Abrahamic Religions and Terrorism:

The Common Themes and Power of Politics

By

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Abstract

This project focuses on religious violence conducted in the name of the Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The purpose of this project is to investigate various terrorist attacks conducted in the name of the Abrahamic faiths and examine the common religious characteristics. What I discovered was that these terrorist incidents share four identical themes and have a variety of outcomes, but they are always political. Before diving into the main arguments, I define the terms terrorism, religion, and power, in order to provide a better understanding of the main argument. Competition created by the existence of other faiths creates an uncertainty about which tradition holds the correct claims of the afterlife, terrorism is designed to leverage one faith above the others and erase this uncertainty. The project seeks to explore a variety of common themes found in these acts of terrorism. These include blind obedience and divine command theory, cosmological warfare, sacred space, and fear. The project concludes that these common themes help change the political structures of the attacked and do so in a way consistent with the goals of the terrorists, ultimately giving the perpetrator(s) the success and power over the other. Using the examples of Robert Bowers' Pittsburg Synagogue massacre, Anders Breivik's synchronous attacks in Norway, the expansion of the Islamic State, the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister by Yigal Amir, and September eleventh, this paper concludes political power is the primary objective of terrorism within Abrahamic traditions. Lastly, a section is included about the role of faith in terrorism and opinions on how to combat religious terrorism.

Introduction

"Nor do I pretend to understand the stark nihilism that drove the terrorists that day and that drives their brethren still." -Former United States President, Barack Obama[1]

Terrorism is not a new issue, but it is one that has constantly evolved alongside proactive measures to prevent it. One of the most fundamentally difficult components of terrorism to deal with and understand is its religious influences. Predominantly among monotheistic religions, a wide variety of perceived absolute truths and doctrinal frameworks have shaped the actions of terrorist organizations. The purpose of this project is to explore a variety of terrorist attacks and examine their religious components to find out what characteristics they share. Upon investigation, I claim that certain terrorist attacks, those influenced by the Abrahamic religions - Christianity, Islam, and Judaism - can have a variety of outcomes, and allow for some combination of religious, economic, social, or political factors. However, the product of monotheistic terrorism has always been the permutation or destruction and creation of a political institution. Why is political contortion the end goal of religious terrorism? I argue that terrorists gain power by shifting existing political organizations, or by destroying an existing institution and creating a favorable other, in order to keep other religious groups submissive, humiliated, and out of the decision-making body.

Many theorists and scholars have worked diligently to understand what motivates religious terrorists. Authors such as Mark Juergensmeyer and Charles Kimball have published books showing that specific religious components of a theology have lead practitioners down a pathway of violence. Kimball even goes as far to provide the reader with "warning signs" of when to expect evil actions.[2] Juergensmeyer details certain characteristics

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[1] Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (Broadway Books, 2004), X.
[2] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 6.

of religion that can ultimately lead the participants to terrorism.[3] Other authors such as Eli

Berman have looked to economics, social injustices, and many other potential motivators to

explain the phenomenon.[4] Yet, what I think is overlooked is the idea of politically oppressive

power. Power is what a terrorist seeks and what is gained through the act of terrorism.

Individuals who associate themselves with the victims of the terrorist act can become

horrified; there is pushback, and they change their standard ways of living in hopes to once

again feel secure. This idea of humiliation and fear is what fuels terrorism, resulting in a

change in the political structure. With the structure of the political frame rearranged, a new

type of power, one with the ability to impose divine will in the name of religion, becomes an

achievable goal for the perpetrator. To consolidate this power, political institutions are either

maintained, restructured, or decimated in order to dictate the desires of the one true religion,

that in the mind of the terrorist.

Why do religious terrorists, specifically in the Abrahamic traditions, feel the need to

gain such a suppressive power? With the existence of other religious traditions, especially as

the Abrahamic faiths are tied by a common history, an anxiety is created. Practitioners will

question which is the one faith that will truly grant the promise of the afterlife. Each religion

has a set of regulations that must be followed in order to achieve this afterlife. If a believer

doubts these rules that they have lived their life by in order to gain what no longer seems

plausible, a sense of purposelessness is created. The best way to ensure the promise of the

afterlife is to establish one tradition over another. Because assimilation of the other entirely is

not possible, total elimination through terrorism and suppression through fear seems more

likely. Terrorism has the capability to rearrange or dismantle and create governing bodies that

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[3] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 11.
[4] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 17.

can enact such suppression of the other while simultaneously grant the feeling of the upper hand to the perpetrators.

In this paper I will use the examples of September eleventh, Anders Breivik's massacre in Norway, Robert Bowers' attack on the Pittsburgh Synagogue, Yigal Amir's assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the expansion of the Islamic State and its synchronized attacks in Paris. Each example will be used to demonstrate how the common themes of cosmological warfare, blind obedience and divine command theory, sacred space, and fear, assist in the acclamation of power. I will conclude with a section indicating that blaming religion for terrorism is little more than a fallacy, while offering my perspective on how to best combat religious terrorism.

Power Paragraph on Terrorism

"The object of terrorism is terrorism. The object of oppression is oppression. The object of torture is torture. The object of murder is murder. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?" – George Orwell[5]

There is no accepted universal definition of "terrorism." As a result, this study becomes more complex. The League of Nations attempted to define this complicated term, but the product did not carry over to its successor, the United Nations. The failed global government defined terrorism as, "All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public."[6] This definition did not stick around due to political, societal, and religious reasons. First, it fails to acknowledge motivations. When it comes to analyzing

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[5] George Orwell, *1984* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013).
[6] Javier Ruperez, "The United Nations in the Fight Against Terrorism," The United Nations, https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2006_01_26_cted_lecture.pdf)

terrorism, motivations of the attackers play a key role in comprehending the violence. Without identifying the motivations, the results cannot be truly comprehensible, and action cannot be taken to prevent similar attacks in the future. Including motivations, such as perceived inequality or injustice, allows for the understanding of why a specific outcome was desired. Secondly, the definition argues that terrorism is confined to an attack against the State, not civilians or stateless people. Modern-day conflicts do not allow for the absence of such peoples, like the Kurds and the Palestinians, both of which have been on the end of violent attacks, including terrorism.

I believe that there is little global clarity on this subject due to various countries' interpretations of terrorism. Having different experiences and historical understandings about the moral judgment and requirements of terrorism has created a lack of a uniform definition. This in turn can hamper collective responses because universal clarity on the topic cannot be achieved. This is echoed primarily by author María Pía Lara in her book, *Narrating Evil*, when she states, "Key to any possible transformation of a society is the effort to understand that what happened needs a collective effort to critically reconstruct it with the goal of envisioning how a society needs to be transformed."[7]

Therefore, in order to encompass motivations, end results, and all potential victims, I have had to select a definition of terrorism that allows for the comparison of terrorist incidents across monotheistic religions. I picked the U.S. Department of Defense's definition found in a joint publication on "Antiterrorism." It states, "Terrorism is often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs and committed in the pursuit of goals that are usually political."[8] I selected this definition not only because of its broad claims that allow for

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[7] María Pía Lara, *Narrating Evil: A Postmetaphysical Theory of Reflective Judgment* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 135.
[8] Joint Publication 3-26: Counterterrorism § (2014), 5.

broader interpretation, but because it differentiates and distinguishes between the motivations and goals of terrorism. The motivations can be political, ideological, or, as I am focusing on here, religious. As claimed in the definition, the goals are generally political. However, they can also be ideological or religious.[9] This allows for various instances of religiously motivated terrorism to seek different end results. I am attempting to contribute to this definition by arguing a political manifestation is always an outcome, either directly or indirectly, which gives the terrorists the power they crave. By focusing on religious motivation, I claim this guaranteed political outcome provides the attacker(s) with power. This obtained power is then used to undermine other religions, who have caused this fear and anxiety in the first place. The power continues to be used in the expansion and enforcement of the religion of those in control, and through legislation or violence, outlaws and oppresses dissenters and potential threats.

Power Paragraph of Religion

"No religion is inherently violent or peaceful; people are violent or peaceful." – Reza Aslan[10]

Power is an important component to consider when a variety of theologies are being discussed. In order to fully understand the next section on power, a strong definition of religion must be provided. In this project, I will reference a more modern interpretation of religion, as both modern religious terrorism and the power that derives from their violence cannot be contained by older understandings. For instance, Durkheim's definition of religion

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[9] Joint Publication 3-26: Counterterrorism § (2014), 6.
[10] Reza Aslan, *Beyond Fundamentalism: Confronting Religious Extremism in the Age of Globalization* (New York, N.Y.: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2010), 4.

involving the church and single morality cannot encompass the influence of Christianity in white supremacy or dissect the lack of social structure in groups such as Al-Qaeda.

I have selected an understanding of religion and politics from James W. Laine's book, *Meta-Religion: Religion and Power in World History*. In this intriguing examination, Laine observes religion and politics as inseparable, and provides a historical analysis of such. Ultimately the author concludes that empires and presidents alike have used religion to gain power. More importantly, this keeps others from obtaining it. Multiple factors elucidate this claim. First, the use of language, such as claims of "truth," will have political results, mainly leading to conflict of one truth versus another.[11] In the end, pluralism is rejected. Second, modern religion and Western thinkers have falsely interpreted religion as being a private matter. Religion is free to be discussed and create followers, provoking political responses, especially when you tie this to claims of truth.[12] Yet in the West there is large acceptance of the separation of religion from the public sphere, when this really is not the case in all areas influenced by the Abrahamic faiths. Third, the only way to prevent political consequences between vying religions would have to be the establishment of a meta-religious institution that could present and, "assert values that can be taken-for-granted as reasonable, natural, and obvious."[13] Such an institution cannot exist if a religion lays claim to a truth that is not universally accepted, and this is the case with the radicalized violence exemplified in this work. With claims of truth, publicity, and different exceptions to what values are reasonable, natural, and obvious, a universal institution to control religion is not feasible.

To summarize Laine, modern politics is an attempt to become a meta-religion, a way to manage religions. However, in a world of radicalization that is unwilling to accept shared

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[11] James W. Laine, *Meta-Religion: Religion and Power in World History* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 234.
[12] Ibid., 234-236.
[13] Ibid., 236.

values and perceived truths, meta-religion is impossible. As Laine demonstrates, there are

plenty of historical examples in which empires and political institutions have tried to

establish a meta-religious state, but ultimately fail. And because politics and religion are

inseparable, the politics must adhere to a set of values that will retain power, and that results

in the classification of "good" and "bad," excluding some and accepting others.[14] Therefore,

to Laine, religion is nothing more than a subset of values used to achieve power through

politics. As Harari notes in his work, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, religion has simply

become a mechanism for serving the state, reinforcing the lines of nationalism and the

creation of "us" against "them."[15] Better reiterated, "God now serves the Nation."[16]

This understanding of religion, politics, and power is the foundation for the religious

violence observed in this analysis. For example, when looking at the selected instances of

Protestant Christian terrorism, it is often masked in the form of white nationalism. As author

Eric A. Weed notes, these acts of violence are commenced in the name of white supremacy

and act as a service to the religion to which they adhere.[17] Christianity therefore serves as an

understanding of values and reasoning to white nationalists. Laine's understanding of religion

can encompass this white supremacy and the use of Christianity to empower it.

