The USIP Learning Agenda: An Evidence Review

Strategic Religious Engagement in Peace Processes

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Over the past three decades, policymakers, practitioners, and scholars have paid increased attention to the relation between religion, conflict, and peace.[1] Much of their initial focus has been on religion as a driver of violence, especially in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001.[2] As the influence of religious leaders and communities in peace processes—from the Philippines to Sierra Leone to Guatemala—gradually grabbed headlines, interest in religious engagement in peace processes also grew.[3] The average yearly output of books on religion and peace cataloged by the Library of Congress, for instance, exploded from approximately seven books a year in the last two decades of the twentieth century to more than two dozen volumes a year since 2001. More than three-quarters of all the Library of Congress's cataloged books on religious peacemaking and peacebuilding have been written since the turn of the twenty-first century.[4]

Behind the burgeoning interest in religious engagement in peace processes is the idea that faith-based actors' participation will contribute to more inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes.[5] Two primary assumptions underpin this expectation. The first is that faith leaders, communities, and institutions maintain an influential position in civil society, given their embeddedness in local communities and because the vast majority of the global population continues to identify as religious.[6] A number of scholars and analysts also assert that religion can be an unusually demanding and enduring form of identity, which further underscores why appeals to religion by authorities can be so effective.[7]

A second key assumption is that religious actors represent high-yield partners in development, democratization, and peacebuilding efforts. This view is based on the idea that religious actors are well-motivated partners driven by religious convictions or direct experience with violence (or both), who enjoy preexisting and often deep-rooted networks and organizational structures that engender trust and increase capacity and are more resilient than some other civil society organizations, owing to spiritual beliefs and multiple sources of material resources.[8] It is also commonly argued that religious actors and practices are uniquely positioned for peacebuilding, in that many faith traditions are already equipped with reconciliatory rituals and other conflict resolution practices.[9]

To date, however, these ideas have not been widely tested. Numerous studies have cataloged the myriad religious actors involved in peace processes and their wide and diverse range of activities. Far less research systematically examines the causal impact of religious engagement on peace outcomes, especially the conditions that bolster or constrain these effects. This omission persists even in the face of increased calls from policymakers and practitioners to rightsize the study and practice of religious engagement or to better understand when, not just whether, religious actors matter for particular peace outcomes.[10] Faith-based actors, along with their interests and strategies, are also often poorly defined in both scholarly and practice-based research. What is more, analysts routinely conflate the activities of religious actors at different levels of action. These conceptual and methodological problems limit the extent to which inferences can be drawn about the forms and efficacy of religious engagement in peace

processes. Thus, there remains much to learn about how, when, and why faith-based actors' involvement can lead to inclusive and sustainable peace.

Research Questions and Levels of Analysis

This evidence review unpacks the burgeoning literature on religious engagement in peace processes and explores ways in which the existing evidence, even with its limitations, can serve as a basis for future research, policy design, and program evaluation. The overarching research problem guiding the analysis concerns how, and under what conditions, the participation of religious actors in peace processes can lead to more inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes.

Four primary, and interrelated, sets of analytic questions guide this analysis:

- Who are the relevant religious actors engaged in peace processes?
- What are the material and nonmaterial interests of religious actors engaged in peace processes?
- How does the strategic environment of religious actors moderate their influence in peace processes?
- What are the primary peace outcomes that religious actors might influence?

Religious actors can, of course, operate at multiple societal levels during the peace process and impact a variety of peace outcomes.[11] The review focused on religious actors' engagement at three of the most commonly identified and investigated levels of action in the peace studies literature.[12] The first level, known as track 1, consists of top-level leaders' actions and exchanges through official government channels or international institutions. Religious actors' involvement in track 1 peacebuilding may include, among other activities, faith-based diplomacy, participation in formal negotiations between conflict parties, and assistance with the implementation of specific components of peace accords. Track 2 activities are more informal interactions between nongovernmental organizations, as well as unofficial contacts and activities between private citizens or groups of individuals, that aim to support more official peace processes. Religious engagement in track 2 peacebuilding may involve pre-negotiation consultations, back-channel diplomacy during negotiations, or faith-based mediation between groups in conflict. Track 3 peacebuilding takes place at the grassroots level. It comprises the activities of local leaders, community developers, and societal groups. Local religious leaders and faith communities participate in a range of activities at this level, including efforts to increase trust in official peace processes, develop or repair trust between divided communities, and advocate on behalf of marginalized communities.

EVIDENCE REVIEW PROTOCOL AND SELECTION CRITERIA

This review surveyed the anglophone literature on religious engagement in peace processes. It focused on four primary sets of literature to identify relevant studies and practice-based knowledge. The first consists of research conducted within the fields of peace and conflict studies. These works are largely responsible for laying the groundwork for the study of religious peacemaking and peacebuilding. The second set of literature falls broadly within the subfield of political behavior. It includes studies on the measurement of religious and other attitudes and behaviors in a society, as well as the influence of religious actors on public perceptions of peace processes, intergroup relations, and government programming. A third area of focus is the robust scholarship on ethnicity, conflict, and peace that has developed since the end of the Cold War. Much of this work, especially before the twenty-first century, considered religion in relation to other ideational factors, such as nationalism and culture. The modest scholarship emerging on foreign missionary organizations and domestic church organizations that provide a share of basic services in some developing countries (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa) makes up the fourth strand of research reviewed.

For each set of literature, the review considered peer-reviewed publications, books published by academic and university presses, trade journals, and published reports by nongovernmental organizations engaged in religious peacebuilding. It also examined unpublished work available on scholars' and practitioners' websites, nongovernmental organizations' project pages, and online paper repositories. Sources were identified through standard databases (such as Google Scholar) and digital libraries (such as JSTOR) used in the field, along with research and project repositories of relevant nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations (for example, the US Agency for International Development's Development Data Library). In addition, the review drew on consultations with regional centers and offices and thematic programs of the US Institute of Peace, including the Gender Policy and Strategy, Nonviolent Action, and Youth teams. This analysis also leveraged two scholarly networks for unpublished or forthcoming studies: the Religion and Politics Section of the American Political Science Association and the Religion and International Relations Section of the International Studies Association. In total, the review engaged with more than 150 academic articles and books, along with dozens of practitioner reports and other unpublished materials.

This review applied two additional selection criteria to determine which analyses to include or exclude. It solely covered work produced since the end of the Cold War, with particular attention to analyses conducted over the past two decades (2001–2021). And, in light of previous research suggesting that the causal connections between culture, including religion, and action may vary substantially between unsettled and settled environments, the review only included studies that examined religious actors operating in conflict or postconflict settings.[13]

Given the still nascent field of religious engagement in peace processes, the review sought to be as comprehensive as possible. Several factors, therefore, were intentionally not

used as exclusion criteria. One notable element was the method of analysis. The review included qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies. Qualitative studies make up the bulk of the literature and consist of single-country or comparative case studies. A modest number of quantitative, nonexperimental studies have been published in the past five years. The review also explored work by the growing cohort of scholars leveraging experimental and quasi-experimental methods to advance our understanding of religious engagement in peace processes, especially on interreligious and intercommunal tolerance and trust.

Similarly, the review was not limited to particular religious communities or other types of local populations (for example, ethnic or linguistic groups). The mapping also did not explicitly concentrate on or exclude a particular geographic region, although the focus on conflict and postconflict settings does mean that certain regions and countries (sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America) are represented more than others.

The review also included studies that consider the role of religion in both peace and conflict outcomes, although the primary focus is the former. As discussed below, the two literatures developed in parallel; consequently, there are lessons to be learned from both, even though the two subfields often operate in isolation from one another. Finally, the review did not rely on the ranking systems of journals or other academic publications as a criterion for inclusion or exclusion. Those classifications offer an ambiguous signal, given that the study of religious engagement in peace processes remains on the margins of broader disciplines in the social sciences.

EVIDENCE REVIEW ORGANIZATION

This review is organized into six subsequent sections. The first establishes the context of the review by providing a brief overview of how the field of religious peacebuilding evolved over the past few decades. It also identifies four constituent elements of research designs, which are often only loosely defined in extant studies but remain pivotal to increasing our understanding of the effects of religious engagement on peace processes. These are the relevant religious actors (that is, the units of analysis), the interests of those actors, the strategic environment in which they operate, and the peace outcomes to be evaluated.

The third through sixth sections explore each of the research design components, respectively. This includes a critical review of the extant theoretical and empirical scholarship. These sections also identify key challenges that will need to be addressed in future research, policy, and programming.

The final section outlines the key implications of, and recommendations from, the review for future research, policy, and programming. The central takeaway from this analysis is the need for more rigorous, design-based research and programming that deepens our understanding of how, when, and why—not just whether—religious engagement advances particular stages of peace processes or activities associated with them. The strategic approach

outlined in this review is a helpful starting point, and thus the analysis offers suggestions for how future studies can more systematically consider actors, interests, strategic environments, and peace outcomes. The review also offers a series of guiding questions for program designers to consider in their work. The review's goal is not to provide a single playbook for studying or engaging with religious actors writ large. Rather, the recommendations and guiding questions aim to provide a starting point for designing research projects, programs, and evaluation strategies across varied contexts.

