explanatory variables on religion. In addition, every variable was statistically significant in the Wald test, suggesting that all variables included were relevant to the model.

Table 3

Crosstabulation of Conflict Recurrences by Ethnicity and Religion

	Non- Religious	Religiously Organized Only	Religious Issue Only	Both Religious Issue and Organized
Non-Ethnic	27 (20.5%)	1 (0.8%)	4 (3.0%)	9 (6.8%)
Ethnically Organized only	5 (3.8%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Ethnic Issue only	5 (3.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (3.8%)
Both Ethnic Issue and Organized	51 (38.6%)	16 (12.1%)	0 (0%)	8 (6.1%)
Total (132)				

Robustness Checks

I attempt to ensure the veracity of my findings with a series of checks. First, I re-estimated the models using only two dichotomous measures of religion and ethnicity rather than four. If a conflict has a ‘1’ on either religious organization or religious issues, I code them as a ‘1’ for the religious dummy variable. I use the same process for ethnic conflicts. This allows me to subset the data into religious or ethnic conflicts and provides some baseline measures of identity. As a further robustness check, I use alternative model specifications and nested models. Results are robust across models and provide clear evidence of the relationships found within this project.

Second, there is a weak Pearson’s correlation between discrimination and regime type, between peace agreements and post-war agreements, between religiously organized groups and conflicts over religious issues, and between ethnically organized groups and conflicts over ethnic issues. None of these relationships are beyond a 0.75 correlation

threshold, suggesting they do not influence the model. In addition, variance inflation factors are not appropriate for time series analysis and do not function with a Cox model.

Results

My theory calls for distinguishing religious and ethnic conflicts from one another to understand how discrimination, autonomy and territory differentially impact the risk of each type of conflict to recur.

Autonomy. Table 4 includes two models assessing the impact of autonomy on conflict recurrence. The first model interacts ethnic issues with whether the group achieved autonomy, while the second model interacts religious issues with whether the group achieved autonomy. Neither model is able to say much about cases with autonomy, as the coefficients are not interpretable due to the lack of groups that achieve autonomy. However, we can see that conflicts about ethnic issues that do not achieve autonomy are at a significantly lower risk of conflict recurrence, totaling a 108% reduction in risk. I am unable to find any support for hypotheses 1a and 1b due to the lack of results for ethnic or religious issues with autonomy.

I find it difficult to ascertain the effect of autonomy with religious issues on conflict recurrence, as the model lacks enough observations in two of four possible outcomes in the interaction to provide coefficients. In the second column of Table 4, I see that religious issues and autonomy do not lead to any statistically significant outcomes, providing some support for hypothesis 1b, which states that religious issues will not be affected by autonomy. This result is overshadowed by the lack of observations for non-

religious conflicts that end in autonomy and religious conflicts that end in autonomy, which limits the explanatory power.

Table 4

Ethnic and Religious Effects of Autonomy on Conflict Recurrence

	Ethnic Issue vs Autonomy	Religious Issue vs Autonomy
Non-Ethnic or Religious, Without Autonomy	--	--
Non-Ethnic or Religious, With Autonomy	-32.72*** (1.003)	-40.83*** (0.822)
Ethnic or Religious, without Autonomy	-1.085*** (0.411)	0.583 (0.368)
Ethnic or Religious, with Autonomy	-33.82*** (1.161)	0 (0)
Regime Type	0.0871** (0.0413)	0.0944** (0.0442)
Territory	1.866*** (0.469)	1.080*** (0.310)
Peace Agreement	-1.350** (0.687)	-1.220** (0.612)
Agreement	0.594 (0.381)	0.529 (0.364)
Discrimination	-0.124** (0.0555)	-0.122** (0.0539)
Population	-5.52e-10 (4.46e-10)	-3.56e-10 (4.76e-10)
GDP per capita	4.99e-06 (2.59e-05)	-6.01e-06 (2.59e-05)
Observations	2,439	2,439
No. of Subjects	263	263
No. of Failures	65	65
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