It is also pertinent to mention the differences between ideology, religion, and politics,

as these are not interchangeable terms. Ideology can be simply defined as a system of beliefs

about how something should be. For example, one may adhere to a more progressive

ideology and support the concept of universal health care. I would describe ideology as

human answers to human questions. Religion, on the other hand, though it can be considered

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[14] James W. Laine, *Meta-Religion: Religion and Power in World History* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 237.

[15] Yuval Noah Harari, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, 1st ed. (Spiegel & Garu, 2018), 137.

[16] Ibid., 130.

[17] Eric A. Weed, *The Religion of White Supremacy in the United States* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), 84.

ideology, encapsulates the belief in the supernatural. For instance, if one has a question about what happens after death, he or she may turn to a religion that teaches about the existence of heaven and hell or even rebirth. In other words, I argue religion is a supernatural answer to human questions. In a sense, both ideologies and religions contain values, beliefs, morals, and ideas. The stark difference is the influence of the supernatural. I point out these differences to explain why this thesis will use examples of white supremacists. Individuals acting in the name of white supremacy, as noted by Eric Weed, benefit a religion to which they adhere, and it is often Protestant Christianity.[18] This is evident in Robert Bowers, Anders Breivik, and the Oklahoma City bomber. Each of these examples use Christian theological influence, as demonstrated in their social media posts and manifestos. Therefore, though these terrorists had ideals, values, and beliefs, their influence by the supernatural, in this case Protestant Christianity, makes their beliefs centered around a religion and not solely an ideology. Politics, on the other hand, is the way in which beliefs, values, and morals are turned into a system of governance. Going back to the hypothetical progressive who supports universal healthcare, he or she may believe in a democratic system in which they vote for the Democratic party in the United States. For the sake of this argument, politics is the means by which terrorist groups obtain power to control and influence the religious other.

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[18] Eric A. Weed, *The Religion of White Supremacy in the United States* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), 84.

The Power Paragraph on Power

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any" –
Alice Walker[19]

In order to convey a deeper understanding of the definition of power I use throughout my work, I have turned to author Steven Lukes and his writing, *Power: A Radical View*. Contrary to the common conceptions of power being one-dimensional and two-dimensional, Lukes' argues for an alternative, and more complex understanding which he appropriately labels three-dimensional.[20] This allows for Lukes to critique and move beyond the definition of power as, "…that A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests," which he declares ignores a crucial point.[21] Rather, Lukes asserts that the third dimension allows for the powerful (A) to transform the powerless (B) by, "… the securing of compliance to domination."[22] In other words, what the one-dimensional and two-dimensional approaches fail to consider is that it is possible to have A control B through means other than forcible coercion and the prevention of B's issues from being considered by A.[23] The three-dimensional argument allows for the creation of an all-consuming ideology that controls through not just physical means, but also through conscious and unconscious measures, such as the installation of fear and idea that unless one submits, they may be contributing to the evil forces and damaging the good.

There is a fourth face of power introduced by Michael Foucault that claims power intersects with governing systems.[24] Foucault argues that the fourth dimension of power is

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[19] Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*, 1st ed. (Mariner Books, 2006).
[20] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (Red Globe Press, 2005), 20.
[21] Ibid., 36-38.
[22] Ibid., 109.
[23] Ibid., 112.
[24] Peter Digeser, "The Fourth Face of Power," *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): pp. 997-1002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2132105, 977, 995-996.

that of power shaping its subjects and their social practices.[25] Peter Digeser expands upon

Foucault by suggesting that both A and B are "vehicles" in the exercise of power.[26] In other

words, through our daily practices and interactions, power is conveyed. This means that our

norms, expectations, and governmental policies do not exist independently of power.

Therefore, A cannot have power without B understanding B's own interests.[27] Thus, the

possession of power by A must be accepted by B. Lukes' argument of coercion still stands,

but now the focus shifts from ordinary practices to those that are mundane, violent, and those

that can forcibly change the norms and practices of the subject.[28] Therefore, power, even in

the fourth face, allows for the subjugation of the religious other, as demonstrated by Lukes,

but with an element of changed social norms as suggested by Foucault.

To relate this back to terrorist ideology, Foucault's theory of four-dimensional power

goes hand in hand with coercing the other to submit to their reign. The perpetrators believe

they had no other choice but to deal with their anxiety and fear but through acts of terrorism.

The attacks can have two potential outcomes. First, the attack can shift the interests of the

attacked (B). The governing system must adapt policies and positions reflecting this change

of interest. Or, secondly, the governing institution crumbles and the terrorists replace it with

their own. In either scenario, the terrorists gain political authority, and the religious other

submits to that power. Each scenario demonstrates not only Lukes' theory of coercion

through alternate means, but also Foucault and Digeser's notion that power is not separate

from the subjects it is used over.

What we will see with the various examples is a play by play of Lukes' theory as one

religion will emerge and suppress the other through a variety of means. By including

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[25] Peter Digeser, "The Fourth Face of Power," *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): pp. 997-1002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2132105, 980.
[26] Ibid., 982
[27] Ibid., 987.
[28] Ibid., 990.

Foucault's fourth-dimension of power, each of these examples will also note the obtaining of power through changes in the political structures as a result of terrorism. And, though Digeser focuses much of his attention on Foucault's political subjects, my emphasis relies on his notion that political structures are affected by the shift in its subjects' interests. By analyzing a variety of Abrahamic examples of terrorism, I can identify four key common factors: the first being blind obedience and divine command theory, the second cosmological warfare, the third sacred space, and lastly, fear. These give the terrorist power through political means, whether politics was the goal of their actions or not. This power allows for the subjugation of the religious other, supposedly fulfilling the lost purpose, defeating evil once and for all, and ultimately, bringing peace either through assimilation or eradication. In my last section devoted to power, I will use Lukes' definition to demonstrate that through these common themes, there is a change in the political institutions, and the terrorists receive oppressive power, enabling the violence to suppress its victims not only through physical coercion, but through psychological means such as fear. As a side note, I am not claiming that all attacks are confined to this specific power model, but that Lukes' theory is the dominant model that best applies to instances of Abrahamic terrorism.

The Common Factors

"Terrorism must be outlawed by all civilized nations – not explained or rationalized, but fought and eradicated. Nothing can, nothing will justify the murder of innocent people and helpless children." – Elie Wiesel[29]

After having observed multiple cases of terrorism conducted in the name of an Abrahamic tradition, I have narrowed down the argument to five categories. The first is blind

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[29] Elie Wiesel, "Hope, Despair, and Memory," Nobel Lecture, December 11, 1986 (The Nobel Prize, 1986), https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1986/wiesel/lecture/.

obedience. I break this section down into two subsections; individuals acting on their own accord because a greater power has instructed them to, and participants willing to adhere to a leader and their teachings.[30] For individuals I will discuss the concept of divine command theory, the idea that one should do as God says because God has justified an action as being "good."[31] However, divine command theory also plays a role in group terrorist organizations, along with theological leaders. Yet, these teachings are made based on theological interpretations of violence and justification for the actions taken against others. And, in many cases, the theological training for these interpretations are considered invalid by the traditional religion.[32] This section focuses on why members select to listen to a leader who has little to no theological training and validation, and what makes the interpretation and justification so convincing that one would then commit an atrocious act against other believers or innocent civilians.

The second category is the concept of cosmological warfare. Each interpretation of doctrine, vision, and prophecy by the perpetrators claims to be rooted in a fight for good in a time of evil. In other words, the belief of the participant is the only right belief, and others are wrong. Even more importantly in this category, the religious terrorists hold the view that their religion has already been under attack by those they consider evil.[33] This section seeks to explore the origins of this concept and how it transforms into the perception of retaliation and holy war.

Sacred space, literal and imagined, makes up the third category. Through rituals, land often becomes sanctified, and this plays a key role in the expansion of the theological empire.

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[30] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 81-109.

[31] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 266, 271.

[32] Ibid., 271.

[33] Ibid., 11, 213-221.

The space does not have to be simply physical, the space may also take the form of "imagined communities," those who often share characteristics such as using the same language.[34] White nationalists, for example, believe communities must not become sacrilegious with the mingling of other races and ethnicities. This topic needs to be broken down into two explanations. First, sanctification of land creates a sense of sacredness that cannot be defiled. The land becomes symbolic of the religion, and when it is either under attack or penetrated by nonbelievers, it becomes impure and in need of cleansing. Secondly, expansion of territory allows for a greater fight of the good against the evil. Connecting this back to our second category allows for the conclusion that land has a significant role in the development of religious terrorist violence.

It would be a mistake to not mention the significance of fear. Based on Eli Berman's economic theories, a terrorist will only commit to the violence if its benefits outweigh the cost.[35] For most religious attackers, their life becomes the cost worth calculating. The damage and results that follow the violence are the benefits, which are even harder to calculate before the action is taken. Why then, do religious terrorists decide to proceed knowing the immeasurable consequences and costs, such as the possibility of death? I argue that a fear of being obsolete and purposeless drives future perpetrators to these extreme religious interpretations, and even motivates them to participate in the justified violence.

Each of these categories is a necessity for the control and dominance of the perpetrator's beliefs. Power is the essential element that arises from the assets of divine command theory and blind obedience, cosmological warfare, sacred land, and fear. This power is then used to subjugate and ultimately eliminate that which has been evil. Lukes'

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[34] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised (London, U.K.: Verso, 2006), 13.
[35] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 17, 118, 157-181.

philosophy on power can thus be applied as the Abrahamic terrorists are able to subjugate and ultimately control the victims, those of other beliefs. Simultaneously, Foucault and Digeser's concept of power not being independent from the interests of the subjects still holds, as either the existing governing body, A, responds to the newly formed interests of the attacked people, B, or the existing governing institution is dismantled and replaced by the terrorists' own. In either regard, the power that A holds is now influenced by the terrorists and leads to the subjugation of the other. With the observed examples, these categories are shown to be similarities that, ultimately, lead to the shared desire of obtaining power that can be used to suppress and eventually eliminate all that threatens their religious interpretation.

Divine Command and Blind Obedience

"Is the holy approved by the Gods because it is holy, or is it holy because it is approved?" – Plato[36]

Together, divine command theory and blind obedience constitute one of the common themes in Abrahamic terrorist organizations. Both have been debated within theology for centuries, dating back to famous figures such as Augustine. Divine command theories are notions that someone will carry out an action because they believe it to be sanctioned by the divine. I will go further in depth with this concept when discussing Anders Breivik. Blind obedience is adherence to the theology of a leader without question. Members of terrorist organizations usually listen to the leaders and flock to these violent organizations with what seems like little or no rational thought beforehand, because the theology of the organization claims that they are doing the righteous work of God. Individual actors will also interpret doctrines, texts, and history as means to believe they are also doing what God has

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[36] "Plato, Euthyphro," Greek and Roman Materials - Plato, Euthyphro (Tufts University), 339 B.C.E., http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0169.

commanded them. There are many reasons to explain why this is the case for terrorists of

Abrahamic faiths. One direction we can look toward is the influence of globalism on their

lives.