The Context of Religious Engagement in Peace Processes

The study of religious engagement in peace processes has developed within a larger debate in social science and policy circles around the role of religion in global politics. Scholars' and decisionmakers' general neglect of religion before the 1980s is now well documented.[14] So, too, is the sluggish but steady way in which they came to recognize the enduring influence of religion through global events and trends that defined the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries—including the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet war in Afghanistan; a spike in ethnoreligious clashes following the collapse of the USSR; the attacks of September 11, 2001; and a rise in Islamist militancy.[15] That empirical reality contradicted decades of scholarship asserting religion's inevitable decline in the public sphere, a view commonly referred to as the secularization or modernization thesis.[16]

Recent global events have shaped the study of religion, conflict, and peace in distinct ways. Most initial investigations concentrated on religion as a cause of violence, especially in the shadow of 9/11.[17] Other research programs gradually developed to examine a range of conflict outcomes, such as duration and lethality.[18] The theoretical emphasis of those that study religion and conflict, however, has remained almost exclusively on the radical religious ideas of nonstate actors, especially insurgents and terrorists.[19]

In reaction to the myopic focus on religious violence and extremist beliefs, several scholars and policy analysts have advocated for a more holistic approach—one that considers the influence of a wider set of spiritual ideas and practices in both fomenting and alleviating conflict. One of the most influential contributions to this shift in theoretical perspective remains that of R. Scott Appleby, who coined the phrase "the ambivalence of the sacred" to describe the dual nature of religion.[20] The subfield of religious peacebuilding emerged against this backdrop, and it has evolved through three waves of academic and practice-based research.

THE FIRST WAVE: DOCUMENTING RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE PROCESSES

The opening chapter to the contemporary study of religious engagement in peace processes primarily sought to raise awareness of, and appreciation for, the irenic influence of religion during and after conflict. Much of the emphasis was on mining sacred texts and faith traditions for the beliefs and values that emphasized peace over violence. Pioneers of this work included scholar-practitioners such as Marc Gopin and Mohammad Abu-Nimer. The former has published widely on Jewish theologies of peacebuilding.[21] Abu-Nimer, in turn, has written extensively on an Islamic peacebuilding framework and developed tools for training religious leaders to facilitate interreligious dialogue.[22] Many others have since followed in their footsteps to interrogate and promote the roots of religious peacemaking and peacebuilding in almost every faith tradition.[23]

A parallel strand of research that catalogs the myriad religious actors and activities associated with peace processes was undertaken during this first wave. This work comprised various academic studies, many of which were concentrated at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Harvard University's Religion in Global Politics Research Project.[24] Similarly, nongovernmental organizations contributed by either recording their own activities or commissioning comparative studies of religious peacebuilders around the world.[25] The US Institute of Peace played a pivotal role through its thought leadership, convening of workshops, and publications that highlight overlooked religious contributions to peacebuilding.[26] These collective efforts document a wide assortment of religious contributions to peace processes, ranging from transitional justice efforts in Guatemala and South Africa to conflict mediation in Northern Ireland and Mozambique to interfaith dialogue programs in Nigeria and the Philippines.

THE SECOND WAVE: BROADENING THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

A second wave of, scholarship on, and practice of, religious peacebuilding—initiated in the early 2010s—witnessed the development of more concerted and inclusive efforts in academia and policy circles to understand and work with religious actors in peace processes. Research clusters and master's programs on religious peacebuilding, for instance, multiplied across American universities.[27] Funding for dedicated projects on religion, conflict, and peace also increased substantially, owing to support from philanthropic organizations such as the Henry Luce, John Templeton, and Andrew W. Mellon Foundations, as well the National Science Foundation.

One of the most noteworthy contributions of the research supported by these initiatives was an expansion of the types of religious traditions and actors investigated. Earlier work focused heavily on Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and on conventional religious leaders in those faith traditions. During this second wave of research on religious peacebuilding, scholars and

analysts pushed beyond the Abrahamic traditions and began to examine the role of women and other nontraditional faith leaders.[28]

Another important analytic move was to emphasize a clearer distinction of religious engagement at different levels of action.[29] Previous work often—though not always—lumped together examples of religious actors engaged in track 1 (for example, faith-based diplomacy, formal negotiations, and peace accords), track 2 (for example, mediation and conflict resolution), and track 3 (for example, community-level trust building and prejudice reduction) activities. This is partly understandable, given that the primary goal of that research program was to demonstrate the utility of religion in peace processes. Research during the second wave built on extant studies both by deepening the study of and developing arguments about religion's unique contributions to each level of action.[30]

Another focus of this second wave of research was increased attention to the unique potential of faith leaders and communities in achieving peace. Several key factors have been identified. The first is what David Little calls the "hermeneutics of peace," an interpretative framework that construes peace as a sacred duty.[31] Extending this logic, several scholars and analysts also assert that religion can be an unusually demanding and enduring form of identity, which further underscores why appeals to religion by authorities can be so effective.[32] Still other research points to the preexisting and often deep-rooted networks, organizational structures, and material resources that religious actors bring to the table, which can contribute to religious and secular mechanisms to promote peace.[33]

The growing awareness of what religious actors bring to peace processes also led an increasing number of governments and international institutions to develop more formal mechanisms with which to engage religious peacebuilders. Each of the previous three US presidential administrations, for instance, established or supported initiatives to deepen diplomats' and other decisionmakers' understanding of, and capacities to work with, faith-based actors on development, peace, and security issues. These include the State Department's 2013 National Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement into US Foreign Policy and the 2020 Evidence Summit on Strategic Religious Engagement convened by the US Agency for International Development's Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives.[34] The United Nations established its Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development in 2010 with the similar aim of deepening UN system staff capacities. Furthermore, a number of international platforms emerged to draw attention to and empower religious actors and institutions and to connect them more directly with global leaders. Notable examples include the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, and the G20 Interfaith Forum.

THE THIRD WAVE: EVALUATING RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE PROCESSES

The field of religious peacebuilding is now entering a third wave of its development. The extant literature has compellingly demonstrated the prevalence and range of religious engagement in peace processes. Scholars and practitioners today, however, are seeking a more nuanced appreciation for where, when, and how religious actors shape peace outcomes. This includes efforts to adopt research designs that take into account both successful and unsuccessful religious engagement and the conditions that bolster or constrain that influence.[35] The most recent phase of research on religious peacebuilding is also starting to leverage a wider set of methodological tools, including experimental and quasi-experimental methods, that may point to clearer intervention types and evaluation techniques.[36] Furthermore, calls for increased conceptual precision in defining both faith-based actors and the outcomes they are purported to influence persist.[37] This section concludes by sketching out an analytic framework that guides, though sometimes only implicitly, many current studies of religious peacebuilding and that could be useful for future research and program design.

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE PROCESSES

Faith-based actors may represent a unique set of strategic partners for peacebuilding efforts. Unfortunately, existing studies have been inconsistent in how they address key components of research design. Some studies, often but not exclusively those that draw on the logic and methods of rational choice analysis, are explicit about the unit of analysis and the method of data collection and evaluation. A great deal of other research, however, remains ambiguous about the universe of cases, suffers from conceptual ambiguity and stretching, and fails to directly test the causal processes purported to link religion to peace outcomes.

To address these issues, academics and analysts would do well to be more intentional about four key components of research and policy design highlighted by a strategic approach: the relevant religious actors (that is, units of analysis), the interests of those actors, the strategic environment in which they operate, and the peace outcomes to be evaluated. Increased precision in these areas would enable stronger inferences about the scope and effects of religious engagement in peace processes.

A strategic approach to religious engagement in peace processes, of course, is not the only option to inform research and policy design. However, at least three key benefits of the approach underscore why it can be, at the very least, a useful starting point for future analyses. First, it requires analysts to be precise about the actors under investigation, their interests and strategic environment, and the peace outcomes to be evaluated. Second, and related, a strategic approach to religious engagement does not require a commitment to a particular

methodology—whether rational choice analysis or otherwise. Rather, a strategic approach complements a wide variety of social science methods, as it challenges analysts to consider how key actors self-define their identities and interests and how they understand their environments. This requires a deep understanding of the history and ethnographic realities of a context, regardless of which tools are used to draw causal inferences in a particular study. Third, a strategic approach lends itself to the type of design-based research that would be useful for evaluating specific program interventions. In particular, design-based studies can help address the attribution problem that has dominated the field, owing to no-variance designs and other methods that fail to directly test the causal processes purported to link religion to peace outcomes.[38]

The Actors

EXISTING RESEARCH

A first step in any analysis of religious engagement in peace processes is to clearly identify the relevant set of actors that have a bearing on religion and peace. The existing empirical research points to four primary units of analysis that can be examined independently or in relation to one another: leaders, institutions, local and national faith-based organizations (FBOs), and transnational faith-based organizations or networks. The specific set of actors relevant to research, policy, and programming will depend on a given context. However, starting an analysis from a clear understanding and definition of the relevant religious actors is crucial for identifying potential interventions for peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Religiously motivated individuals constitute the first, and one of the most commonly studied, set of actors relevant for peace outcomes.[39] Traditional faith leaders of religious communities, congregations, and institutions have remained the primary point of focus until quite recently. This includes leaders at all levels of analysis—from the international level (Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama) to the national level (Maha Ghosananda in Cambodia and Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi in Guatemala) to the local level (Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye in Kaduna, Nigeria).