Table 5

Ethno-Religious Effects of Autonomy on Conflict Recurrence

Non-Ethnic, Non-Religious, No Autonomy (base category)	--
Non-Ethnic, Non-Religious, With Autonomy	-38.96*** (1.109)
Religiously Organized, without Autonomy	0.323 (0.573)
Religiously Organized, with Autonomy	0 (0)
Ethnic Issue, without Autonomy	-1.321*** (0.510)
Ethnic Issue, with Autonomy	-40.02*** (1.165)
Ethno-Religious, without Autonomy	-0.918 (0.584)
Ethno-Religious, with Autonomy	0 (0)
Regime Type	0.0903** (0.0438)
Territory	2.011*** (0.508)
Peace Agreement	-1.502** (0.692)
Agreement	0.478 (0.373)
Discrimination	-0.116** (0.0493)
Population	-7.64e-10 (5.72e-10)
GDP per capita	-2.41e-05 (3.31e-05)
Observations	2,439
No. of Subjects	263
No. of Failures	65
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1	

Table 5 shows a three-way interaction between religious organization, ethnic issues, and autonomy. There is no support for hypothesis 2 that are both ethnic and

religious are at a lower risk of conflict recurrence. Instead, they do not seem to have an effect together. We do see that in this three-way interaction, ethnic but non-religious conflicts without autonomy are at a lower risk of conflict recurrence.

There are issues with this model, as autonomy is so rare that three of the possible outcomes have unreadable coefficients in ethno-religious conflicts that achieve autonomy, ethnic but not religious that achieve autonomy, and those that religious but not ethnic and achieve autonomy. The likely issue is that the lack of cases of autonomy, as only 23 peace spells involve groups that achieved autonomy.

Across all of these models, I continue to see significant results for regime type, discrimination, and territorial claims as control variables. Regime type has a strong statistically significant positive relationship with conflict recurrence, suggesting that more democratic states are more likely to have a civil war recur. I also see the two other major explanatory variables showing statistical significance, as territorial claims are highly correlated with increased risk of conflict recurrence, and discrimination is highly correlated with less risk of conflict recurrence.

Discrimination. Discrimination plays a strong theoretical role in conflict recurrence, as it acts as a motivating factor for groups to reengage the state with new grievances. However, I find little evidence to support the wide-ranging theories that discrimination plays any role in peace for religious and ethnic conflicts.

In table 6, I perform two interaction models that interact conflicts involving ethnicity against discrimination in column one, and religion against discrimination in column two. I find that religious conflicts are not affected by existence of discrimination, as no interaction term is statistically significant. This is counter to hypothesis 3b, which

states that religious groups who experience postwar discrimination are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence. Instead, ethnic groups experience reduced risk of conflict recurrence regardless of discrimination.

Table 6

Ethnic and Religious Effects of Discrimination on Conflict Recurrence

	Ethnic	Religious
Non-Ethnic or Religious, Without Discrimination (base category)	--	--
Non-Ethnic or Religious, With Discrimination	-0.0286 (0.509)	-0.272 (0.459)
Ethnic or Religious, without Discrimination	-1.497*** (0.568)	-0.411 (0.543)
Ethnic or Religious, with Discrimination	-0.952** (0.484)	0.880 (0.541)
Regime Type	0.0184 (0.0412)	0.0250 (0.0387)
Territory	1.993*** (0.485)	0.740** (0.350)
Peace Agreement	-1.564** (0.634)	-1.533** (0.618)
Agreement	0.492 (0.420)	0.496 (0.464)
Population	-0 (5.90e-10)	3.59e-10 (4.48e-10)
GDP per capita	4.52e-07 (2.76e-05)	-1.13e-05 (2.49e-05)
Observations	2,549	2,549
No. of Subjects	263	263
No. of Failures	65	65
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

In Table 7, I perform two different three-way interactions including the dichotomous discrimination variable. In the first column, measures of groups that fight for ethnic issues, groups that fight for religious issues, and discrimination are interacted

against one another. In the second column, groups organized on ethnic groups, those organized on religious grounds, and discrimination.