The stereotypical perpetrator, whether acting alone in the name of faith or part of a

larger terrorist cell, is, for a lack of a better term, average.[37] They are not the wealthiest

though they can get by, they are not notable for any achievement, and most likely, they are

struggling to find their purpose in life. Even more specifically, they have often failed to

satisfy their sexual desires or find their meaning in family because they have not succeeded in

having one. Juergensmeyer explains this is why you see suicide bombers as younger men,

who are uncertain of what the future holds for them.[38] In a world of globalism, fast paced and

rapidly developing, this uncertainty is nothing but solidified.[39] As we will see with Anders

Breivik, he believed that globalism led to the invasion of Norway by Jews and Muslims who

were damaging the purification of a white, Christian Europe.[40] With globalism, a perceived

lack of opportunities, and nothing else notable, those who turn to terrorism in these examples

are people desperately seeking hope. Hope is what these terrorist organizations and individual

attacks provide. For those joining a larger organization, they offer indoctrination, financial

awards, and community. Also known as the "Club Theory," that if one contributes to the

group and does what is asked from them, such as carrying out an attack, they will receive the

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[37] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 11-12, and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 232-241, 255.

[38] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 255

[39] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 69.

[40] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 20-23.

benefits and rewards of the group mentioned prior.[41] For single attackers and those carrying

out their own manifestos, the violence creates attention and gives a media spotlight.[42]

More importantly, these violent acts offer a purpose, even before the attack is

committed. Knowing that one will further the cause and die a martyr is itself a satisfaction.

These acts of violence offer a fulfillment of what individuals feel as though they have lost,

meaning in a world that has seemingly moved on without them.[43] For instance, Robert

Bowers, who carried out the devastating murder of eleven people and wounded six at the

Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on October 27, 2018, was no more than

your average Joe. He grew up in a divorced household where his dad eventually committed

suicide. Bowers moved around a lot, dropped out of high school, and found himself making

his living as a trucker. With no family, Bowers later turned to antisemitism as a coping

mechanism. As I will write about the other examples, the perpetrators struggle to find

meaning in their lives in societies that do not seem to care. Instead of internalizing the

unfortunate circumstances, blame is put elsewhere. As for Bowers, he believed his society

and his way of life were crippled due to the influence and actions of Jews. After years of

antisemitic social media posts and weapons buildup, Bowers "snapped" before carrying out

the ultimate act, one that would idolize his name among those who agreed with him and give

him a greater societal purpose of which he felt void.

But is it truly just a "snap" that leads someone to carry out the violence? No. In the

sense of religious terrorism, it is because God told you to do it. With individual actors like

Robert Bowers and Anders Behring Breivik, they believe they are acting in a morally

justified manner, just as God would and has commanded them to act. Divine command theory

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[41] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 61-93.

[42] David L. Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (Oxford, U.K.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2006), 47-71.

[43] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 41-44.

is a concept that has been written about and contemplated for thousands of years.

Theologians and philosophers from St. Augustine to Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus to

Immanuel Kant have proposed numerous works related to the theory. Generally, the theory

claims that an action is "good" when given approval by the higher being in question. In other

words, morality is subjective to the will of a supernatural presence, and, because God is good,

it is the moral obligation to carry out the command.[44] Further defined by modern scholar

Philip Quinn, "God commands P to do A, then P ought to do A."[45] Obviously this brings up

the question of moral authority. Quinn concludes that if God commands P to do A, but A

violates P's morality, A should do so anyhow, because "if God is perfectly good, then for all

actions A and for all agents P... then A is what P ought to do."[46] In a sense, Lukes' third face

of power sounds a lot like divine command theory as God transforms P in a manner

consistent with compliance.[47] What is even more interesting, is that there seems to be a chain

of command created from the divine's original order. A command from the divine is given to

the perpetrator, who then makes the demands of the victims through an attack, who then

demand change in their government. So, Luke's third-dimension can also account for any

resemblance of this command chain, as fear and other means of power are exhibited from the

start to finish, ending in the acclamation of power. This is elaborated on later in the section

dedicated to power.

Divine command is thus a central factor in leading to the acquisition of power. I have

already mentioned Anders Breivik, further discussion will illustrate this point. Raised a

Lutheran and with a childhood full of psychological trauma, on the morning of July 22, 2011,

he electronically distributed his manifesto, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*,

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[44] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 271.

[45] Philip L. Quinn, *Divine Commands and Moral Requirements*, ed. L. Jonathan Cohen (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1978), 5-6.

[46] Ibid., 18.

[47] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (Red Globe Press, 2005), 109.

to thousands of people.[48] From his residence he parked his van outside Regjeringskvartlet,

home to hundreds of Norwegian government offices, and, disguised as a police officer, set

the timer on the bomb in the back of the vehicle.[49] The bomb killed a total of eight people,

but Breivik was not finished. While the world watched the scenes from the Norwegian

capital, the perpetrator moved to the island of Utøya, where he unleashed a hailstorm of

bullets, killing sixty-nine people, mostly children of the Worker's Youth League summer

camp, Norway's largest political youth organization, affiliated with the country's Labour

Party which Breivik associated as having let immigration ruin his home country. Police

arrived on the scene after an hour of shooting, where he surrendered immediately, telling the

officers, "it is only me."[50]

Breivik believed that the globalization of the twenty-first century was leading Europe

toward a decline. As outlined in his manifesto, Breivik believed he was therefore fighting for

a divine cause to keep his country Christian-centered, calling himself a, "savior of

Christendom and western civilization."[51] Perceiving himself as a martyr for the religion, there

was an interpretation of Christian theology and ethics that justified his decision somewhere in

his practice. In Hannah Strømmen's article, *Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible in Anders

Behring Breivik's Manifesto,* she notes the manifesto's sixty-two explicit references from the

Bible, and twenty-seven references to "the Bible."[52] Interestingly, most of these references

can be found in the manifesto's section entitled "The Bible and Self-Defense," part of a larger

chapter on "Christian Justification of the Struggle."[53] It is in this section that there is an

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[48] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 20-23.

[49] Åsne Seierstad, *One of Us: The Story of a Massacre in Norway - and Its Aftermath*, trans. Sarah Death (New York City, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 278-291.

[50] Ibid., 291-344.

[51] Andrew Berwick, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, 2011, 1435.

[52] Hannah Strommen, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible In Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto," *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception* 4, no. 1 (June 23, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1515/jbr-2017-2006.

[53] Andrew Berwick, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, 2011, 1325.

individualized, yet theologically uneducated interpretation at justifying violence. It is also in this section that Anders clearly demonstrates his belief that he is following the divine command of God.

Breivik begins by comparing himself to religious figures such as Pope Urban II and Pope Innocent III who were notorious for granting pardons and "favors" to martyrs of the Church.[54] He then directly condemns religious figures of the modern day, saying that Christianity in Europe has been abandoned, for these leaders would not commend another cultural crusade to protect the Christian identity.[55] These condemnations are closely followed by biblical passages, which appear to be plucked in spontaneity, only picking a select few that confirm his thoughts, and each used to support Breivik's belief in the actions he must take. According to Strommen,

> Breivik's Bible emerges with a clear message: God is not a pacifist, the Bible encourages violence as a self-defense of the Christian God and his seemingly exclusively European people; additionally, proponents of an anti-multiculturalist and anti-Muslim position are effectively soldiers of Christ, following a biblical tradition of righteous warfare.[56]

Mark Juergensmeyer points out in his work, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, that religious terrorists often perceive themselves in a world that is under attack.[57] Therefore, Breivik interpreted Christian doctrine in accordance with his worldview. Perceiving his way of life and his Christian identity to be threatened from a loose immigration policy and wave of "Islamic Imperialism,"[58] Breivik saw justification in his violent actions through being a warrior of Christ, referencing Acts 5:29, that he and others,

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[54] Hannah Strommen, "Christian Terror in Europe? The Bible In Anders Behring Breivik's Manifesto," *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception* 4, no. 1 (June 23, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1515/jbr-2017-2006.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 12.
[58] Andrew Berwick, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, 2011, 150, 1201.

"must obey God rather than men."[59] Only having been raised a Christian, and with no formal

theological training, Breivik operated on what he believed was divine command theory.

Divine command theory is thus a dangerous component found amongst violent

individuals acting in the name of Abrahamic faiths. But what if it is someone joining a group

like ISIS, Boko Haram, or even Aum Shinrikyo? Those who join larger terrorists'

organizations are generally given a role, either as a soldier, or in some cases, even suicide

bombers. With the potential to lose one's life, why would someone feel the need to blindly

join? First, we can understand this from the theory of economics of terrorism. Basic

economics tells us that any action, for a rational actor, is done based on a cost-benefit

analysis. This provides us with enough to deduce that the member must value membership

and its benefits as greater than the life they currently have. Also, it allows for the assumption

that the benefits that are derived from a violent action are greater than the loss of life itself for

both the victims and potentially the attacker(s), especially in suicide attacks.[60] However, it

can be argued that terrorism defies rational choice theory.[61] But, as Bryan Caplan argues,

terrorists and terrorist attacks are not acting irrationally by seeking benefits.[62] Suicide

bombers, he notes, are the minimal outliers to rational choice theory, while others have the

potential to be deterred away from violence, meaning they are rational actors.[63]

Second, we cannot exclude the role of theological terrorist leaders. The religious

leader, often untrained in theology, interprets texts in a way that justifies the religious

violence of the organization.[64] The interpretation of this doctrine seeks to place the blame

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[59] Andrew Berwick, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, 2011, 1334.

[60] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 158-181.

[61] Bryan Caplan, "Terrorism: The Relevance of the Rational Choice Model," *Public Choice*, no. 128 (2006): pp. 91-107, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-006-9046-8), 91-92.

[62] Ibid., 97.

[63] Ibid., 101-105.

[64] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 157-159, 162-167, 169-171.

elsewhere. The potential member, typically unemployed, unable to provide, no longer must accept the responsibility for the situation in which they find themselves. This is evident in the speeches of leaders from groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and many others, that place blame on groups such as the United States and "the West" for destroying the lives of its people. And this works effectively.

Let us take for instance the most notable terrorist organization of today, the Islamic State. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Syria, also known as ISIS, is a fundamentalist Sunni terrorist group who is seeking to reestablish the caliphate throughout areas of the Middle East.[65] The group came to fame with its social media beheadings and its capture of the city of Mosul in 2014. The leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, did have years of theological training, unlike the prior case study of Anders Breivik.[66] With this authority, al-Baghdadi promoted a hatred of the Western ideals: capitalism, globalism, materialism, and most significantly, a secular movement away from the one true religion. Blind obedience is thus a willingness to adhere to his anti-western ideology and interpretation of the Quran and other Islamic doctrines, even with its violent justifications for public beheadings and ethnic cleansing.

Coming back to Berman's economic theory of terrorism, leaders like al-Baghdadi who interpret doctrines or violent reasons are attractive to those who have little to lose.[67] Groups such as ISIS promise benefits in a manner so that those who contribute to the cause have access to these benefits while nonmembers can be denied.[68] These benefits generally fulfill what members lacked when outside of the organization. These include theological

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[65] William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 12, 121-148.
[66] Ibid., 160.
[67] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 62-63, 80-81, 85, 89-91, 93.
[68] Ibid., 81.

education, societal acceptance, charity, and other benefits included in the club theory

mentioned prior. In terms of economics, members blindly follow leaders, such as al-

Baghdadi, because the rewards offered for their sacrifice are greater than not only what

normal society has to offer, but also greater than the risks for losing one's life.