Several factors underpin the substantial attention given to these religious leaders. One is simply that they are easily identifiable to external analysts because of their position and the broader networks in which they are embedded. Other reasons are more theoretical. For instance, religious leaders are assumed to hold influential positions in civil society and, therefore, to be able to mobilize their constituencies.[40] Analysts also commonly argue that these leaders are equipped with spiritual and moral resources to promote peace, including sacred texts and reconciliatory practices.[41] Faith leaders also tend to have direct access to social and development infrastructures that can provide crucial foundations for peace.

Religious institutions are a second set of actors relevant to peace outcomes.[42] Of particular interest to scholars and practitioners have been local places and communities of worship, such as churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples. These sites are seen to be important spaces for mobilization—toward both violence and peace: Sacred spaces, along with the clergy that manage them, are often the main point of interface between believers and their religion and can thereby enjoy more legitimacy within respective communities than higher-level organizations, such as religious umbrella organizations or high-ranking clerical bodies.[43] Sacred spaces also offer ready-made sites for meetings, workshops, trainings and other activities.[44] Consequently, religious leaders and other faith-based actors can draw on these institutions both to reinforce their authority and to disseminate their messages.

A third set of relevant actors highlighted by empirical research on religious peacebuilding is local and national faith-based organizations. Scholars and analysts define these organizations in various ways, and sometimes merely in opposition to their secular counterparts.[45] Some analysts also distinguish between those at the local or national level and transnational FBOs, the latter of which are discussed below.

Despite the conceptual ambiguity, researchers have documented a wide variety of roles played by local and national FBOs—from interfaith dialogue to mediation to development.[46] A substantial research program has also emerged on the contributions of FBOs to reconciliation efforts—including case studies of groups (for example, the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland) and cross-national surveys of religious contributions to transitional justice mechanisms.[47]

Moreover, the analytic lens and methods used to study faith-based organizations have advanced over the years. While early work focused primarily on Christian-inspired groups, researchers today look at organizations rooted in other Abrahamic faith traditions, as well as other world religions.[48] There is also growing attention to umbrella organizations that represent a number of local religious denominations or faith communities. For instance, several analysts have examined how the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative contributed to the peace process that brought an end to Lord's Resistance Army attacks on civilians in northern Uganda.[49] Other examples include the Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone, the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the New Sudan Council of Churches and, in Nigeria, the Women's Interfaith Council.[50]

Finally, a number of cross-national datasets have been constructed in recent years, but more often than not these focus on conflict rather than peace dynamics.[51] One notable exception that could aid future quantitative cross-national analysis of religious organizations engaged in peacebuilding activities is the Mobilization for Peace dataset by Johannes Vüllers, which includes information on more than 500 religious groups in 128 countries active from 1990 to 2008.[52]

A fourth set of religious actors comprises transnational faith-based organizations. These organizations operate at the global level and either connect local communities to

coreligionists in other parts of the world or interact with members of other religions or those without religion to advance a broader mission of peace, justice, and reconciliation. Much of the initial empirical work on transnational FBOs paid attention to the intersection of development and peace.[53] Similarly, there was a heavy emphasis on global FBOs engaged in mediation efforts, such as the Roman Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio.[54] A burgeoning research program is now also developing on transnational FBOs engaged in other aspects of peacebuilding.[55] This includes groups working for peace and reconciliation around the world (the Taizé Community, Religions for Peace), those advancing peace in specific countries (Indonesia's Nadlatul Ulama movement), and those promoting wider social change through education initiatives (the Gülen movement, in Turkey).

CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING

While extant studies have raised awareness of the prevalence and diversity of religious actors engaged in peace processes, they are not without their limitations. Future research and program design will need to address at least three important challenges.

The first is conceptual ambiguity and stretching. The former refers to the tendency for several meanings to be attached to the same term, such as the many definitions for faith-based organizations.[56] Conceptual stretching arises from the rather sweeping definitions of *religious actor* often employed. For instance, many analysts distinguish religious actors from their secular counterparts by claiming the former are motivated by or working to uphold spiritual beliefs or values. Under such a definition, who would not count as a religious actor? Why, for example, is Archbishop Desmond Tutu often included as a religious actor in studies of transitional justice, but Nelson Mandela is not? Or, as Michael Barnett has questioned, what of the typical secular international nongovernmental organizations, such as Médecins sans Frontières, once led by a man who seriously considered a vocation in the priesthood in his youth and continues to find inspiration from the writings of the twentieth-century Jewish Hasidic philosopher Martin Buber?[57] A few scholars have sought to resolve this issue by focusing on actors who coherently, consistently, and explicitly act to influence politics in the name of religion.[58] Of course, those adjectival terms only raise further questions, including long-standing debates on how to define religion in the first place.[59]

An additional point to consider is raised by critical theorists about the study of religion and politics, more generally. Their primary criticism is that the conceptual ambiguities and stretching present in the field stem not from a lack of analytic rigor but from persistent secular biases.[60] This can also lead to a false dichotomy between "good religion" that is peaceful and "bad religion" that is violent.

A second limitation of current research is an equally shallow justification for focusing only on religious actors engaged in peace efforts. In many conflict and postconflict settings, a

set of militant or violent wings of a religious movement also operate. These are often dismissed from analyses. One reason for that is the assertion that the two sets of actors are motivated by different political theologies or interpretations of their faith traditions and are thereby analytically distinct.[61] The omission, however, obscures the contribution of religion to peace processes, especially as these violent flanks often arise from splits in nonviolent movements. Future work would do well to consider the relation between religious actors who promote violence and those who promote peace. At the very least, analysts need to include a comparison of these actors in their analysis. Otherwise, analysts can only infer best practices for religious engagement with a predefined set of actors, not with religious leaders and communities writ large.[62]

A third challenge concerns generalizability. The vast majority of empirical research continues to focus on traditional religious actors, leaders, and institutions representing a certain set of faith traditions. Several efforts—including those led by the US Institute of Peace—have been made in recent years to bring a more diverse set of actors into view, especially nontraditional leaders and women. Work has also been done to broaden the range of religious traditions studied and to pay more attention to the multivocality within those communities. This work, however, has yet to develop into a coherent research program. Moving forward, studies would do well to be more deliberate about the extension of their claims. For instance, a study on Christian and Muslim faith-based organizations in Nigeria might have direct implications for similar organizations in the country or elsewhere in West Africa. The inferences that analysts can draw about other religious traditions or Christian and Muslim faith-based organizations in other regions may be less clear.

The Interests

EXISTING RESEARCH

Analysts of religious engagement in peace processes need to specify not only the actors under investigation but also their interests. The extant scholarship focuses on two primary types of preferences: sacred and instrumental.

Pioneers in the field of religious peacebuilding principally construed actors' interests in terms of their religious beliefs and sacred values—perhaps, in part, because their work developed in response to a focus on religious ideas as a driver of conflict. Their analyses paid close attention to doctrines and theology, as well as ritual and practices.[63] And, while not always defined, religious beliefs and sacred values typically referred to the central tenets of a faith tradition or the moral imperatives derived from them that motivate political action.[64]

A common implicit or explicit assumption behind studies on religious ideas and values is that these ideational factors often condition material goals. One reason for this is that they

may extend actors' time horizons or, in other words, modify the way religious actors evaluate the trade-offs between present costs and future benefits. Beliefs about an afterlife or heavenly rewards can, for instance, increase the willingness of religious actors to engage in risky activities, make sacrifices, and even absorb costs in the face of significant setbacks or diminishing economic returns.[65] Scholars have also considered the ways in which religious beliefs and values can be intimately bound to personal and collective identities and may have privileged links to emotion.[66] For these reasons, political leaders often appeal to sacred values as a way of mobilizing their constituents to action or as a less costly method of enforcing compliance.[67]

Analysts have, therefore, also spent a great deal of time considering how religious ideas and sacred values can be interpreted and reinterpreted to drive peace rather than conflict outcomes.[68] In particular, they have drawn attention to the ways the leadership of organizations such as World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, and the Mennonite Central Committee have led to a reexamination and renewed emphasis toward peacebuilding at certain times.[69]

A growing body of work—often referred to as the religious economies school—also considers the instrumental interests of religious actors.[70] This approach does not completely dismiss the role of ideas and values, but it does seek to shift the focus toward more material goals and the interest-based calculations of religious actors.[71] At the individual level, this might be maximizing spiritual satisfaction. At the institutional level, it usually refers to increasing the size of a religious community (gaining more adherents) or amplifying societal influence. The latter point underscores how analysts focused on the instrumental interests of religious actors do not treat religion reductively (that is, as seeking nothing more than money or power). Rather, they acknowledge that regardless of the origin and nature of religious actors' beliefs, the survival and growth of their organizations depend on access to resources.[72]

Studies that focus on the material interests of religious actors also draw attention to the costs of religious engagement in peace. For individual clerics or other religious actors, this can include stigmatization by local communities or the state if their message of peace is seen as disloyal, as was the experience of Shi'a clerics in Iraq.[73] They also face the risk of personal attacks or even death, such as the assassination of Bishop Juan Gerardi in Guatemala. Institutions also face a potential backlash for their involvement in peace processes, especially if they fail and violence reoccurs. The Catholic population's frustration with the church during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, including a decline in worship service attendance, is but one example.[74] As discussed in more detail below, the interest-based calculations of religious actors can be driven by the religious ecosystem in which they operate.

CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING

Religious traditions are, of course, internally diverse and multivocal. The existing empirical research highlights two general sets of interests that can drive religious engagement: material

interests and sacred interests. Behind those distinctions linger key tensions that future researchers and practitioners will need to address—namely, how to pay more attention to both the direct and indirect factors that shape religious actors' behavior and how to give more consideration to the process that informs religious actors' beliefs and preferences.

The first of these tensions concerns the causal role of religious beliefs and sacred values. While most studies now consider the way confessional beliefs and religious tenets are interpreted and reinterpreted, they also imply that, once specific actors adopt a theology of peace, their beliefs will compel leaders and communities to act.[75] Religious actors do not act in a vacuum. The strategic environment in which they operate can also play a substantial role in determining behavior. Research that further unpacks factors that can moderate the role of religious ideas and values would advance our understanding of how religion contributes to peace processes. The burgeoning research on how religion has shaped truth-and-reconciliation processes to varying degrees offers one example moving forward.[76]

A second tension requires researchers and practitioners to explore the endogeneity of interests. For analytic clarity, researchers often assign interests to religious actors but spend significantly less time considering how those preferences arise in the first place and evolve over time. This is problematic for both our understanding of sacred and material interests and for identifying interventions for peacemaking and peacebuilding.

A shallow appreciation for the history of contemporary religious ideas and values, for instance, has given rise to a false dichotomy between "good" religion and "bad" religion—the former applying to sacred ideas and values that promote peace, the latter to violence.[77] This distinction poses significant risks for interventions.[78] One is the development of trainings that focus exclusively on religious sources for peace. Such efforts can leave religious leaders and others ill equipped to counter messages that promote violence. Another is that a good/bad dichotomy runs the danger of labeling certain religious traditions as authentic and others as corrupted.[79] Moving forward, analysts and practitioners need to do more than pay lip service to the "ambivalence of the sacred"; they have to take seriously the multivocality of religious traditions. This could have the advantage of also spurring additional research on the internal variation in preferences within religious communities, including those related to peacebuilding.

Scholars and analysts who concentrate on the material interests of religious actors could also pay more attention to the relationship between sacred and instrumental interests. The former may help to define the latter by shaping the type of societal influence—both the degree of influence and the issue areas—over which religious actors seek to gain influence. Some groups, such as Old Order Amish communities, eschew direct involvement in the public sphere because of central tenets in their faith tradition. The political theologies of other communities help shape the channels through which religious actors find it appropriate to engage in politics.[80] Those ideas may determine which issues a religious actor seeks to take up. Consequently, external engagement with religious actors will require at least some basic knowledge

of the doctrines and values of a given faith tradition, including how they have evolved over time.

The Strategic Environment

EXISTING RESEARCH

The strategic environment in which actors operate is an important component in understanding their engagement in peace processes. Religious actors' context may not determine their actions, but it can moderate the degree to which specific options are either desirable or even feasible.[81] The existing empirical research highlights two key features of the strategic environment that might bolster or constrain the strategies available to religious actors: the religious marketplace and religion-state connections.

Building on the religious-economies approach mentioned earlier, religious marketplaces generally refer to the number of religious organizations and the level of competition between them in a given environment.[82] Adherents are viewed as rational consumers who seek to maximize spiritual rewards and material resources. Similarly, religious leaders are understood to have fixed interests and clearly defined preferences, and it is assumed that they will select strategies for behavior that maximize their utility within the constraints of the religious marketplace (that is, to maximize membership, influence, and resources for their faith community).

Peacebuilding and other outreach to citizens, in turn, is understood to be a function of the number of, and competition between, religious organizations.[83] Where multiple faith groups compete over adherents, each must appeal to the preferences of adherents or risk losing members and influence.[84] By way of example, Guillermo Trejo shows how Catholic clergy in Latin America ignored the religious and social needs of poor rural indigenous parishioners until they were confronted by the expansion of US mainline Protestantism.[85]

Some research also suggests that the size and number of religions and denominations can not only shape the incentives of politicians but also lead to the construction of horizontal networks across religious communities that dampen violent interreligious conflict.[86] This is because such networks can lead to bonds across economic, political, and sometimes even ethnic divisions and thereby reduce tensions across these religious and nonreligious cleavages. Dense religious networks also increase the frequency of contact between individuals and can aid in the flow of information, minimizing the risk of misunderstanding. In support of these expectations, Robert Dowd has found that religious leaders in Nigeria were more active in promoting religious tolerance in diverse than in segregated religious settings.[87] Similarly, Alexander De Juan, Jan Pierskalla, and Johannes Vüllers demonstrate how the density of local religious institutions significantly decreased the likelihood of mass fighting in their analysis of more than 60,000 Indonesian villages.[88]

In contrast, when a particular religion enjoys a monopoly over the supply of spiritual services in a society, almost always owing to state sponsorship, membership is relatively static, adherents have little say in organizational membership, and religious leaders have little incentive to cater to their preferences. Instead, religious authorities depend on material resources from, and the ongoing protection of, the state, especially its regulation of other religions.[89]

The religion-state connection in a particular country is another, and related, feature of the strategic environment that can regulate religious actors' behavior. Broadly speaking, the autonomy of religious organizations and political rulers in relation to one another stands out as a critical precondition for religious engagement in peace processes. This is, in part, because the regulatory context set by the state can either facilitate or limit the freedom of religious groups through laws or discriminatory policies.[90]

Additionally, institutional differentiation, or the degree of mutual autonomy, between religious bodies and state institutions exerts a strong influence on the type of religious marketplace.[91] In contexts where there is little separation, religious monopolies flourish, and the agency of religious actors is limited. By way of contrast, strict separation of religion and state allows for the development of diverse religious marketplaces that, in turn, incentivize innovation.[92]

The bulk of studies, to date, focusing on religion-state connections have examined outcomes related, though not always directly, to peace processes, such as democratization efforts.[93] A few studies also consider human rights promotion. For instance, Güneş Murat Tezcür demonstrates how the nature of the religion-state relationship, along with transnational religious ideas, shaped religious organizations development of human rights platforms during violent internal conflicts in El Salvador, Peru, Turkey, and Indonesia.[94] Additional research that explores the interplay between religious ideas and the strategic environment could substantially advance our understanding of religious engagement in peace processes.

CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING

Of the three research design components discussed so far, the strategic environment of religious actors engaged in a peace process stands out as the one least developed to date. Consequently, there are substantial areas for advancement in this area. Two are especially worth noting.

First, questions persist as to whether, and if so how, the internal structure of religious organizations might moderate actors' responses to the strategic environment. For instance, some argue that the centralized, hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church uniquely positions it to respond to changing religious markets, especially in contrast to decentralized Protestant churches, which have appeared less agile in the face of social and political change.[95] In contrast, it is also possible that decentralization may provide unique opportunities for local or national religious leaders to engage in potentially risky peacemaking initiatives.[96]

Second, the ability of religious actors to shape and reshape the strategic environment requires additional attention. Ahistorical accounts that assume actors' preferences overlook the developments that led to particular religion-state configurations, processes in which religious actors typically played a significant role. Defining organizational preferences in terms of exogenously determined factors, or at least factors perceived to be exogenous, also can miss the internal variation of religious organizations.[97] Individual religious leaders and faith-based actors have different lived experiences and can, consequently, be motivated by different goals. The example of how individual leaders sharply changed the modus operandi, if not the mission, of certain transnational FBOs (for example, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, and the Mennonite Central Committee) suggests the value of considering both endogenous and exogenous determinants of interests and action.[98]

Peace Outcomes

EXISTING RESEARCH

Religious actors, their interests, and the strategic environment are, of course, only one side of the equation. Understanding and evaluating the effects of those explanatory factors on peace processes also requires precision about the outcome to be explained. Conceptual ambiguity again plagued early studies in the field of religious peacebuilding with respect to this area. In the rush to show that religion mattered, empirical examples across multiple levels of action were provided. Little explicit consideration was given to case selection criteria. What is more, most studies employed no-variance designs, examining only religious peacebuilding efforts that had been successful and often of different varieties, mixing ceasefires, formal peace agreements, and interfaith dialogue. This has inhibited our ability to understand how, when, and why religion matters, given that different underlying causal processes may be at work for the three tracks of peacebuilding.