Table 7

Ethno-Religious Effects of Discrimination on Conflict Recurrence

	Issues	Organization
Non-Ethnic, Non-Religious, Without Discrimination (base category)	--	--
Non-Ethnic, Non-Religious, With Discrimination	-0.0886 (0.529)	-0.305 (0.543)
Religious, without Discrimination	0.0290 (0.846)	-34.45*** (0.894)
Religious, with Discrimination	0.854 (0.546)	0.711 (0.925)
Ethnic, without Discrimination	-0.909 (0.615)	-1.563*** (0.397)
Ethnic, with Discrimination	-0.497 (0.492)	-2.314*** (0.682)
Ethno-Religious, without Discrimination	-1.857 (1.356)	-2.144*** (0.550)
Ethno-Religious, with Discrimination	-0.422 (0.780)	-0.0648 (0.466)
Regime Type	0.0139 (0.0353)	0.0348 (0.0358)
Territory	1.565*** (0.512)	1.858*** (0.449)
Peace Agreement	-1.422** (0.639)	-2.457*** (0.744)
Agreement	0.503 (0.415)	1.037** (0.525)
Population	9.48e-11 (4.27e-10)	-0 (4.22e-10)
GDP per capita	1.29e-05 (2.26e-05)	-4.39e-05** (2.12e-05)
Observations	2,549	2,549
No. of Subjects	263	263
No. of Failures	65	65

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

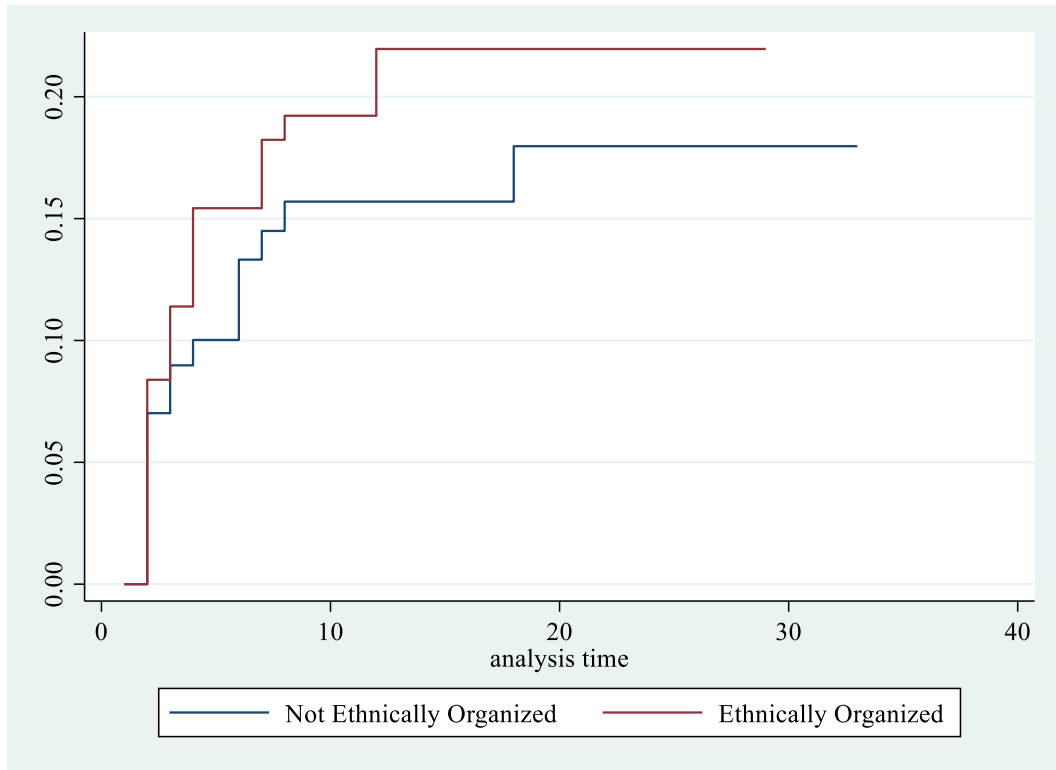


Figure 2. Hazard Estimates of Ethnic Organization Within Discrimination Conflicts.