Material benefits such as education and monetary access are not all that is provided by

these types of organizations. I wrote earlier of potential members feeling purposeless in a

society that has left them behind. Like Breivik, members are typically average people who

seemingly have nothing to offer in a global society. These violent terrorist groups change that

sensation by offering them psychological benefits, such as inclusion in a religious society that

does not abandon them like that of a global society. Therefore, it is often that you will see in

manifestos and from religious leaders such as Osama bin Laden and al-Baghdadi, a hatred of

globalization.[69] Material benefits, such as those mentioned above, further escalate this

restored sense of purpose by further separating the member from the global society of which

they were once a part.[70] That is why the education offered is religiously focused, but both the

material and mental benefits are designed to promote the goals of the group. Hatred toward

globalization or finding somewhere to place the blame for the purposelessness not only

further separates the person from a normalized society but further pushes them toward violent

means.

Blind obedience to doctrine and divine command theory are thus two crucial

components to Abrahamic religious violence. First, doctrines make violence easily justifiable,

especially in the name of self-defense. For instance, it is easy to cite the influence of history

on Abrahamic doctrines, from Christianity when followers were persecuted by Nero, to when

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[69] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), xv.

[70] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 81, 137-138.

Muhammed and his followers defended themselves in Medina, and even the constant violence perpetrated against the Jewish population from the Spanish inquisition to the Holocaust. All these events and more shaped the doctrines of the religions included. Thus, when Jesus speaks about bringing fire and the sword in Matthew 10:34, it is important to understand that during this time the Romans were persecuting the Jewish population Matthew was attempting to reach. In other words, in times of violence we often find justification for self-defense in Abrahamic doctrines. When one perceives their way of life as under attack, like Breivik, the Bible gave way to an understanding and justification of self-defense.

Secondly, blind obedience and divine command theory provide benefits. For groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and others, education, finances, an accepting social community, and more are offered in exchange for participation. For single attackers such as Bowers and Breivik, rewards come in a sense of action and responsibility. This translates to my last point, that blind obedience and divine command theory allow for the pursuit of a goal. This, in turn, gives purpose to the perpetrators of the violence. Breivik's manifesto was read by thousands after his attack, and he was given international media coverage for weeks, all focused on what he wished to accomplish and why. ISIS consistently has performed suicide bombings and mass murders all to strike at western imperialism and globalization, giving their attackers a sense of validation in furthering a recognizable cause.

Cosmological Warfare

"The bottom line, I now understand, is that purifying the world through holy war is addictive. Holy war intensifies the boundaries between Us and Them, satisfying the inherently human longing for a clear identity and a definite purpose in life, creating a seductive state of bliss." – Jessica Stern[71]

French author Arnaud Blin has noted in his book, *War and Religion: Europe and the Mediterranean from the First through the Twenty-First Centuries*, that the history of religious violence has often been conducted through the lenses of war, and truly emerged from the monotheistic faiths.[72] Not only were wars fought in the name of religion, but faith determined how the violence was to be conducted, such as the eventual evolution of Christian just-war theory.[73] As with any war, secular or religious, certain values, people, and reasons for fighting are going to be considered evil and portrayed as villainous. This is done so because the faith is perceived as under attack. This notion of a continual and constant cosmological war can therefore be observed as a common theme in Abrahamic terrorism.

What differentiates Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in their understanding of violence is the idea that the faith has consistently been suffering and that a violent response has been ordered by their God in the name of protection and self-defense. Not only does this tie in the concepts of blind obedience and divine command theory, but also the idea that fighting in the name of the one true God has been an everlasting cosmological battle, meaning that the violence transcends human experience.[74] This idea of cosmological warfare can be found in Islamic, Christian, and Judaic terrorism today, and can be traced all the way back to their contextual origins. The Torah describes the Jewish exile, the New Testament depicts the

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[71] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 165.
[72] Arnaud Blin, *War and Religion: Europe and the Mediterranean from the First Through the Twenty-First Centuries* (Oakland, C.A.: University of California Press, 2019), 25.
[73] Ibid., 63-73.
[74] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 182.

crucifixion and murder of Jesus Christ, and the Quran recounts a story of survival in having Muhammed flee from Mecca only to be sieged in Medina. In each story is an episode of violence in which the perceived "good" is being forced to suffer at the hands of the "bad." For religious fundamentalists and terrorist organizations, these stories convey a larger, more significant understanding of an eternal war between the forces of good and the darkness of evil.

First, it is necessary to consider the perception of what is "good" and what is "bad." As already discussed in the explanation of divine command theory, but because God is perfect, God's commands are also perfect and cannot be blemished by what is conceived as bad. The perpetrator, being commanded by the supernatural, must carry out the violence, even if it is contrary to their moral obligations. Thus, actions that are good are to be deemed so by God. Divine command theorists have also argued that anything that may go against the wishes of God is considered bad, or profane.[75] But I do not think this perspective encapsulates all that are considered "good" and "bad" in a cosmological war. As seen by ISIS in the destruction of Greek monuments and the Taliban's elimination of Buddhist statues, objects can also constitute the bad to the cosmological warrior. Not just people, but objects and representations can also convey improper morals or beliefs to another group. Other than commands from God, which we have seen solely through interpretations of texts and history by individuals, how does one know what is sacred and what is profane?

Emile Durkheim first proposed that religions originated around, "…beliefs and practices relative to sacred things…[and] things set apart and forbidden."[76] This sacred-profane dichotomy represents what is "good" through group unity, a shared system of beliefs,

[75] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 203, 213-221.
[76] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1995, 44.

while that which is considered "bad" is anything that goes against the groups' mentality.[77]

However, the sacred only exists in its relationship with the profane,[78] and both extend from

the acceptance and rejection of an original society.[79] In a more modern interpretation,

Tomoko Masuzawa argues that the sacred and the profane cannot be so simply traced to an

origin or so easily defined.[80] She argues that since Durkheim's groundbreaking work, *The*

Elementary Forms of Religious Life, the binary of sacred and profane became so universally

accepted that any understanding of religion without the dichotomy was ignored.[81] The real

emphasis should be on the society itself, and, how throughout history many religious

understandings, specifically non-Western and non-European ones, have been grossly

misconstrued from a European and western perspective.[82]

Johnathan Z. Smith, reverberates this notion of a Eurocentric misunderstanding.[83] In

his work, Smith claims that the words religion, religions, and religious each carry Eurocentric

connotations that developed over a period of colonialism and empire.[84] The Europeans

gradually began to self-impose their definitions of these concepts in ways that were

assimilating to the inhabitants of the colonized.[85] Basically, Smith argues that modern

definitions of terms such as religion, have been completely Europeanized and westernized.[86]

This means that most will associate the definitions of religion, religions, and religious with

European and western values.

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[77] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1995, 35-36.
[78] Ibid., 36-38.
[79] Ibid., 42.
[80] Tomoko Masuzawa, "The Sacred Difference in the Elementary Forms: On Durkheim's Last Quest," *Representations*, no. 23 (1988): pp. 25-50, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928565), 42.
[81] Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 32-33.
[82] Ibid., 1.
[83] Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago, I.L.: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269, 277-278.
[84] Ibid., 269.
[85] Ibid., 270-271.
[86] Ibid., 277-278.

It is safe to say that a more modern understanding of what constitutes good (sacred) and bad (profane) is determined by the collective society. However, as Masuzawa notes, and reiterating Smith, the focus is not on what makes up the sacred and the profane, but rather what makes up the values and ideas of a society as it constantly changes.[87] Because societies are continually developing, values are likely to change. As a result, the interpretation of religious scriptures and histories will also change to fit this new narrative. Anders Breivik interpreted Europe to be a sacred element of Christianity, and developing globalization and immigration were perceived as threats to this sacredness, making these elements profane. Thus, what is considered "good" and "bad" is not just a reflection of the religion itself, but of traditional moral structures and values in a rapidly developing world.

For further clarification, I will breakdown the example of the hijackers of the planes flown into the twin towers on September 11th, and the leaders of Al-Qaeda who commended the attack. Bruce Lincoln, in his book entitled, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion after September 11*, speaks to this idea of societal integration. Reverberating Masuzawa's argument,

> Cultural identity and belonging are not simply ascribed or inherited… [they] emerge from processes in which people are slowly educated by those around them to make judgements the group considers appropriate about a great host of things and to make metajudgements about the relative value of their own and other's judgements.[88]

Lincoln goes on, mentioning that because of these judgements, full integration of the other, if it be difference in ideals, cultures, ethnicities, races, or specifically, religion, is simply impossible. And, where there are societies and groups that are restoring religion to the center point of culture and society, conflict is not reduced, but rather it enhances the destructive

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[87] Tomoko Masuzawa, "The Sacred Difference in the Elementary Forms: On Durkheim's Last Quest," *Representations*, no. 23 (1988): pp. 25-50, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928565), 48.
[88] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 51-52.

capabilities.[89] With the case of Al-Qaeda and September 11th, it is clear that the group sought to ignite a revolution that was wholly religious, a war between Western imperial crusaders and righteous Muslim defenders of the faith.[90] A closer analysis of the hijackers' instructions and Osama bin Laden's October speech further this understanding.

      The hijackers of the four planes were given final instructions to read and constantly repeat before the deadly events of the day. These instructions, found in the luggage of hijackers Mohamed Atta and two others, are full of war-inspired language, themes of justification, and more importantly, notions of self-defense in a cosmological battle. The papers included three phases for the attack: preparation, committing the action, and what comes afterwards. Upon reading the instructions,[91] the reader will notice religiously construed phrases of war such as, "…remember all of the things that God has promised for the martyrs," "Pray… and be persistent in asking God to give you victory, control and conquest," and, "Remember how God gave victory to his faithful servants."[92] Not only does this language present us with war-like messages, but it also portrays the concept of cosmological war. Particularly, "Remember that this is a battle for the sake of God. As the prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'An action for the sake of God is better than all of what is in this world.'"[93] This alone demonstrates that this cosmological warfare dominates the worldview of the perpetrator.

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[89] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 61.

[90] Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, eds., *Violence and the World's Traditions: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 166.

[91] "FBI Releases Copy of Four-Page Letter Linked to Hijackers," National Press Releases (The Federal Bureau of Investigation, September 28, 2001), https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-copy-of-four-page-letter-linked-to-hijackers.

[92] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 97-102.

[93] Ibid., 100-101.

We can next look at Osama bin Laden's response to the attacks on October 7, 2001.[94] Videotaped, the message is one of superiority over a now downed global giant. More importantly, it is a message of retaliation,

> Here is America struck by God Almighty…What America is tasting now is only a copy of what we have tasted. Our Islamic nation has been tasting the same for more than eighty years of humiliation and disgrace…God has blessed a group of vanguard Muslims, the forefront of Islam, to destroy America.[95]

It is a call to war, to continue the fight in an everlasting cosmological struggle that can only be concluded with a victory over the profane, "Every Muslim must rise to defend his religion. The wind of faith is blowing, and the wind of change is blowing to remove evil… God is the greatest and glory be to Islam."[96]

As demonstrated by the attackers, Osama bin Laden, and Al-Qaeda in general, they held values that were strictly anti-American. Standing against what they perceived as Western imperialism, the group perceived the United States to represent bad or profane values. Bin Laden and the terrorist organization called for a maximal, violent response to this imperialism, and justified it through the lenses of Islam.[97] Tying in blind obedience to religious leaders and their interpretations, Osama bin Laden convinced young men to sacrifice their lives for the protection of the faith. The shared values of Al-Qaeda, anti-imperialism and anti-globalism, created the sacred, and its leaders interpreted the protection of such against the profane, imperialism and globalism represented by none other than the United States. Thus, cosmological warfare has been raged to protect what is good in the eyes of Al-Qaeda, and in order to do that, they interpreted doctrine and history in ways to justify

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[94] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion After September 11*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 106-107.
[95] Ibid., 106.
[96] Ibid.,107.
[97] Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, eds., *Violence and the World's Traditions: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 168-169.

the attacks of September 11th. This can be demonstrated through another example of a terrorist believing they fought for a greater reason than themselves.