The second and third waves of literature on religious peacebuilding have been more deliberate in defining the universe of cases under investigation. For instance, a robust literature now exists on religious actors in official peace processes (track 1). This includes research on faith leaders' roles as mediators, observers, and official facilitators of negotiations from Liberia to East Timor to the Beagle Channel.[99] Since 2018, the US Institute of Peace, with Inclusive Peace and the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, have also been conducting cutting-edge research in this area.

The mapping of religious actors engaged in track 2 diplomacy has similarly developed as an area of interest. These activities can, by definition, be more difficult to capture, given that they often involve unofficial diplomacy and confidence-building measures behind the scenes of more formal negotiations. Still, a number of practitioner-based research initiatives—especially

those by the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding—have documented a diverse range of examples.[100]

Finally, religious engagement in track 3 peacebuilding is a particularly fast-growing area of study. Several recent analyses, for instance, examine the role of religious actors, symbols, and practices in reducing intercommunal tensions and building trust. Faith-based actors may be particularly well suited to this role because they are often considered to be dependable leaders who are less corrupt or self-interested than political actors in many contexts.[101] Furthermore, religious leaders have the spiritual authority to interpret and reinterpret myths and stories that demonize or derogate other communities.[102] And, as discussed previously, religions contain reconciliatory practices that can be leveraged to rebuild broken relationships.[103]

Research findings to date, however, remain inconclusive owing to common inference challenges faced by social scientists. Some experimental and quasi-experimental studies, for instance, suggest at least short-term benefits to religious engagement in trust-building exercises.[104] However, similar to analyses that rely on cross-national, observational data, those results are also often driven by heterogenous effects. Additionally, they remain limited in terms of their external validity—though again, not necessarily more so than cross-national or comparative and single-country case studies.[105]

Trust in peace accords is another promising area of recent research on religious engagement in track 3 activities. Particular attention has been paid to the role of religious actors as potential spoilers. Large sectors of the pentecostal evangelical community in Colombia, for example, mobilized in opposition to the 2016 peace plebiscite. That referendum eventually failed to pass, much to the shock of many external observers.[106] Other research has drawn attention to how the exclusion of religious leaders from peace processes, such as in Sri Lanka and Iraq, can not only delay peace but also trigger direct opposition to negotiations.[107] A promising avenue for additional study is the degree to which local and national religious leaders can promote confidence in formal peace processes among their constituents.

CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PROGRAMMING

Studies that make a clear distinction between religious engagement at different levels of action during peace processes have provided valuable contributions in recent years. They are, of course, not without limitations. Two are noted here.

First, the comparative framework of many studies continues to suffer from a number of research design flaws. The universe of cases, for instance, is often opaque. It is encouraging that more and more researchers are moving away from no-variance designs. However, this has given way to a tendency to focus only on cases in which religious actors play an obvious or highly visible role. These studies have helped to advance our understanding of key differences

between successful and unsuccessful cases of religious engagement. Because these designs do not consider why faith-based actors become active in the first place, however, it is still difficult to determine whether successful religious engagement is a spurious effect.

The issue of equivalence is another worry with existing comparative empirical research. A number of studies still fail to explain how they were able to validly collect data that is comparable across different contexts and avoid biases in measurement, instruments, and sampling. Of particular concern is the degree to which reporting bias shapes our understanding of religious engagement.

Second, the analytic clarity given to the level of action in more recent empirical research does not always carry over to the indicators used to evaluate outcomes. Studies on track 1 and track 2 activities often take the signing of a peace accord as an indication of success. Not only are religious actors only one factor that contributes to such an outcome, but also they may be engaged in many more routine activities that are not often evaluated systematically. Some existing empirical research also continues to lump multiple types of track 1 or track 2 activities together in support of their conclusion that religious engagement can lead to more inclusive and sustainable peace.

Studies that explore the role of religious actors in reducing intercommunal tensions and building trust are also often vague about what counts as success. This is partly a consequence of the methods used to evaluate outcomes. Survey and quasi-experimental methods, for instance, often only capture attitudes at a single point in time.[108] Longitudinal studies in post-conflict settings could help to determine the degree to which any changes in attitudes observed immediately after an intervention persist over time.

Finally, the inclusivity and sustainability components of peace outcomes remain open questions. In the reviewed studies, the former often refers to the participation of religious actors themselves. But in some contexts this creates additional tensions, especially around gender and sexual minority rights.[109] In the case of the latter, sustainable peace is often measured by the absence of armed conflict recurrence. Yet a growing body of scholarship emphasizes that peace is a multifaceted concept.[110] Even as some tensions between some communities are reduced, others may be exacerbated. The rise in anti-Muslim sentiment in Sri Lanka since the formal end of the civil war between Sinhalese and Tamil communities offers one illustrative example of this dynamic.[111] Other scholarship points to the promise of studying the micro-level dynamics of peace processes and outcomes.[112] This approach focuses on the motivations of individuals and small groups engaged in conflict. It also moves beyond macrolevel indicators of peace, such as conflict termination, to focus more on shifts in individual attitudes and interpersonal behavior. Future research will have to be more precise about the attitudinal and behavioral changes that would indicate the achievement of an inclusive and sustainable peace.

Implications of the Evidence for Research, Policy, and Programming

The study of religious engagement in peace processes has moved well beyond its formative stage. However, substantial questions for scholars and program designers to address remain, as well as challenges to be overcome. As emphasized throughout this review, future avenues of research would do well to push beyond merely asking whether religious engagement matters in peace processes. Doing so will not only help advance academic debates about the causal impact of religion on peace outcomes, it will also better equip policymakers and program designers to develop more efficacious interventions.

First and foremost among the challenges to future research agendas are the limitations identified in this review to drawing meaningful inferences about the role of religion in peace processes. These shortcomings cast a substantial shadow of doubt over the oft-repeated claim of many of the reviewed studies that religion can have a positive impact on peace outcomes. Thus, the central takeaway from this analysis is a call for more rigorous, design-based research and programming that deepens our understanding of how, when, and why religious engagement advances particular stages of peace processes or the activities associated with them.

How might scholars and program designers respond to this charge in practice? This concluding section offers a modest set of recommendations and guiding questions designed to help researchers and program developers overcome some of the most common conceptual, theoretical, and methodological flaws identified in this review. These proposals are, of course, merely a starting point. Analysts and program planners are encouraged to adapt and extend these suggestions to the particular contexts in which they operate.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FUTURE LEARNING AGENDA

This assessment of the existing theoretical and empirical literatures highlights the efforts of contemporary scholars and practitioners to seek a more nuanced appreciation for the role of religious actors in peace processes. It also underscores one of the largest impediments to that goal: a tendency to sacrifice methodological rigor for relevance (that is, the pressure to show that religion matters). It is imperative, therefore, that a future learning agenda address a number of research design challenges. As repeated throughout this review, this will require scholars to think more systematically about the relevant religious actors, the perceived interests of those actors, the strategic environment in which they operate, and the peace outcomes to be evaluated. The strategic approach presented here lends itself to addressing some of the most persistent flaws related to each component.

Minimize Conceptual Confusion

The conceptual ambiguity and stretching that characterizes previous analysis is one major issue a future learning agenda cannot afford to ignore. In particular, scholars need to be more clear-cut and systematic in the way they conceptualize and operationalize religious actors relevant to a particular study or set of studies.[113] Failing to do so limits our ability to draw meaningful inferences about the causal impact of religious actors and generalize from a particular subset of actors. Moreover, conceptual confusion obscures the unique ways in which religious actors or dynamics may contribute to peace outcomes when they are not clearly delineated from their nonreligious counterparts. In addition, this imprecision reinforces the concern about a false religion-secular dichotomy driven by Western biases.

A strategic approach can help analysts address these challenges, as well as open avenues to new study, in at least two ways. First, the approach requires analysts to clearly define and identify the relevant units of analysis for a study from the start. As part of this process, scholars must also consider the relationship between distinct sets of religious actors (leaders, institutions, and local and national faith-based organizations). Doing so will help avoid the tendency endemic to many past studies to cherry-pick exemplar, but often analytically distinct, cases. It can also help elucidate important variation between religious actors. A lingering assumption in the literature is that religious actors have a uniform effect. Yet might distinct sets of actors be more or less efficacious in specific settings or on certain issues areas?

Second, a strategic approach encourages scholars to consider how key actors self-define when mapping the religious landscape. This inductive process would help address concerns by critical theorists that the conceptual ambiguities and stretching present in the field stem not from a lack of analytic rigor but rather from a tendency to label certain groups as religious and others as not, owing to secular biases. Of course, this approach is not a perfect fix. A secular lens may still limit which actors are included in the landscape mapping in the first place. Thus, a conscious effort needs to be made to look beyond traditional faith leaders or large institutional religious bodies. This will require an understanding of the history and ethnographic realities of particular contexts; as well as the individual, and often implicit, biases of a researcher. If done well, these efforts could bring to our attention a far broader set of religious groups or relevant actors engaged in peace processes, especially those often overlooked or marginalized in particular settings.