Conflicts on ethnic and religious issues have no statistically significant results in any way, as seen in column 1 of Table 7. This counters hypothesis 3a, which expected that conflicts over ethnic issues would experience a higher risk of conflict recurrence when facing discrimination. In fact, we see that issues are completely irrelevant to the role that discrimination plays in conflict recurrence, regardless of whether ethnicity or religion is relevant. This matches the theory I developed, as discrimination primes identity through the development of organization, not by priming the existing issues. If groups are fighting over an ethnicity's or religion's role in the state, the act of discriminating against the group will not prime individuals' grievances and reignite conflict.

However, I do see some results in cases of religiously or ethnically organized groups. Groups that are ethnically organized experience significantly reduced conflict recurrence regardless of discrimination status, with those experiencing discrimination having a 231% decrease in risk of recurrence while those that do not experience discrimination have a 156% decrease in their risk of recurrence. However, ethno-religious groups who do not experience discrimination have a significantly lowered risk of conflict recurrence, by 214%, while ethno-religious groups who experience discrimination do not have any statistically significant changes to their risk. This runs counter to the hypothesis that postwar discrimination increases risk in ethnically organized groups. While ethnicity is a driving factor, discrimination enlarges the magnitude of ethnicity's impact on decreasing the risk of conflict recurrence.

In addition, it does not appear that religion and ethnicity are reinforcing mechanisms when looking at discrimination. Ethno-religious conflicts that experience discrimination have no additional increase in the risk of conflict recurrence than any other group, thereby refuting hypothesis 4a and the theory of reinforcing mechanisms.

While not statistically significant, it is interesting to note the directionality of religion and ethnicity's effects on peace duration when looking only at issue-based conflicts. Religious but not ethnic groups facing discrimination have tacitly positive impacts on the risk of conflict recurrence. Ethnic groups, both those with and without a religious component, are related to a tacit negative impact on conflict recurrence. This counter-directionality leads to two further areas of study. First, why are ethnicity and religion seemingly linked to differing responses to discrimination? Likely, the specific type of discrimination matters a great deal, leading to questions of why religion and

ethnicity would react to political or economic discrimination differently. Secondly, the directionality of ethnicity is matched in cases where the group is both ethnic and religious. Thus, ethnicity seems to be the more powerful and influential identity. Thus, I can assess that religion and ethnicity may not be reinforcing cleavages, but cross-cutting cleavages, further providing evidence against the overarching theory behind hypothesis 4b.

Religion and ethnicity largely cause an opposite effect on conflict recurrence when looking at discrimination as theorized, reducing the risk of civil wars to return. The differences between issue and identity, however, are clearly supported in how groups focused on issues are less impacted than those who are organized around an identity.

Territory. Finally, I find substantive support for the argument that religious and ethnic issues drive increased risk of conflict recurrence through territorial claims. The results show support for each of the hypothesis developed on the effects of territorial claims on conflict recurrence.

Table 8 performs two-way interactions between ethnic issues and territorial claims in column one, and religious issues and territorial claims in column two. In this table, there is evidence that supports hypothesis 5a that conflicts over religious issues that experience territorial claims are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence than those not over religious issues. Religious issues with territorial claims lead to a 178% increase in the risk of conflict recurrence, compared to a non-significant change in those without territorial claims. This supports hypothesis 5a, declaring that sacred space is a primary driver in conflict recurrence.

Table 8

Ethnic and Religious Effects of Territory on Conflict Recurrence

	Ethnic Issue vs Territorial Claims	Religious Issue vs Territorial Claims
Non-Ethnic or Religious, No Territorial Claims (base category)	--	--
Non-Ethnic or Religious, With Territorial Claims	2.263*** (0.450)	0.965*** (0.372)
Ethnic or Religious, without Territorial Claims	-0.613 (0.605)	0.310 (0.648)
Ethnic or Religious, with Territorial Claims	0.778** (0.367)	1.785*** (0.459)
Regime Type	0.0826** (0.0399)	0.0887** (0.0429)
Peace Agreement	-1.321** (0.656)	-1.214* (0.625)
Agreement	0.631 (0.389)	0.546 (0.367)
Discrimination	-0.124** (0.0555)	-0.124** (0.0547)
Population	-5.38e-10 (4.16e-10)	-2.53e-10 (4.64e-10)
GDP per capita	9.67e-06 (2.61e-05)	-4.29e-06 (2.58e-05)
Observations	2,436	2,436
No. of Subjects	263	263
No. of Failures	65	65
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