Yigal Amir was born in Israel in May of 1970. Raised in an Orthodox Yemenite Jewish family, Amir went on to teach Judaism in Latvia after his required military service. In 1993, Amir attended university, studying Israeli law and computer science. It was here where he engaged in right-wing activism and sought instruction from militant rabbis.[98] Amir largely protested the Oslo accords, which started peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, focusing on fulfilling the, "…right of the Palestinian people to self-determination."[99] Believing the government to have betrayed Israel and the Jewish faith, Amir decided it was up to him to protect the land which homed his faith. On November 4, 1995, following a rally in support of the Oslo Accords, Amir waited in a parking lot adjacent to Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv where the rally was taking place. Upon arrival of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Amir used a semi-automatic pistol and fired three shots, two hitting the Prime Minister and the other his bodyguard. Amir was then successfully seized.

Prime Minister Rabin died in transit to a medical facility. When Amir heard of the death of the Israeli leader, he told the police he was "satisfied" with his work and that he was acting alone on the orders of God.[100] In Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman's book, *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin*, the authors comment on the influence of religious leaders in Amir's life. Nationalist Rabbis, militant settlers, and right-wing political members, all of whom shared the common worldview that the Jewish faith was under

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[98] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 60.

[99] "Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination," United Nations - The Question of Palestine (United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution 1996/31, February 13, 2006), https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-187651/.

[100] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 60.

attack.[101] This perception was taken up by a young, impressionable Amir, who was influenced by a violent issuing of Jewish law that instructs the believer to halt anyone who presents a mortal danger to the faith, such as the Prime Minister.[102]

The opinions that helped form Amir's own thoughts all shared this common theme of cosmological war. Simply put, Amir believed God had given the Jewish people a world that was being infiltrated and attacked by Palestinians and the influence of Islam. Quite literally, the State of Israel had seen an increase in Islamic fundamentalist bombings and an increase in tensions in the early 1990s, including twenty-one killed in the one week leading up to the assassination.[103] Not only that, but the government had agreed to the Oslo II accords, meaning that Israeli troops would pull out of all six major cities in the West Bank.[104] In turn, this lead to polarizing political society in Israel, with many right-wing Israelis contending that the essence of the Jewish state cannot live in harmony with Palestinian self-determination. To blame was the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Arabs alike. More importantly, the blame resided with the Prime Minister who negotiated the first round of peace treaties.[105] Not only did Amir justify his assassination in the name of divine command theory, "My whole life has been studying the Talmud and I have all the data," but also that Amir perceived Israel as in need of self-defense.[106] In other words, understanding his newly found purpose to be a warrior in a war that transcends human experience, Amir felt called to a righteously justified act of terrorism.[107]

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[101] Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin*, 1st ed. (Ontario, Canada: Henry Holt Company, Inc., 1998), 102-109, 114-120, 127-130.
[102] Ibid., 102.
[103] Dan Ephron, *Killing a King: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel*, 1st ed. (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Company, 2015),
[104] Ibid., 159-160.
[105] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 56-57.
[106] Ibid.,
[107] Dan Ephron, *Killing a King: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel*, 1st ed. (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Company, 2015), 39.

Cosmological warfare can also be seen in the prior examples from the section on blind obedience and divine command theory. Central to the Islamic State's ideology and religious interpretation of the Quran is the return of the Mahdi who will lead the true believers to total conquest over what is evil.[108] When this occurs, all that is profane is vanquished, the "bad" is eradicated, and peace can be restored with the universal acceptance of the sacred and all that is "good."[109] Anders Breivik understood his Christian centered Europe to be under threat from Norway's loose immigration policies. Breivik obviously believed Arabs and the values of Islam were profane; they did not belong in the society he wished to maintain. In retaliation, he carried out one of the most notorious terrorist attacks Europe and the World has ever seen. So, as seen with ISIS and Breivik, cosmological warfare lays at the center of the perpetrator's worldview.

In conclusion, cosmological war infuses the worldview of the perpetrators of Abrahamic terrorism. It is a cosmological war because the violence serves a purpose that is supposedly greater than the human experience. Believing in the existence of a religious homogenous society, the perpetrator views this way of life as under attack by competing values and norms that are not accepted within the community. This sacred/good versus the profane/bad dichotomy is the underpinning of this violence. However, though originally defined by Durkheim, Masuzawa highlights the importance of development and religious influence being different across societies. Through the examples of the hijackers on September 11th, Osama bin Laden's October response, Yigal Amir, Al-Qaeda, and Anders Breivik, I have demonstrated that each example consisted of notions of self-defense and retaliation.

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[108] William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 32, 105-106, 177-178.
[109] Ibid., 99-100, 105-114.

More significantly, we can understand how blind obedience and divine command theory are intertwined with cosmological warfare. Leaders, as seen with Osama bin Laden, interpret doctrine and present to possible perpetrators a worldview that revolves around a cosmological war. Giving them the possibility of being a fighter in something that transcends themselves, this opportunity is consistent with the argument of restoring meaning into one's life, committing violence in the name of something greater. The same can be said for divine command theory. Yigal Amir, though influenced by a variety of leaders and theologians, studied Jewish literature and law and believed he was acting in the name of God to protect Israel from evil forces. It is this conception of defending a real or imagined "holy land" that leads into the next section on sacred spaces.

Sacred Space

"The experience of sacred space makes possible the founding of the world: where the sacred manifests itself in space, the real unveils itself, the world comes into existence." – Mircea Eliade[110]

It is necessary to understand that land and space are incredibly important sacred aspects that undoubtedly play a large role in the comprehension of self-defense in the name of religion. To clarify, certain territories, sites, and lands are considered sacred in some religions, and when they are perceived as under attack or lost, it plays into the larger idea of cosmological warfare that the faith itself is also under attack. This is because the faith is tied to these locations in a way that is ritualistic and identity defining. For example, we can observe Native American groups in the United States, and how they have made arguments to protect reservations because of the connection the land has to the identity, culture, and faith

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[110] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 23.

of their people.[111] The North Dakota Access Pipeline, for instance, has thousands of Native

Americans, such as the Standing Rock Sioux, protesting against the Federal Government,

claiming that the land gives the Natives ancestral access. To build the pipeline would not only

damage this cultural connection but taint the sacredness of the water and land.[112] This idea of

a sanctuary and divinely provided space can also be found within Islam, Judaism, and

Christianity.

In Christianity, there are many conceptions of sacred space. Differences between

Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Christianity mean that there are a variety of international

spaces and places that are considered holy, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the

River Jordan, Galilee, Rome, and many more. Yet, the most important concept of sacred

space in Christianity is found in the doctrine which states the establishment of a Kingdom of

God.[113] This will be explained more below. In Islam, the Hajj, also known as the pilgrimage

and a fundamental pillar of the religion, already has many sites for participants to visit and

partake in worship. For instance, there are two holy mosques, the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca

(the Grand Mosque) and Al-Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina (the Prophet's Mosque), and

structures such as the Kaaba.[114] There is also Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, arguably

the two most important cities in Islamic history.[115] Yet, Islam also offers claim to the

establishment of a heavenly presence.[116] For the Jewish believers, and others, the State of

Israel is itself a sacred territory containing divine structures such as the Temple Mount, the

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[111] Kelli Mosteller, "For Native Americans, Land Is More Than Just the Ground Beneath Their Feet," Not Even Past (This article originally appeared in The Atlantic on September 17, 2016. , July 22, 2019), https://notevenpast.org/for-native-americans-land-is-more-than-just-the-ground-beneath-their-feet/.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Mark 1:15, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).
[114] *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange Between East and West During the Period of the Crusades* (Western Michigan University, M.I.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 208.
[115] Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca: The 1979 Uprising at Islam's Holiest Shrine* (Anchor, 2008).
[116] Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Quran and Muslim Literature*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2009), 27.

Western Wall, Jerusalem, and more.[117] Judaism also has texts centered around the

development of a "Kingdom of the Lord."[118] Because of these similarities, this section of

sacred space will be divided into two main parts, the first focusing on modern examples, and

the second observing the idealization of a divine kingdom on earth.

       Considering that each of these Abrahamic faiths share some of the same sacred

spaces, such as Jerusalem, the traditions have often found themselves in conflict to either

defend or obtain those spaces. Once again, we can use the example of the crusades. The first

crusade was sparked by the reports of Christian oppression in Jerusalem after the Seljuk

Turks, Islamic practitioners, took the city.[119] The crusade was justified by Pope Urban II who

supported violent means, including the purging of Jewish communities in transit to save

Jerusalem.[120] Unfortunately, there would be a total accumulation of nine crusades over this

Holy Land, consisting of modern day Israel, the western part of Jordan, southern Lebanon,

some of Syria, and the region of Palestine.[121] However, we can still look at the fight over

these territories and how it has extended into the present. Muslim Arabs and Israeli Jews

continue to fight over the conquest of these regions, such as the West Bank and the Gaza

strip.[122] Though multiple agreements have been proposed and attempted to grant access to the

Holy Lands and ensure the safety of all within this highly contested region, such as the Oslo

accords, hatred persists and warfare is continually conducted in the name of self-defense.[123] It

cannot be denied that faith has much to do with the terrorism that occurs in this region,

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[117] Norman Soloman, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24-26, 58-62 65-66, 68, 110-111.

[118] James Luther Mays, *Psalms: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 438-439.

[119] Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, eds., *Violence and the World's Traditions: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 123.

[120] Ibid., 123.

[121] Ibid., 123-125.

[122] Michael Lerner, *Embracing Israel/Palestine: A Strategy to Heal and Transform the Middle East* (Berkeley, C.A.: Tikkun Books, 2012), 27-253.

[123] Ibid., 167-193.

especially when the land is considered sacred and foundational to the religions. But, before I return to examples already mentioned throughout this paper, I will take this time to incorporate a new example.