Strengthen Theoretical Precision

A future learning agenda will also need to address the theoretical imprecision of the extant scholarship. Past studies often assert reasons why religious engagement may affect peace processes, but they rarely employ research designs that can test between competing causal mechanisms.[114] Instead, this scholarship aims to show the observed, or correlational, connection between specific explanatory factors and outcomes.

A strategic approach that directs more systematic attention to the interests and strategic environments of religious actors can increase our understanding of how, when, and why religious engagement has a causal impact. The approach, for instance, emphasizes that religious actors' interests are neither limited to the spiritual or material realm nor uniform. It also highlights a diverse set of sacred and material interests, even if the jury remains out on which drive particular outcomes.

Future research could push further. For instance, relatively little is known about the processes by which religious beliefs and values condition material incentives. A fair amount of research explores the role of prominent faith leaders in interpreting and reinterpreting religious ideas. But what about more local leaders' influence? Moreover, what factors bolster or constrain leaders in these efforts? Debate also persists over whether sacred values are nonnegotiable. This oversimplifies the problem: Even if some religious goals are inflexible, might it not be the case that others are open to interpretation, or that they can be tabled while other goals are negotiated?[115]

A strategic approach also directs attention to the costs and benefits to religious engagement in peace process. Studies that focus exclusively on religious ideas and values often overlook the latter, framing religious engagement as a normative commitment. But, as discussed earlier, religious actors can often face substantial risks to themselves or the communities they represent when speaking out against injustices and engaging in peace activism. Policymakers and program designers seeking to encourage religious engagement, therefore, would benefit from a deeper understanding of these dangers in particular environments.

In addition, a strategic approach urges analysts to consider how actors' interests can vary within religious traditions. Because so many existing studies focus on a distinction between religious and nonreligious actors, this internal diversity is often overlooked. But it can have substantial implications for policy and program implementation. Ofer Zalzberg, for example, draws attention to how distinct religious actors within the same tradition might hold liberal or nonliberal worldviews and how these differences can either shape constructive engagement in Western-designed peace processes or sustain political conflict.[116] Attending more systematically to this multivocality may also help advance our understanding of how representatives of the same religious tradition can act as both spoilers and peacemakers within the same conflict.

A strategic approach also pairs consideration of religious actors' interests with their particular contexts (for example, the strategic environment).[117] Accordingly, it urges scholars to consider not just the motivations of actors but also the conditions that may make action more or less likely. David Buckley and Daniel Philpott offer at least two models other scholars may seek to emulate.[118] Their studies trace the emergence of particular sets of ideas within and across religious communities and illustrate how external institutional structures (religion-state relations) have either enabled or constrained the ability of religious actors to pursue those interests. A future learning agenda could also consider the internal institutional constraints on

religious actors' involvement in peace processes. This might include the way hierarchical or horizontal organizational structures produce or limit opportunities for action.

Furthermore, future scholarship should be clear about which stage of peace processes they examine, since different factors may matter at different points in time. Why do certain religious leaders, institutions, or communities become engaged in mediation, negotiation, or other such efforts to bring an end to armed conflict? Why, and when, do they contribute to the implementation of peace accords? And under what conditions do they remain engaged in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities in the long term? These questions link to a third recommendation for how scholars can sharpen the outcome of interest in their studies.

Develop a Microlevel Perspective

A future learning agenda needs to be just as rigorous when evaluating peace outcomes as when developing the explanatory framework of a research design. One way to accomplish this, which would be in line with a strategic approach, is to shift more attention toward the microlevel dynamics of religious engagement. By increasing our focusing on individual religious actors or faith communities in their particular social context, future scholarship could tighten at least three other research design elements.

The first concerns the universe of cases. On this point, scholars need to be clearer about the precise population studied and the generalizations that can be made from a study. Analyzing a specific set of actors or geographic region, for example, does not necessarily imply lessons for, or findings about, all religious actors, as several existing studies tend to imply. The universe of cases may also be limited by the level of action. Research that lumps track 1, track 2, and track 3 activities together obscures, more than explains, the impact of religious actors.

Researchers engaged in comparative studies must also address a second issue, that of equivalence. This refers to the challenge of validly collecting data that is comparable across different contexts and avoids biases in measurement, instruments, and sampling. One avenue for addressing this issue would be to focus more on subnational variation rather than cross-country studies, which tend to dominate the literature.[119]

Third, and just as important, analysts need to develop clearer indicators for "inclusive and sustainable" peace. The current literature focuses on macrolevel outcomes, such as a reduction in intercommunal violence, an outright end to armed conflict, or the lack of conflict recurrence. These indicators are so broad that it is often difficult to determine whether religious actors contributed to the outcome or if they are largely the result of other factors. As an alternative, researchers could explore the reduction in tension between specific communities or attitudinal shifts within groups.

A focus on the microdynamics of religious engagement is, of course, not a perfect solution. Scholars will also need to consider how the actions of individuals and small groups link to wider political, economic, and social outcomes.[120] This is all the more reason, however, to

expand the focus beyond macrodimensions of peace and conflict. A shift toward the micro-level is a first step toward an evolving research program.

Expand the Methodological Toolkit

At least two sets of methodological tools could be particularly helpful in efforts to advance understanding of the microdynamics of religious engagement in peace processes. Survey experiments (for example, list experiments and conjoint experiments) are one approach that has been developed over the past decade or so by social scientists but are still not widely leveraged in policy research. This method randomizes respondents into shielded survey treatments, and it can be especially useful for evaluating sensitive or implicit attitudes and biases. Several studies at the intersection of peace and security studies have drawn on this method to assess local support or opposition toward Islamist militancy.[121] Survey experiments are also now widely used in the broader field of religion and politics to evaluate voters perceptions of candidates.[122] While few scholars have yet used these tools in the subfield of religious peace-building, they represent an important opportunity for more precisely estimating interreligious and intergroup hostilities, as well as support for and the efficacy of specific types of programming.

Randomized program designs may also be a helpful way to add to our understanding of religious engagement in peace processes. There has been a hesitation in some academic and practitioner circles to embrace experimental methods of this kind, since confessional identities and spiritual leadership cannot be randomly assigned. Nevertheless, researchers and policy designers would do well to consider other key forms of variation. Religious training and messages could be one area of study. In addition to the content of the message, the representation of religious actors could be manipulated, as done by Luke N. Condra, Mohammad Isaqzadeh, and Sera Linardi through a field experiment in Afghanistan.[123] The location at which a religious message is delivered could also have an impact.[124] Several analysts, for instance, have argued that mosques played a crucial role in collective mobilization during the Arab Uprising.[125] The extent to which sacred sites might amplify messages of peace remains an open question.

In sum, a future learning agenda on religious engagement in peace processes requires increased conceptual, theoretical, and methodological precision. This should include efforts to minimize conceptual confusion, a commitment to strengthen theoretical precision, increased attention to microlevel processes and outcomes, and use of the full range of available research methods. This review does not anticipate that all studies will employ every recommendation outlined here. Rather, the goal has been to highlight a key set of research design components that need to be carefully considered in any study and offer a few illustrative approaches for doing so.

The degree to which a future learning agenda commits to more rigorous scholarship matters not just within academic circles. A deeper understanding of how, when, and why religious engagement contributes to specific peace outcomes can also contribute to more successful program design and implementation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Many of the key challenges for effective policy and program design for religious engagement are not dissimilar to those of a future learning agenda. For instance, just as no single academic study can incorporate the full range of religious actors or levels of action, programmers and policy designers must make difficult choices about where to focus their attention. Similarly, programmers often face questions about the generalizability of interventions beyond a specific population or a geographic region in which they were implemented.

Programming in support of religious engagement in peace processes, of course, also faces some unique challenges. The program cycle, for example, is typically characterized by a shorter time horizon and a distinct set of external risks in the field. Policy and program design can also be more constrained by resource limitations, and more attention is often paid to stakeholder management. Rather than provide a precise set of recommendations to address these context-dependent activities, the discussion that follows instead offers a set of guiding questions for practitioners and policymakers seeking to engage with, or evaluate the role of, religious actors in peace processes.

This framework is organized around each of the design components highlighted by the strategic approach. For each element, three key lines of inquiry to consider are identified, as well as potential dimensions along which those questions might be answered. The dimensions are ideal types, meant to facilitate comparison rather than precisely capture the empirical reality. Risks that can arise when answering these questions are flagged. Failing to consider these potential fault lines could undermine the efficacy of an intervention by creating or exacerbating tensions between or within communities. Ignoring these risks factors may also lead practitioners to overlook potential partners, especially less traditional religious actors. The tables that follow also point to illustrative organizations and cases program and policy designers might look into further to consider how each dimension plays out in practice. Planners might consider the questions in this framework throughout the program cycle, but it is particularly important to consider them at the design stage.