In addition, conflicts over ethnic issues that face territorial claims are at a 78% higher risk of conflict recurrence. This provides evidence that hypothesis 5b is correct, claiming that conflicts over ethnic issues are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence than those conflicts not over ethnic issues. Notably, conflicts over ethnic issues and territorial claims are at a lower risk than those conflicts over territorial claims without ethnic issues. Further, the comparison between magnitudes in these results provide support for

hypothesis 6b, as it shows that religious issues are the primary driver of civil war recurrence in conflicts that have territorial claims.

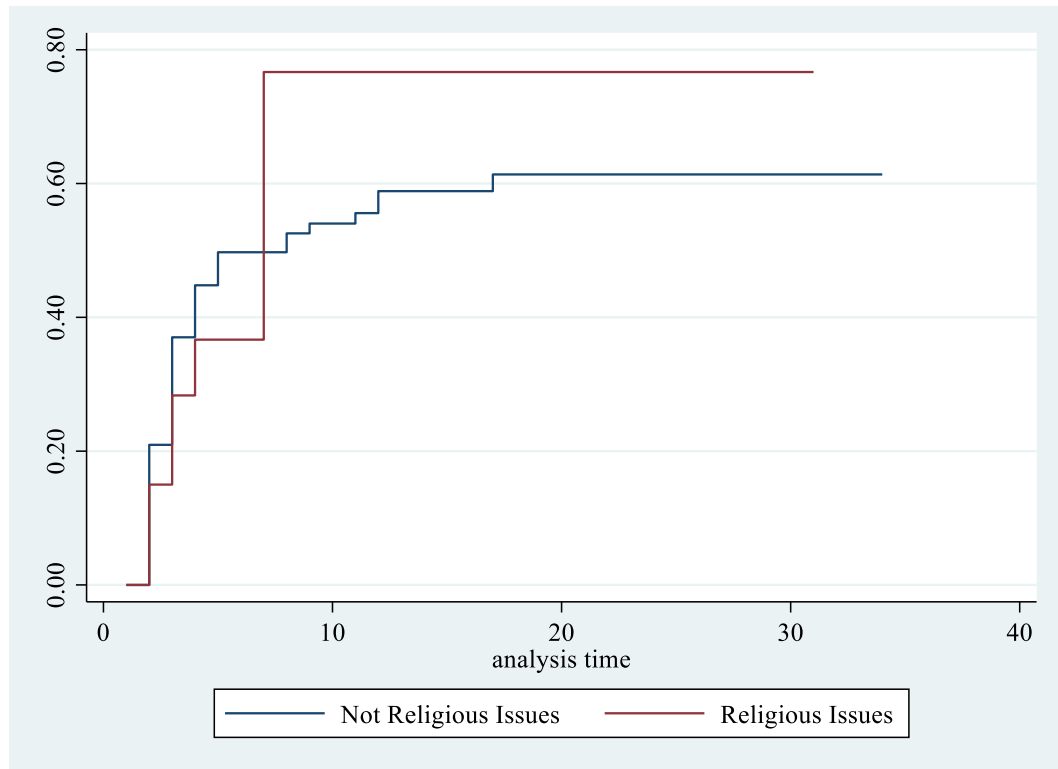


Figure 3. Hazard Estimates of Religious Issues Within Territorial Conflicts.

Table 9, column 1 performs a three-way interaction between the religion dummy variable, the ethnicity dummy variable, and whether the conflict had territorial claims. The second column performs a three-way interaction between whether the conflict was fought over religious issues, ethnic issues, or territorial claims. These models provide evidence that conflicts over religious but not ethnic issues that included territorial claims experience a 228% increase in the risk of conflict recurrence. Interestingly, I see a weaker but still statistically significant effect caused by conflicts over ethnic but not religious

issues that include territorial claims, experiencing an 88% increase in the risk of conflict recurrence. These fully reinforce the findings from Table 8.