The Tree of Life Synagogue, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, experienced one of the most shocking faith-based terrorist attacks in October of 2018. Like Anders Breivik, Robert Bowers, age forty-six at the time, held a large online media presence in platforms that promoted alt-right white nationalism.[124] In the two weeks leading up to the attack, Bowers was notably active on the website Gab, where he engaged with many other antisemitic users through the use of memes and forum posts to talk about his hatred of Jews and support of neo-Nazi conspiracy theories.[125] Under the username "onedingo," the most notable posting confirms Bowers fear of infiltration in a perceived sacred space. The post quotes "HIAS [the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."[126] He posted this five minutes before the first 9-1-1 call. The Southern Poverty Law analysis emphasizes the role sacred land holds in Bowers' worldview,

> Bowers blames Jews for enabling violent "invaders" to enter the United States [the perceived sacred space]. His reference to **"optics"** — meaning how best to market the white nationalist message to gain recruits and ultimately political power — reflects a familiarity with the current debate within the movement, which is accessible to anyone on Gab. "The Optics Debate" was a defining argument within alt-right circles, both online and off, as leaders and groups cracked under the pressure of public scrutiny and legal trouble following the deadly Unite the Right riot in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017. Bowers also echoes racist mass murderer Dylann Roof who lamented that there was "no one doing anything but talking on the internet." But Bowers targeted Tree of Life because of a deeper conspiratorial worldview that cast Jews as the most urgent threat to the white race. In his last Gab post and several others, as well as in his statements to authorities after being apprehended, it's clear Bowers adheres to the antisemitic conspiracy called **"white genocide."** White

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[124] Alex Amend, "Analyzing a Terrorist's Social Media Manifesto: the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter's Posts on Gab," Southern Poverty Law Center, October 28, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/10/28/analyzing-terrorists-social-media-manifesto-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooters-posts-gab.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.

genocide holds that forces — principally Jewish, often coded as "globalist" — are pursuing policies seeking to destroy the "white race" in their "traditional homelands" like Europe and the United States through the deliberate importation of non-white people. This is what the torch-bearing white supremacists who marched on the campus of the University of Virginia meant when they chanted "Jews will not replace us." White genocide includes immigration policy but also extends into the cultural realm. Adherents of the conspiracy view depictions of interracial relationships or positive representations of minority groups in media not only as lies but propaganda to convince viewers to acquiesce to "globalist" forces and become willing agents of their own demise. This cultural aspect of "white genocide" is buttressed by older antisemitic conspiracy theories that claim Jews control the mass media and Hollywood.[127]

What is missing from this article by the Southern Poverty Law Center and many others is the focus on Bowers connection to Christian components of white nationalism. Bowers constantly shared material on the Christian Identity Movement, a group of white nationalists who believe God divinely sanctified Europe and America for white Christians. He also quoted directly from the bible. In his Gab profile description, Bowers puts "jews are children of satan. (john8:44)" and adding "------- the lord Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."[128]

Though religion might not be the most evident in Bowers' social media posts and reported daily activities, it nonetheless deserves further investigation. First, we cannot deny the religious motivation. Citing the Bible for its justification of antisemitism, Bowers took the opportunity to murder eleven and wound six. It cannot be ignored that the desired result was a message to Jews that the United States was not open to their everyday life and religious practices. It often goes unnoticed that Bowers succeeded in delivering that message as he was charged with eleven counts of Obstruction of Exercise of Religious Beliefs Resulting in Death, four counts of Obstruction of Exercise if Religious Beliefs Resulting in Bodily Injury,

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[127] Alex Amend, "Analyzing a Terrorist's Social Media Manifesto: the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter's Posts on Gab," Southern Poverty Law Center, October 28, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/10/28/analyzing-terrorists-social-media-manifesto-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooters-posts-gab.

[128] "What We Know About Robert Bowers, Synagogue Attack Suspect," News - Gun Violence (Al Jazeera, October 28, 2018), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/robert-bowers-synagogue-attack-suspect-181028094228480.html

and fourteen other related counts.[129] It is also clear that with the use of materials and

Christian text that Bowers believed he was doing the work of the lord. Tying in the idea of

cosmological warfare and divine command, Bowers obviously believed he was fighting in a

war that was greater than himself, and he had justification which he found in the Christian

faith. Bowers gives us a prime example as to the importance of sacred space in the role of

Abrahamic terrorism, while also relating back to the earlier concepts.

Some of our other previous examples also offer an insight into the role of sacred

space. Anders Breivik is the best example to speak to next because he and Robert Bowers

were highly involved in white nationalism. Similarly, Anders Breivik believed that his

Eurocentric Christian-centered country was under attack. Breivik's manifesto states,

> In fact, multiculturalism is the tool by which Islam infiltrates our institutions and
> political systems. Islam is at war with all non-believers everywhere and forever, this
> is called "jihad" or "fighting in Allah's cause." … Because multiculturalists have no
> need to know anything about culture…they do not understand that they are under
> attack.[130]

This distinguished wording of infiltration, being under attack, and being at war are the exact

same uses of violent language that Bowers adapted when speaking of Jewish affairs in

America. Both perpetrators have distinguished a sacred land, if it be Norway or the United

States, whose Christian-based white supremacy is threatened by the existence of other

predominant faiths and religious ways of life within that space.[131]

Yigal Amir's case of defending a sacred land from the "profane" is easily the most

agreeable example of sacred space. Israel, not just in his opinion, should never agree to a deal

that would allow for Palestinian self-governance in the West Bank and the Gaza strip which

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[129] Abby Vesoulis, "What to Know: Pittsburgh Synagogue Suspect Robert Bowers," TIME (TIME, October 29, 2018), https://time.com/5436894/robert-bowers-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting/.

[130] Andrew Berwick, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, 2011, 407-408.

[131] Eric A. Weed, *The Religion of White Supremacy in the United States* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), 43, 122.

challenge the rightful, and divinely mandated, existence of the Israeli State, especially when the borders of Israel and its settlements are thrown into question. Therefore, "the Oslo deal was not just a calamity for Israel but an act of treason by Rabin, the land he would be handing over to the Palestinians having been promised by God to the Jews."[132] Believing that the Talmud justified his actions, Amir assassinated Prime Minister Rabin, and in his trial defense, Amir said, "According to Jewish law, the minute a Jew gives over his land and people to the enemy, he must be killed."[133]

Both members of Al-Qaeda and ISIS believe that the West has corrupted the proper way of life in the Middle East, though they believe in different ways of returning Islam to the forefront of Arab life. Al-Qaeda emerged out of the anti-Soviet fighters in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Osama Bin Laden utilized the connections established by this group to make jihad a global project.[134] He sought to blame the United States for all of the corruption found throughout the Middle East. Though the organization began to embrace a variety of smaller terrorist cells to coordinate the destruction of the United States, no clear ownership of land and the inability to coordinate another successful attack on America really sunk the power of the group. We can see here that the United States intervention during the Cold War, and after, created the sacred-profane dichotomy, with the goal of "driving Western influence from Islamic lands."[135]

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[132] Dan Ephron, *Killing a King: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel*, 1st ed. (New York, N.Y.: W. W. Norton and Company, 2015), 35.

[133] John Kifner, "A SON OF ISRAEL: Rabin's Assassin -- A Special Report.; Belief to Blood: The Making of Rabin's Killer," The New York Times (The New York Times, November 19, 1995), https://www.nytimes.com/1995/11/19/world/son-israel-rabin-s-assassin-special-report-belief-blood-making-rabin-s-killer.html.

[134] Daniel L. Byman, "Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different Goals, Different Targets," Brookings (Brookings Institute, July 28, 2016), https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/comparing-al-qaeda-and-isis-different-goals-different-targets/.

[135] Mary Habeck, "What Does Al Qaeda Want?," Foreign Policy (Foreign Policy, March 6, 2012), https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/03/06/what-does-al-qaeda-want/.

ISIS on the other hand has a more direct goal when it comes to sacred land. The Islamic State, as in its name, is seeking to restore the Islamic Caliphate, and has attempted to do so since its wave of attacks in 2014, capturing key cities such as Mosul and Tikrit.[136] Having officially declared the establishment of a caliphate, naming al-Baghdadi the ruler, the group has gone on to create problems throughout the Middle East in an attempt to purify the Islamic community, meaning to get rid of the Shi'as and Yazidis, as well as rival opposition groups within Iraq and Syria.[137] ISIS differs from Al-Qaeda in that the Islamic State is defined by localized sacred spaces, while Al-Qaeda seeks to remove evil on a global scale.

Land is thus a central component not only to Abrahamic terrorists, but also to communities in general. Throughout history land and property has defined identities. Take for example John Locke's influence of the right to private property in the construction of United States founding philosophies. Or, consider Enrique Salmón's book, *Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience*, which claims that land and food reaffirm one's identity and worldview.[138] It only makes sense that when land is either taken, attacked, or threatened, that one would try to protect it. We see that with actors such as Robert Bowers, Anders Breivik, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS.

Sacred space and land can also be further reflected upon in relation to divine command theory and cosmological war. In each of the faiths being observed, doctrines and texts speak to the existence of "God's Kingdom" or a Heavenly Existence on Earth. The most well-known example comes from the Hebrew Bible in reference to judgement day and the

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[136] Daniel L. Byman, "Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different Goals, Different Targets," Brookings (Brookings Institute, July 28, 2016), https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/comparing-al-qaeda-and-isis-different-goals-different-targets/.

[137] William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 10-11, 38-39, 111-114.

[138] Enrique Salmón, *Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience*, 1st ed. (University of Arizona Press, 2012), 8, 40-55.

establishment of the Kingdom of the Lord.[139] In the New Testament, the Kingdom of God is referred to in a variety of fashions. Take for example to book of Revelation, in which after the seventh seal does the kingdom finally arrive on Earth.[140] Though the Quran does not use the term "Kingdom of God," there is mention of a "kingdom of the heavens and the earth" along with the call for days of judgement.[141] With the confirmation of a future kingdom, especially when it is preceded by violence, such as in the New Testament, it can be perceived as a reason to fight in a greater cosmological war. Additionally, it may be justified or commanded when language exists about becoming a soldier for the cause.

Fear

"Terrorism isn't a crime against people or property. It's a crime against our minds, using the death of innocents and destruction of property to make us fearful. Terrorists use the media to magnify their actions and further spread fear. And when we react out of fear, when we change our policy to make our country less open, the terrorists succeed – even if their attacks fail. But when we refuse to be terrorized, when we're indomitable in the face of terror, the terrorists fail – even if their attacks succeed." – Bruce Schneier[142]

According to Berman, Juergensmeyer, terror management theorists, and other scholars who study religious violence, fear is the primary underlining factor of terrorism. This may sound obvious at first, but past a surface level explanation, the concepts of fear and terrorism are much more complicated. Of course, terrorism is designed to create fear in the average individual, forcing them to reconsider what is identified as normal. If a bomb were to have targeted a local mall and made national headlines, the odds are likely that many people would hesitate before going shopping near other malls. Terrorism is designed to function in

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[139] 1 Chronicles 28:5, 2 Chronicles 13:8, Daniel 3:33, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).

[140] Revelation 11:15-19, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011)

[141] 1:4, 6:75, M.A.S Abdel Halem, tran., The Qur'an: A New Translation, Reissue (OUP Oxford, 2008).

[142] Bruce Schneier, "Close the Washington Monument," Schneier on Security (New York Daily News, December 2, 2010), https://www.schneier.com/essays/archives/2010/12/close_the_washington.html.

this manner. However, when it comes to religious terrorism, especially within the Abrahamic faiths, fear goes much further than disrupting the standard way of life. It creates a sense of panic within the religion attacked, a fear that it is losing in a cosmological war. Even worse, the attacked begin to question their own existence.