As with any framework, trade-offs are made between depth of information and breadth of reasoning. The questions offered do not provide ready-made answers about where program and policy designers should place their attention. Nor do they suggest simple solutions for designing successful interventions. Also, they are not an exhaustive list of considerations.

What the framework can do, though, is aid organizations in their development of more careful policy and program designs and evaluation strategies across varied contexts. It can

help guard against the instrumentalization of religious actors as it challenges practitioners to consider when it might or might not be appropriate to engage with religious actors. The guiding questions can inform ongoing efforts for increased religious literacy, especially within government agencies and organizations that remain uncomfortable with the mixing of religion and politics.[126] Finally, the outlined framework can be extended through the US Institute of Peace's Religious Landscape Mapping in Conflict-Affected States methodology.[127] This mapping and assessment instrument provides more fine-grained tools to identify relevant religious actors, their influence, and potential challenges to partnering within the religious landscape in specific contexts. Recently published studies on the religious landscapes of Libya, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Iraq also offer detailed examples of how these and other guiding questions can be applied in practice.[128]

Which Religious Actors?

Identifying, selecting, and building appropriate partnerships is, of course, a crucial part of effective program design and implementation. Planning for and realizing programs on religious engagement, therefore, will need to include more than merely a map of the relevant religious actors. Policy and program designers will also need to consider how to prioritize specific leaders or communities to engage in a particular context and at a particular stage of a program. The questions presented in table 1 can help to guide that process.

What Are Religious Actors' Interests?

The religious landscape is further characterized by the diverse and evolving interests of religious leaders, institutions, organizations, and communities. As such, effective policy design and implementation needs to account for both the range of potential religious partners and their self-defined interests. The latter includes the sacred values and material goals of religious actors. Sacred values can often be ignored or sidelined because of the assumption that they are less subject to instrumental engagement or strategic alteration. As stressed in this review, however, sacred values can still condition material interests, and that interplay can change over time. There can also be substantial diversity within, not just between, religious traditions. Policy and program designers need at least some understanding of these dynamics to effectively engage with religious actors. The questions posed in table 2 can provide an entry point for a deeper appreciation of how religious actors define their interests in particular contexts.

What Factors Bolster or Constrain Religious Actors' Influence?

Recognizing the range of religious actors and interests in a particular context will do little to produce effective policy and programming if the strategic environment in which those actors operate is not taken into account. Yet as highlighted in this review, both scholars and

practitioners have only recently begun to think systematically about the conditions that either bolster or constrain the actions and strategies of religious leaders, institutions, organizations, and communities. The questions in table 3 offer a starting point for evaluating whether potential religious partners have the autonomy to act effectively. They also draw attention to external and internal factors that might moderate their interests and actions.

Table 1		
Guiding question	**Potential dimension**	**Examples**
Who are the relevant religious actors?		
	Leaders	Ven. Maha Ghosananda (Cambodia); Imam Muhammad and Pastor James Wuye (Nigeria)
	Institutions	World Council of Churches; Church of England
	Faith-based organizations	World Jewish Relief; RECONCILE International (South Sudan)
	Risk factor: Spotlighting conventional actors at the expense of nontraditional leaders or organizations.[a]	
What is the organizational scale of religious actors?		
	Local	South African Council of Churches; Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Transnational	Islamic Relief; Mennonite Central Committee
	Risk factor: Failing to consider how organizational scale can shape actors' preferences for particular strategies.[b]	
What is the authority structure of a faith community?		
	Hierarchical	Roman Catholic Church
	Horizontal	African Independent Churches
	Risk factors for hierarchical structure: Overlooking tensions between top-level and local clergy; and overestimating the influence top-level leaders have on adherents' attitudes and behaviors.	

a. For example, the role of religious women remains an "untapped resource" for national-level peace initiatives in South Sudan. See Jacqueline Wilson, "The Religious Landscape in South Sudan: Challenges and Opportunities for Engagement," Peaceworks (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, November 2019).
b. For example, local religious actors often favor restorative transitional justice mechanism over retributive ones; where, the inverse has been found for transnational religious actors. See Leslie Vinjamuri and Aaron P. Boesenecker, "Religious Actors and Transitional Justice," in *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*, ed. Thomas Banchoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 155–94.

Table 2

Guiding question	Potential dimension	Examples
What are the primary goals of religious actors?		
	Sacred values	Satyagraha; Ahimsa
	Instrumental interests	Increased participation of Pentecostal churches in politics and peace processes throughout Latin America since the 1980s
	Risk factor: Overlooking sacred values or refusing to partner with particular religious actors because their sacred values are assumed to be fixed.	
What are the worldviews of religious actors?		
	Cosmopolitan[a]	Quaker Peace and Social Witness; Caritas Internationalis; Wajir Peace and Development Committee (Kenya)
	Communitarian[b]	World Jewish Congress; National Association of Evangelicals
	Risk factor: Mismatching donor and partner expectations in terms of target population.	
What are the political theologies of religious actors?		
	Religious and political authorities should remain independent and separate.	Roman Catholic Church post–Vatican II
	Religious ideas should underpin the political system.	Hindutva in India; Bodu Bala Sena in Sri Lanka
	Religious communities should submit to political authorities.	Lutheran Churches in East Germany, Latvia, and Estonia under Soviet rule
	Risk factors: Assuming all religious actors support or contest the political status quo. Missing the way religious actors' engagement with the public sphere changes over time.	

a. Represents, in theory, all humanity.
b. For example, committed to a particular group.

Table 3

Guiding question	Potential dimension	Examples
To what degree is religious authority independent of the state?		
	Highly level of autonomy	South Africa; Northern Ireland
	Low level of autonomy	Uzbekistan; Iran
	Risk factor for high level of autonomy: Selecting partners that cannot engage or engage robustly in intended activities.	
	Risk factor for low level of autonomy: Assuming religious actors are not engaged in peace processes due to their beliefs, rather than circumstances.	
How religiously diverse and dense is the context?[a]		
	High diversity and density	Nigeria; China; Sri Lanka
	Low diversity and density	Yemen; Papua New Guinea
	Risk factor for high diversity and density: Exacerbating interreligious competition or division by favoring one community over another.	
	Risk factor for low diversity and density: Underappreciating the ways a religious monopoly constrains the agency of religious actor.	
What is the relationship between religious actors of the same faith tradition?		
	High level of intrareligious tension	Tension between the wider Shi'a community in Iraq and the Shiraziyyin (followers of Ayatollah Mohammad al-Husayni al-Shirazi)[b]
	Low level of intrareligious tension	Inter-Religious Council of South Sudan; Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leon
	Risk factor: Exacerbating intrareligious competition or division by favoring one community over another.	

a. Religious diversity = number of religions; density = number of religious institutions and denominations.
b. Ann Wainscott, "Engaging the Post-ISIS Iraqi Religious Landscape for Peace and Reconciliation," Peaceworks (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, November 2019).

Which Peace Outcomes and Which Effects of Religious Actors?

Table 4 concludes this review with a set of questions that can inform the primary goal of programming in support of religious engagement in peace processes: more inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes. These questions echo the call throughout this review to be more systematic about how, when, and why the participation of religious actors matters. Doing so in program design will tighten the inferences that can be drawn about the efficacy of religious

Table 4

Guiding question	Potential dimension	Examples
At what level of action are religious actors most likely to make an impact?		
	Track 1	1972 Sudan Peace Accord mediated by World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches
	Track 2	Back-channel diplomacy of Rev. Roy Magee in Northern Ireland
	Track 3	Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia's promotion of the peace process with congregations and pastoral associations
	Risk factors: Siloing religious actors to a particular part of the peace process. Overlooking the ways religious actors might move between levels of action.	
What are the resources of a religious community that contribute to peace outcomes?		
	Material capital	The Christian Renewal Centre providing space for Catholics and Protestants to pray together for healing and interaction during the Troubles in Northern Ireland
	Spiritual capital	Archbishop Desmond Tutu infusing religious language into the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
	Risk factors: Missing the ways that some religious spaces can be unwelcoming to certain marginalized groups. Instrumentalizing religious beliefs and rituals.	
How might religious actors affect peace outcomes?		
	Institutional formation and implementation	Human Rights Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Guatemala launch of its own Recovery of Historical Memory Project after the civil war
	Intergroup relations	Sports-for-peace programs that bring children from different religious backgrounds together (Israel-Palestine, Iraq)
	Individual attitudes	*Gerakan Perempuan Peduli* (Concerned Women Movement) that has worked to reduce interreligious tensions in Moluccas/Maluku (Indonesia)
	Risk factors: Overascribing agency to religious actors. Focusing on only the causal impact of religious actors.	

engagement. This will not only strengthen the case for such activities. It will also enable policymakers and program designers to create more targeted interventions and to identify when it may not be as appropriate to engage religious actors.

Conclusion

Does the participation of religious actors in peace processes lead to more inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes? This review of the theoretical and empirical literatures may, at first glance, offer a rather unsatisfactory conclusion. An admirable case showing religious actors' involvement in a wide range of peace processes has been advanced. However, there are reasons to remain skeptical of the causal impact of religious actors because of the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological limits of past studies. Thus, frustratingly little is known about how, when, and why religious actors affect peace outcomes.