Table 9

Ethno-Religious Effects of Territory on Conflict Recurrence

	Both Issue and Identity	Issue Only
Non-Ethnic, Non-Religious, No Territorial Claims (base category)	--	--
Non-Ethnic, Non-Religious, With Territorial Claims	2.522*** (0.625)	2.461*** (0.681)
Religious, without Territorial Claims	0.528 (0.609)	0.366 (0.727)
Religious, with Territorial Claims	-41.50 (0)	2.282*** (0.534)
Ethnic, without Territorial Claims	-1.087* (0.630)	-0.491 (0.602)
Ethnic, with Territorial Claims	0.627 (0.425)	0.879** (0.398)
Ethno-Religious, without Territorial Claims	-42.51*** (1.008)	-40.60*** (1.018)
Ethno-Religious, with Territorial Claims	1.323*** (0.460)	1.020 (0.912)
Regime Type	0.0971** (0.0456)	0.0877* (0.0462)
Peace Agreement	-1.643** (0.728)	-1.276* (0.679)
Agreement	0.525 (0.401)	0.619 (0.382)
Discrimination	-0.129*** (0.0490)	-0.122** (0.0559)
Population	-9.50e-10 (6.22e-10)	-6.03e-10 (5.99e-10)
GDP per capita	-3.80e-05 (3.36e-05)	4.19e-06 (3.02e-05)
Observations	2,436	2,436
No. of Subjects	263	263
No. of Failures	65	65
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

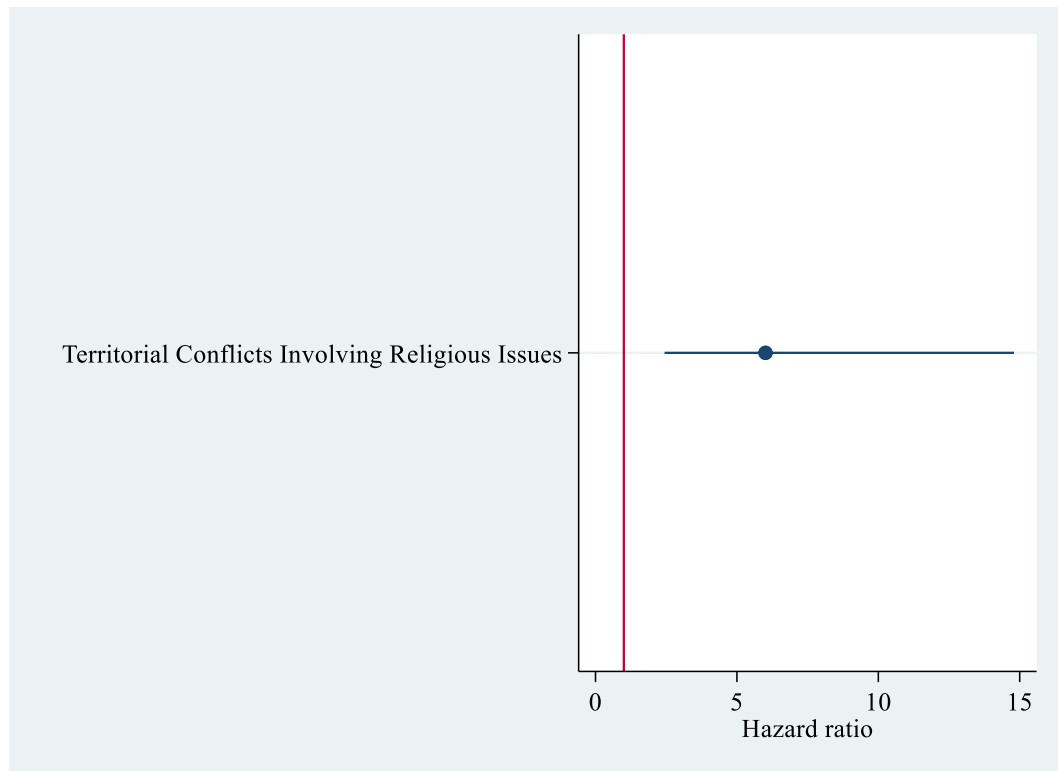


Figure 4. The Effect of Religious Issues on Territorial Conflicts.