Authors Thomas Pyszczynski, Jeff Greenberg, and Sheldon Solomon are some of the most respected terror management theorists to discuss what the meaning of religion is. They conclude that religion is an answer to the question of purpose and afterlife. They argue that religion provides a playbook to how one should live life in order to acquire the promises of the afterlife.[143] However, as stated before, multiple religions create a sense of doubt within practitioners over which promise of the afterlife is the correct one, and this seems to have a damaging impact on the practitioners' concept of purpose. [144] To erase this anxiety, as the authors argue, religious terrorism provides radical converts with a new sense of purpose, to attack and ultimately undermine opposing faiths.[145] When that opposing religion is attacked, the members become scared. In turn, the religion sort of freezes. People become scared to attend places of worship, share their faith with others, practice their faith in public, and ultimately, question their own religions foundations of purpose.[146] Thus, the fear produced by religious terrorism produces two main functions, to bring a temporary halt to productivity, and, in the long term, undermine the confidence and foundations of the target.

Religious terrorism is meant to stun the target. Typically, this begins with the act of violence plaguing social platforms and media outlets. This causes a lot of speculation because the act of violence is generally thought to have been committed randomly and without

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[143] Thomas A. Pyszczynski, Jeff Greenberg, and Sheldon Solomon, *In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror*, 1st ed. (Washington DC, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2003), 16-18.
[144] Ibid., 29.
[145] Ibid., 16-18.
[146] Ibid., 19.

explanation, but as Berman notes, this is typically not the case.[147] This sense of uncertainty is compounded when those hearing the news begin to identify themselves with the victims.[148] This idea of, "it could have been me," leads to the thought that, "maybe I am next." Those people then hesitate before continuing their normal routines. Therefore, what is considered the daily activities of a group are stunned. When religious groups become the victims of terrorism, religious services are canceled, communities mourn over their losses, and what was considered routine and normal will forever be impacted and changed.

To best describe this, I will return to the examples of the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting and September eleventh. For members of the Pittsburgh Synagogue, life was never the same after October twenty-seventh. For instance, if you google "Tree of Life Synagogue," the competing top result is either the Tree of Life Synagogue home page, or the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting Wikipedia search.[149] TIME magazine wrote an article in October of 2019 detailing how the members of the community are moving forward one year after the catastrophe. However, the article notes exactly how fear has influenced these decisions. Primarily, the Synagogue had not reopened to members within a year of the devastation.[150] Rabbis and community members can be found at the gates offering teachings and lessons that appeal to the need for hope in these troubling times.[151] One member of the synagogue even discussed how the Synagogue was paralyzed from moving forward due to the discussion of retention, "We're considering whether any part of the building should be retained at all," he says. "Should it all come down? Does it create emotional problems?"[152] What TIME's article

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[147] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 20-26.
[148] David L. Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (Oxford, U.K.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2006), 10, 15-18, 29-30, 32-39.
[149] "Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting," Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, n.d.), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pittsburgh_synagogue_shooting.
[150] Mahita Gajanan, "How Tree of Life Is Moving Forward 1 Year After Tragedy," TIME (TIME USA, October 28, 2019), https://time.com/5710735/tree-of-life-one-year-rebuild/.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

depicts is this momentary halt to business as usual. I believe this is best summed up in another member's contribution, "We needed to let the public know that we're not gone… Tree of Life will return to that site. We'll forever remember the 11 lives that were lost, but we will go forward."[153]

To best describe how fear radiates from these attacks, David L Altheide's book, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*, showcases how after the attacks of September 11th, five nationally prominent U.S. media and news outlets bolstered the assumptions of danger and risk.[154] By looking at the use of language before and after Nine Eleven, the author comes to the conclusion that there was a dramatic increase in linking terrorism to fear within the United States, because there was a large push by news reports linking terrorism to victimhood.[155] By associating themselves with the victims, as demonstrated by Altheide, there is a hesitation in continuing normal routines. This severely impacted the months following September Eleventh. All trading was cancelled within the New York Stock Exchange for a few days, the bond market closed, the federal reserve was forced to deal with liquidation, gold prices soared, and the United States dollar collapsed when compared to its counterparts such as the British Pound, Japanese Yen, and continental Euro. Though the economy was not the direct target of the September eleventh attacks,[156] airlines ceased flights, tourism in large cities experienced anomaly downward trends, and security was ramped up throughout the United States.[157] In other words, life does not continue as it once was.

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[153] Mahita Gajanan, "How Tree of Life Is Moving Forward 1 Year After Tragedy," TIME (TIME USA, October 28, 2019), https://time.com/5710735/tree-of-life-one-year-rebuild/.

[154] David L. Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (Oxford, U.K.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2006), 47-71.

[155] Ibid., 207-221.

[156] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 154.

[157] Garrick Blalock, Vrinda Kadiyali, and Daniel H. Simon, "The Impact of Post-9/11 Airport Security Measures on the Demand for Air Travel," *The Journal of Law and Economics* 50, no. 4 (November 2007): pp. 731-755, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/519816, 731.

One could argue that the fear that disturbs everyday life following a terrorist incident

is profoundly connected to the fear that makes one question the validity of their own religion.

Thus, the second component of fear is that of undermining the foundational structure on

which the Abrahamic traditions stand. Returning to Terror Management Theorists mentioned

earlier, religion provides relief. Religious cultures, such as the Abrahamic traditions, are

mitigation tactics meant to provide relief over the uncertainty of death.[158] Religion can do so

by,

> …[having] social roles with prescriptions of appropriate conduct; those who meet or
> exceed those standards obtain self-esteem: the belief that one is a person of value in a
> world of meaning. The primary function of self-esteem, then, is to buffer anxiety,
> especially anxiety associated with vulnerability and death.[159]

Religion provides the notion of life after death; with rules one must follow in order to achieve

such an award. However, the existence of other religions who have competing beliefs on how

to achieve the afterlife, and different ideas of what the afterlife is, pose a doubt to the original

conception of purpose and afterlife.[160] Fear and anxiety return to the believer, who will

question the foundations of their own religion.

The fear that generates the questioning of one's own religion is compounded in the

wake of terrorist incidents. This is primarily exacerbated through the observance of death and

association with the victims. This is also amplified when the attack is on another religion.

Nine Eleven again provides a great example of this, as many believed their great Christian

nation was under attack, not just from the Muslim world, but from the secular side of

America that had strayed from God.[161] Terrorism in the Middle East between Judaism and

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[158] Thomas A. Pyszczynski, Jeff Greenberg, and Sheldon Solomon, *In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror*, 1st ed. (Washington DC, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2003), 13-19.
[159] Ibid., 22.
[160] Ibid., 29.
[161] Joseph B. Taney, "American Views of Islam, Post 9/11," *Islamic Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): pp. 599-630, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20837376, 609-623, and Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion*

Islam is seen as a cosmological war with the ability only to provide one winner, creating a

fear that one will cease to exist.[162]

This fear and anxiety over death can be "conquered" in two main ways. First, one

religion may simply absorb and convert the other.[163] Complete assimilation would eliminate

the other existing options about the afterlife by having a universal acceptance of one belief.

With alternate options over how to achieve the afterlife relinquished, the fear of

purposelessness also ceases. With traditions spanning from thousands to millions of

practitioners, this is highly unrealistic and time consuming, it cannot be played like a game of

Civilization XI where victory comes through conversion. The second option seems more

likely yet more consequential, and that is total annihilation.[164] The cessation of the other

tradition means that yours is truly the correct one with the true understanding of purpose and

the afterlife.[165] Understanding that the second option of elimination is the goal of religious

terrorism, the victimized religion questions the meaning of their own religion in a world

where their faith would allow for such atrocity, why they are juxtaposed in a cosmological

war with only one victor, and whether or not they will win.

Lastly, in terms of this fear, it constantly feeds the cycle of cosmological warfare.

When attacked, an understanding of the existence of a cosmological warfare is enacted, and

one does not want to lose. The only way to get rid of the anxiety is to erase the existence of

the other. As discussed, conversion and assimilation are unrealistic options due to the number

of other practitioners and the immense amount of resources and time it would take to achieve.

Extermination through means of physical violence is the remaining option and can also be a

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After September 11, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 36-50, and David L. Altheide, *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear* (Oxford, U.K.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2006), 37-39.

[162] Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 167.

[163] Thomas A. Pyszczynski, Jeff Greenberg, and Sheldon Solomon, *In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror*, 1st ed. (Washington DC, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2003), 30.

[164] Ibid., 32.

[165] Ibid., 32.

desperate last resort.[166] Therefore, violence seems to only lead to more violence. To further

clarify, a more recent example is required.

On November 13th, 2015, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks shocked the French

city of Paris. Three suicide bombers ignited their explosives outside of the Stade de France

Stadium in Saint-Denis as a handful of other perpetrators simultaneously carried out mass

shootings in cafes and restaurants.[167] Throughout the night, dozens would lose their lives as

police responded to multiple calls and were forced into shootouts with the terrorists. In the

end, one hundred and thirty citizens were killed, and over four hundred injured.[168] Seven of

the attackers died either through suicide or police combat, while others got away. ISIS, or

ISIL, claimed they were the ones responsible, and stated that the attacks were in retaliation to

French airstrikes in Syria and Iraq.[169] France soon responded by claiming the atrocity to be an

act of war, and by launching the biggest air raid two days later in an allied bombing

campaign, targeted the Syrian city of Raqqa.[170] Five days after the incident, a police raid in

Saint-Denis lead to the killing of the prime lead suspect, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, along with

two others.[171]

Life after the attacks was not normal. First, a three-month state of emergency was

implemented across all of France in order to combat possible future terrorist attacks.[172] This

included banning public demonstrations and the granting police the ability to conduct search

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[166] Jeff Goodwin, "Terrorism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, ed. Edwin Amenta, Kate Nash, and Alan Scott (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), pp. 190-203, 193.
[167] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 1-3.
[168] Ibid., 1.
[169] William McCants, "Why Did ISIS Attack Paris?," The Atlantic (Atlantic Media Company, November 16, 2015), https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/isis-paris-attack-why/416277/.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 242.
[172] Andrew Griffin, "France State of Emergency Declared for Three Months, Allowing Authorities to Shut Down Websites and Giving Police Sweeping New Powers," The Independent (Independent Digital News and Media, November 19, 2015), https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/france-state-of-emergency-declared-for-three-months-allowing-authorities-to-shut-down-websites-and-a6740886.html.

and seizures without a warrant.[173] The borders were closed due to the concern that the

Belgium housed the terrorist cell and that some of the perpetrators moved from the Middle

East into France through migrant and refugee channels.[174] Flights were grounded until further

notice, Disneyland Paris was shutdown, and the Eiffel Tower was closed.[175] Cinemas and

shops in close proximity to the attacks remained closed for days and international events such

as traveling concerts and shows were either postponed or cancelled.[176] The Netflix

documentary, *November 13: Attack on Paris*, is an incredible congregation of interviews

from survivors, officials, and responders, including amateur footage from that night. Anne

Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris at the time of the attacks, is quoted in the documentary saying,

"[the attackers] hit the thing that makes Paris great: a sense of freedom, of appreciating

others. Our taste for life took a hit."[177]

The Atlantic states that, "The November 13 Terrorist attacks took aim at people of all

races and religion. And the attacks were targeting everything Paris stands for and holds most

dearly, its mixing of cultures, its cafes, its hedonism, its good life."[178] This highlights the

many ways of life that were the targets of the attacks, but this still caused a theological

conundrum with the religious community of France.[179] Months before the November attack, a

Kosher market was attacked by Islamic extremists, leading many figures to criticize the

French retaliation to antisemitism.[180] However, the November attacks demonstrated that

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[173] Andrew Griffin, "France State of Emergency Declared for Three Months, Allowing Authorities to Shut Down Websites and Giving Police Sweeping New Powers," The Independent (Independent Digital News and Media, November 19, 2015), https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/france-state-of-emergency-declared-for-three-months-allowing-authorities-to-shut-down-websites-and-a6740886.html.
[174] Victoria Shannon, "Paris Attacks: What We Know and Don't Know," The New York Times (The New York Times, November 14, 2015), https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/14/world/europe/paris-attacks-what-we-know-and-dont-know.html.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] November 13: Attack on Paris. Directed by Gédéon and Jules Naudet, 2018. Netflix.
[178] Rachel Donadio, "What the November 13 Attacks Taught Paris," The Atlantic (Atlantic Media Company, November 14, 2018), https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2018/11/paris-attacks-three-years-later/575629/.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.

anyone within France or the international community could be the next victim. No one single religion was the target of the November attacks, but rather all traditions, cultures, and religions that were not that of ISIS were the victims. This allowed for many nations to come together and support the bombing retaliation by France. A fear of being the next target and fear of losing in a religious war sparked by ISIS meant that violence was needed to fight back. France joined many nations in a bombing campaign just days later.