That said, this review concludes on a note of optimism. Both scholarly and policy interest in religious engagement continues to grow. And religious actors continue to play a positive role in conflict and postconflict settings around the world. The opportunities moving forward are plentiful.

The strategic approach outlined here is one way to seize on those prospects. While no precise model has been presented, this review draws attention to analytic questions and approaches to answering those questions that can be used by scholars and peace practitioners alike in their own efforts to develop more rigorous, design-based research and programming. Researchers and program designers will, hopefully, not only adapt these to their own contexts but also expand on them. This cumulative process will enable scholars and practitioners in the field of religious peacemaking and peacebuilding to better understand the conditions under which religious engagement can have the most impact, increase appreciation for its limits, and help guard against the instrumentalization of religious actors.

Endnotes

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2. See Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jason Klocek and Ron E. Hassner, "War and Religion: An Overview," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.984; Isak Svensson, "Civil War and Religion: An Overview," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.650.

3. See Nukhet Sandal, "Post-Conflict Processes and Religion: An Overview," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore /9780190228637.013.678; Michelle Garred and Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Making Peace with Faith: The Challenges of Religion and Peacebuilding* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018); Atalia Omer, R. Scott Appleby, and David Little, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

4. Descriptive statistics are based on a key word search of the terms *religion* and *peacemaking* or *peacebuilding* in the Library of Congress online catalog.

5. The terms *religious actors* and *faith-based actors* are used interchangeably in this evidence review. They are defined broadly as actors who implicitly or explicitly draw on faith traditions—either beliefs or practices—to influence peace processes. This includes clergy who occupy official positions in a religious institution as well the laity. The challenges of defining religious actors, including how best to define religion in the first place, are discussed further in this review. The review includes studies that adopt both substantive (that is, focused on belief systems) and functional (that is, focused on practices) definitions of religion.

6. According to the latest global data from the Pew Research Center, some 84 percent of the global population identifies with a religion; Pew Research Center, "The Changing Global Religious Landscape," April 5, 2017, https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/04 /07092755/FULL-REPORT-WITH-APPENDIXES-A-AND-B-APRIL-3.pdf.

7. For example, see Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Kenneth D. Wald, Adam L. Silverman, and Kevin S. Fridy, "Making Sense of Religion in Political Life," *Annual Review of Political Science* 8, no. 1 (2005): 121–43; Dominic Johnson, "Gods of War: The Adaptive Logic of Religious Conflict," in *The Evolution of Religion: Studies, Theories, and Critiques*, ed. Joseph Bulbulia et al. (Santa Margarita, CA: Collins Foundation Press, 2008), 200; Scott Atran and Jeremy Ginges, "Religious and Sacred Imperatives in Human Conflict," *Science* 336, no. 6083 (2012): 855–57.

8. See Ben Jones and Marie Juul Petersen, "Instrumental, Narrow, Normative? Reviewing Recent Work on Religion and Development," *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 7 (2011): 1291–1306; Jacinta Nwaka,

"Faith-Based Actors and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Jos and Kaduna, Nigeria: 2000–15," *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review* 10, no. 1 (2020): 50–71.

9. See Cynthia Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. I. William Zartman (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 273–323; Daniel Philpott, "When Faith Meets History: The Influence of Religion on Transitional Justice," in *The Religious in Responses to Mass Atrocity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Thomas Brudholm and Thomas Cushman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 174–212.

10. The Religion and Inclusive Societies program at the US Institute of Peace has been among the most vocal advocates of an approach that considers when, not just whether, religious engagement shapes peace outcomes; see, for example, Peter Mandaville, *The Future of Religion and US Foreign Policy under Trump* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, March 7, 2017), www.brookings.edu /research/the-future-of-religion-and-u-s-foreign-policy-under-trump/; and Susan Hayward and Katherine Marshall, *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding: Illuminating the Unseen* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2015).

11. While much of the existing literature has focused on religious engagement in track 1 and track 2 activities, scholars have paid increased attention track 3 activities in recent years. This is not least because track 3 stands out as a clear, if still underappreciated, opportunity to implement and evaluate future interventions.

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13. For example, see Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986): 273–86.

14. Eva Bellin, "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics," *World Politics* 60, no. 2 (2007): 315; Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, eds., *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Nukhet Sandal and Jonathan Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory: Interactions and Possibilities* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

15. Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (2001): 53–73; Daniel Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 183–202; Nukhet Sandal and Patrick James, "Religion and International Relations Theory: Towards a Mutual Understanding," *European Journal of International Relations* 17, no. 1 (2011): 3–25.

16. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967; Steve Bruce, *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Erin K. Wilson, *After Secularism: Rethinking Religion in Global Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

17. Juergensmeyer, Kitts, and Jerryson, *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*; Klocek and Hassner, "War and Religion."

18. See Svensson, "Civil War and Religion."

19. For a critique of this focus on radical religious beliefs and examples of exceptions to this general rule, see Ron E. Hassner, ed., *Religion in the Military Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 2013); Ron E. Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

20. R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000). See also Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Daniel Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion," *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (2007): 505–25.

21. Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peace-making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace*; Marc Gopin, "Religion, Violence, and Conflict Resolution," *Peace & Change* 22, no. 1 (1997): 1–31. See also Robert Eisen, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

22. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 6 (2001): 685–704; Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

23. For example, see Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); Garred and Abu-Nimer, *Making Peace with Faith*; R. Scott Appleby, Robert J. Schreiter, and Gerard Powers, eds., *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010).

24. For example, see Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach, eds., *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Appleby, Schreiter, and Powers, *Peacebuilding*; Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?"; Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (2007): 97–131. A number of academic institutions in the Washington, DC, area also served as a nexus of research and practice on religious peacebuild-ing. Notable examples include George Mason University's Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution; American University's Peacebuilding and Development Institute; and Georgetown University's Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

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27. This includes programs at Georgetown University, George Mason University, American University, Emory University, the University of Arizona, and Eastern Mennonite University, to name just a few.

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Peacebuilding; Chandima Daskon and SungYong Lee, "Buddhist Approaches to Local Peacebuilding and Development," *Peace Review* 31, no. 3 (2019): 381–90; Joyce S. Dubensky, ed., *Peacemakers in Action,* vol. 2, *Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes* (Washington, DC: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, 2015).

29. Lederach, *Building Peace*, 39.

30. Scott Thomas, "Diplomacy and Religion," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.154; Daniel Philpott, "Reconciliation, Politics, and Transitional Justice," in Omer, Appleby, and Little, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding,* 335–54; Jacob Bercovitch and Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Religion and Mediation: The Role of Faith-Based Actors in International Conflict Resolution," *International Negotiation* 14, no. 1 (2009): 175–204; Sandal, "Post-Conflict Processes and Religion."

31. Little, *Peacemakers in Action*, 438.

32. Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*; Wald, Silverman, and Fridy, "Making Sense of Religion in Political Life."

33. Philpott, "Reconciliation, Politics, and Transitional Justice"; Jones and Petersen, "Instrumental, Narrow, Normative?"; Nwaka, "Faith-Based Actors and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Jos and Kaduna, Nigeria"; Nukhet Sandal, *Religious Leaders and Conflict Transformation: Northern Ireland and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

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40. Stark and Finke, *Acts of Faith*; Wald, Silverman, and Fridy, "Making Sense of Religion in Political Life"; Johnson, "Gods of War"; Atran and Ginges, "Religious and Sacred Imperatives in Human Conflict."

41. Sampson, "Religion and Peacebuilding," 273–323; Philpott, "When Faith Meets History," 174–212.

42. See Timothy D. Sisk, *Between Terror and Tolerance: Religious Leaders, Conflict, and Peacemaking* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012); Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

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63. Examples include Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*; and Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam*.

64. See Scott Atran and Robert Axelrod, "Reframing Sacred Values," *Negotiation Journal* 24, no. 3 (2008): 221–46; Little, *Peacemakers in Action*; Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion."

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70. Tetlock, "Thinking the Unthinkable"; Atran and Ginges, "Religious and Sacred Imperatives in Human Conflict."

71. For example, see Lawrence R. Iannaccone, "Religious Participation: A Human Capital Approach," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no. 3 (1990): 297–314; Rodney Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 11, no. 2

(1996): 133–46; Anthony Gill, "Religion and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (2001): 117–38; and Vüllers, "Mobilization for Peace."

72. Kent D. Miller, "Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations," *Strategic Management Journal* 23, no. 5 (2002): 435–56; Robert Wuthnow, *Producing the Sacred: An Essay on Public Religion* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail."

73. See Alshamary, "Religious Peacebuilding in Iraq."

74. See Claire Mitchell, "Catholicism in Northern Ireland and the Politics of Conflict," Working Papers in British-Irish Studies, no. 33 (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2003), https://researchrepository.ucd .ie/bitstream/10197/2189/1/33_mit.pdf; Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity, and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

75. See Charles Selengut, *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 14.

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80. See Philpott, "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion."

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