Interestingly, ethno-religious conflicts are also impacted by territorial claims, leading us towards the possible explanation that religious and ethnic claims on territory may be reinforcing claims. The differences between the issue model and the inclusive model are notable. The issue model, in column 2 of Table 9, does not show any statistically significant impact of ethno-religious conflicts with territorial claims on conflict recurrence. The relationship is clearer in the inclusive model, covering religious and ethnic conflicts that are either over an issue or organized that way. This model shows 132% increase in the risk of conflict recurrence in ethno-religious conflicts with territorial claims. These results provide robust evidence of hypothesis 6b, which states

that conflicts that are both religious and ethnic with territorial claims are at a higher risk of conflict recurrence than those that are not over territorial claims. Hypothesis 6c states that territorial claims will have their greatest impact in conflicts that are ethno-religious. This is untrue in each model, as they are not significant in the issue-based model and are more than 160% less in impact in ethno-religious conflicts than in non-ethnic and non-religious conflicts in the inclusive model.

The three-way interactions in Table 9 lead to similar issues as we saw in other models, as the results for certain groupings explode to high thresholds caused by a severe lack of cases. Ethno-religious conflicts without territorial claims in both models, and religious conflicts with territorial claims in the model covering both issue and organized components, do not have coefficients we can readily interpret.

There is enough evidence here to reinforce existing theories on sacred space (Hassner 2009), showing that religious issues are relevant to how impactful territorial claims are. In addition, ethnicity and religion act as reinforcing claims, leading to questions about how narratives of territory play a role in conflict.

Concluding Thoughts

Each of these models is still plagued by some notable issues. The low number of civil war recurrences, combined with the necessary stratifications included in the models, leads some coefficients to achieve incredibly low scores. These values are likely a product of a lack of positive cases that fit the three-way interaction parameters, as noted

above. This is mitigated in the two-way interactions, but any theory regarding the reinforcing nature of ethnicity and religion requires the three-way interaction terms.

122 peace spells drop from the data when regressing, largely due to the lack of data on population and GDP per capita from the World Bank (Blattman and Miguel 2010) and lacking data on discrimination (Cingranelli et al 2014). The missing cases stem predominantly from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Afghanistan. This is clearly not a random process of missing data, but I performed robustness checks dropping the population and GDP per capita variables and found it did not impact statistical significance of the models.

Ultimately, it does not appear that autonomy or discrimination lead to reinforcing cleavages between ethnic and religious components of civil wars. In neither case did religion and ethnicity lead to increasing effectiveness of autonomy or discrimination in their influence on conflict recurrence. Religion and ethnicity are, however, reinforcing cleavages within territorial conflicts, raising evidence that the processes behind each of autonomy, discrimination, and territory are fundamentally different within ethnic and religious conflicts. When religion and ethnicity are both relevant in territorial conflicts, the effect of territorial claims on conflict recurrence is amplified. However, when ethnicity and religion are relevant, autonomy and discrimination have no effect on conflict recurrence. This shows that only under certain conditions are religion and ethnicity reinforcing cleavages.

This chapter shows the importance of distinguishing between groups organized on identity and those fighting over issues in how they approach conflict, as the two

component parts of both religious and ethnic groups lead to variation on their relationships with three key causes of conflict recurrence.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Religion and ethnicity are poorly conceptualized in existing research, as incompatibility fails to differentiate between groups organized along identity and those whose core rationalizations for conflict are based on the role that identity plays in government. Within the existing literature on conflict recurrence, there is a widespread struggle to isolate the processes by which religion and ethnicity play a role in conflict recurrence. The literature relies on othering, on inherent differences, to carry the explanatory weight when discussing conflict. This project demonstrates that the conceptualization of religion and ethnicity as issue-or-identity-oriented is a necessary step in explaining how they affect peace and conflict. The process by which conflicts recur is dependent on the religious and ethnic dimensions, and religion and ethnicity are multifaceted. To accomplish that, I introduce new coding structures to religious and ethnic conflicts to expound on the role of issue and identity on conflict recurrence.

My research illustrates that religion and ethnicity must be considered holistically, extending theories beyond merely othering dynamics but instead focused on the goals of the groups involved in conflict. Religiously and ethnically motivated groups drive conflict recurrence through mechanisms around autonomy, discrimination, and territorial claims. However, religion and ethnicity only act as reinforcing cleavages in the context of territorial claims. Instead, it appears that these two identities compete for relevance within a conflict, as groups seek to articulate a central rationale for their behavior. These conflicts are driven by one motivating factor over another, and the process by which those are chosen remains unclear.

My analysis finds nuanced evidence of the role that religion and ethnicity play in conflict recurrence. I find that territorial claims and discrimination are directly related to conflict recurrence through their relationship with identity. Conflicts over territorial claims see greater chances of conflict recurrence when the two sides are fighting over the role of religion or ethnicity in government. Importantly, issues are more important than identity, as both ethnic and religious issues are correlated with shorter peace after conflicts following territorial claims. Religious issues are significantly more potent than ethnic issues in this context, as the transcendental nature of sacred territory makes conflicts about religious issues significantly more likely to recur than those conflicts about ethnic issues.

This substantively alters the way we think about territorial claims in conflict, as the mere act of a religious claim is not enough. Instead, when we see territorial claims are most impactful when in conflicts where the question at hand is about the role of religion in governance. However, this project does not address the content of those claims. Manekin et al (2019) introduces a set of tools for territorial claims, specifically in the West Bank, and Zellman (2015; 2018) performs experimental analysis to explore how specific narratives may affect support for territorial claims. These models of defining the types of claims being used can be utilized for more specified analysis into what kinds of claims may be most impactful for religious groups in conflict.

States that discriminate after conflicts are less likely to have that conflict recur. This is largely driven within groups organized around ethnicity, rather than religious groups. Ethnic identity makes discrimination more successful in suppressing conflict. This is potentially a product of states being more capable of identifying ethnic minorities,

and further study about how states discriminate unevenly would be useful to expanding this.

However, this project is not without its limitations. The results on autonomy are simply too limited by the scope of the project to achieve any statistical solutions through quantitative analysis. I'd like to expand on this project by utilizing a process tracing approach to several key case studies to explore the causes of why some cases of autonomy yield peace, and others conflict. For example, countries like Chad, where ethnic groups were able to gain autonomy, but religious groups did not. In fact, the only religious groups in my dataset that achieve autonomy are in Afghanistan, Israel, or Lebanon. These cases would be useful in exploring related to other conflicts by groups spreading across nations, as the Palestinian people do.

Given that, I can pinpoint two specific spaces by which this project can continue to grow into a broader research agenda. First, the growing literature on identity and issue-based conflicts is beginning to add a third component: motivations. Exploring ways to measure motivation within the same framework would expand this project and its explanatory power greatly, potentially giving more refined understanding of how group elites signal priorities and how that affects the ways in which its members pursue group goals.

Second, the approach to discrimination here is limited to economic and political rights, rather than the forms of repression and restriction associated with religious and ethnic groups in works by Jonathan Fox or others. In Jonathan Fox's work, for instance, several dozen types of religious repression are explored that separate individuals, institutions, and practices from one another. This more nuanced and detail-oriented

approach to discrimination would allow me to better theorize about what kinds of state activity can cause changes to group identity, thus leading to conflict recurrence.

This project has provided detailed evidence that a nuanced approach is necessary for how we consider religion and ethnicity within a conflict context. Religious issues drive how much a conflict over territorial claims is at risk of falling into another conflict period. Further, conflicts organized around ethnic identity are more likely to achieve peace among conflicts facing high levels of discrimination. In future steps, I plan to expand on this project to establish a more robust understanding of conflict recurrence by including questions of group motivation into the analysis, and to explore how a highly nuanced approach to targeted discrimination can provide more detailed information on the role that religion and ethnicity can play in conflict recurrence.

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