The French bombings, Nine eleven, Amir's assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister, Breivik's Norwegian massacre, and Bowers mass shooting, all portray this concept of fear differently, but fear still is the common factor. Though groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda are meant to produce this fear and seek a retaliation from others, Anders Breivik, Robert Bowers, and Yigal Amir were the ones afraid. They viewed the cosmological battle as one their tradition was losing. This means that it was Breivik, Bowers, and Amir who were questioning the foundations of their own religion. They saw their ways of life as under attack and were scared. Knowing they could never convert the enemy to their faith, they retaliated with means of eradicating the threat entirely. We do not have to distinguish ISIS and Al-Qaeda from these individuals either. Both groups, like all the examples mentioned thus far, see the world headed in a direction that excludes their traditions and understandings. Their members are scared and feel purposeless, just as I argued in the section on divine command theory and blind obedience. In other words, these terrorists already perceived themselves in a losing situation. Their attacks were a retaliation meant to give themselves the upper hand they once lacked.

Lastly, fear does not just emanate from the attacks themselves. Fear can be traced back to our other three components of divine command theory and blind obedience, cosmological warfare, and the idea of sacred space. I have already mentioned the fear of losing in a religious cosmological war and noted the fact that the fear of losing circles back

and feeds the violence found within the conception of war. With sacred space, the idea of

gaining ground physically and spreading violent ideology scares communities who resemble

the victims of the attackers. Lastly, the idea that a divine figure is ordering others to suffer

through violent means which adherents blindly follow is enough to send chills through bones.

Thus, fear is the underlying component of all actions and purposes of Abrahamic terrorism.

To create this immense amount of fear within their enemies is, again, enough to give the

terrorists the upper hand they once believed they lacked. But what is gained that gives the

terrorists the upper hand?

Power

"One of the reasons a state of war is preferable to peace is that it gives moral justification to
acts of violence. Violence, in turn, offers the illusion of power." – Mark Juergensmeyer[181]

Power is the primary goal which terrorists seek to gain from winning a cosmological

war, for blindly following orders, and for spreading their ideology and protecting their sacred

space. As a reminder, the definition of power used here is that of Steven Lukes and his

definition from, *Power: A Radical View*. Though Lukes argues that this model is applicable

to secular forces, I can further apply the model to the sacred. Lukes argues for three-

dimensional power,[182] allowing him to go further than a simple definition of , "…A exercises

power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests."[183] Lukes definition

asserts that the third dimension allows for the powerful (A) to transform the powerless (B)

by, "… the securing of compliance to domination."[184] In other words, it is possible to have A

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[181] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 194.
[182] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (Red Globe Press, 2005), 20.
[183] Ibid., 36-38.
[184] Ibid., 109.

control B through means other than forcible coercion.[185] I do include Michael Foucalt's use of the fourth face of power, and do not believe it excludes Lukes' third face. The fourth face claims power intersects with governing systems, and it does so by shaping the subjects of the ruling system and their social practices.[186] Peter Digeser expands on this by suggesting that both A and B are "vehicles" in the exercise of power.[187] Since A cannot have power without B understanding B's own interests,[188] the possession of power by A must be accepted by B. Lukes' argument of coercion still stands, but now, the focus shifts from ordinary practices to those that are mundane, violent, and those that can forcibly change the norms, practices, and self-definition of the subject.[189] And, as I have demonstrated with the use of cosmological warfare, divine command theory and blind obedience, sacred space, and fear, power allows for the subjugation of the religious other.

To put this into more subtle terms, terrorism can create, change, or destroy political institutions and establishments. These institutions are created, changed, or destroyed by acts of terrorism and the factors that I have addressed. In doing so, the terrorists gain power because they have created or morphed the politics in their favor. In Digeser's example, A, the political institution, responds or changes due to a terrorist attack because B, the subjects, need change to not become victims again. Of course, as I have demonstrated, this is not the case for every example. But every example shares the usage of divine command theory/blind obedience, cosmological warfare, sacred space, and fear, in order to have B need changes that A then makes.

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185 Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (Red Globe Press, 2005), 112.
186 Peter Digeser, "The Fourth Face of Power," *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): pp. 997-1002, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2132105, 980.
187 Ibid., 982.
188 Ibid., 987.
189 Ibid., 990.

Before this work takes the examples used throughout and displays this notion of

obtaining power, it is important to understand how the four factors play into this acquisition

of said power. Divine command theory and blind obedience are critically important because

the actor believes they are doing what is necessary to alter the political means in their favor.

They believe that the divine has commanded them or the group's leader to orchestrate this

attack in the name of their beliefs. In a cosmological warfare, the attackers believe they are

retaliating against an enemy who seeks to eliminate them. As discussed with divine command

theory and blind obedience, these two factors go hand in hand as the perpetrator now believes

that they are not only carrying out an attack to please the divine, but now ingrained is the idea

that they are doing so to win in a war greater than the human experience. Sacred space is also

a significant factor in two ways. First, the protection of a sacred space or the idea of

reclaiming holy land creates fear to those who may live there and disagree with the ideology

of the attacker. Secondly, expansion, especially for a terrorist cell or organization, either

through territory or membership, grants legitimacy to the group, specifically when attacks are

violent and costly. As noted earlier, fear is generated from all three of these components, and

fear can feed into the cycle of an everlasting struggle. However, most importantly, this fear,

one that emanates from the possibility of another terrorist attack, is what can create change in

an already existing political institution or mandate the establishment of a new one.

Let us take for example the response by Norway to the 2011 massacre. Norway's

parliament ordered an investigation and report on the attack that was fulfilled and delivered to

the Prime Minister in August of 2012.[190] The report came as a shock; it detailed the lack of

preparedness of Oslo and Norwegian national security to handle the threat and convinced

many of its main argument that Anders Breivik could have been stopped and apprehended

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[190] Åsne Seierstad, *One of Us: The Story of a Massacre in Norway - and Its Aftermath*, trans. Sarah Death (New York City, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 522-524.

faster.[191] More importantly, the report held thirty one recommendations on how Norway's government could adapt, from increasing police presence and coverage to banning semiautomatic weapons.[192] Over the next handful of years, Norway would strengthen their antiterror laws.

More importantly, Norway's government responded to the fear of the people. Breivik was successful in spreading fear through the Nordic countries. The country's anti-immigration platform, known as the Progress Party, which Breivik supported, held a massive role in the victory of the conservative coalition in the 2013 parliamentary elections.[193] Breivik demonstrated that the election of the liberal ideology was an attack on the nation from religious outsiders, and, if not corrected, would result in mass terror. People were fearful, and thus, B, understanding their own interests were at stake, changed A as the terrorist desired. Norway increased its national security to protect itself from the religious other, to fortify its sacred space, and to try and alleviate the fear that plagued its people.

The same can be observed in the examples of Robert Bowers, Al-Qaeda and September eleventh, and Yigal Amir. In the aftermath of Robert Bowers' destruction, one of the largest interfaith movements in the United States was sparked through unity on social media. From here, in Boone, North Carolina, to Paris, France, solidarity walks, broadcasted prayers, and candlelight vigils were held at Synagogues and national monuments. But Bowers also sparked an intense surge of online white nationalists almost immediately after the attack. The hashtags #HeroRobertBowers and #DeathToTheJews appeared on Gab and other social

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[191] Rappart fra 22. juli-kommisjonen: Preliminary English Version of Selected Chapters, Norges offentlige utredninger (2012).
[192] Ibid.
[193] Elin Haugsgjerd Allern and Rune Karlsen, "Elections in Context, A Turn to the Right: The Norwegian Parliamentary Election of September 2013," West European Politics 37, no. 3 (2014): pp. 653-663, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.895525.

media platforms, praising the attacks.[194] A multiple-choice poll was also created on Gab

asking users what the best option was for Jewish people in the West, with thirty-five percent

of responses answering "genocide."[195] The number of antisemitic instances, from violence to

vandalism and swastika spray paint, have been at a record high and only increasing since the

attack.[196] Needless to say, Jews in America have felt increasingly unwelcome in the U.S., and

Bowers attacks have only fueled that fire. With a President who called some of the

supremacists at Charlottesville, "very fine people," Bowers and others like him have

managed to make antisemitism feel more acceptable in society, forcing Synagogues and

Jewish centers to ramp up security.[197]

Remaining within the United States, the attacks in September 2001, irrefutably

changed society and the political structure within America. First, and probably most

significantly, most Americans, at the time, supported the wars that were to be declared in

Afghanistan and Iraq.[198] This support for the "War on Terror" was commenced under the

Presidency of George W. Bush, who saw an increase in party and presidential approval.[199]

Secondly, the Department of Homeland Security was created in 2002, merging twenty-two

other agencies into one behemoth, and the United States Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, otherwise known as ICE, was created, and has overseen the increase in

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[194] Rita Katz, "Inside the Online Cesspool of Anti-Semitism That Housed Robert Bowers," POLITICO Magazine (POLITICO, October 29, 2018), https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/10/29/inside-the-online-cesspool-of-anti-semitism-that-housed-robert-bowers-221949.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Alex Amend, "Analyzing a Terrorist's Social Media Manifesto: the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter's Posts on Gab," Southern Poverty Law Center, October 28, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/10/28/analyzing-terrorists-social-media-manifesto-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooters-posts-gab.

[197] Jamie McGee, "Synagogues Around the Nation Strengthen Security Following Pittsburgh Shooting," USA Today (Gannett Satellite Information Network, October 28, 2018), https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/10/27/pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting-security-boosted-jewish-communities/1792997002/.

[198] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 284-285.

[199] David W. Moore, "Bush Job Approval Highest in Gallup History: Widespread Public Support for War on Terrorism," Gallup News (Gallup, September 24, 2001), https://news.gallup.com/poll/4924/bush-job-approval-highest-gallup-history.aspx.

immigrant deportations that continues to this day.[200] Thirdly, and probably most known to American citizens, was the increased security found in airports, government buildings, and everyday life. A series of major security overhauls revitalized the Transportation Security Administration, TSA, and implemented screenings at airport checkpoints, the removal of shoes for scanning, the creation of a watchlist for individuals who posed flight safety risks, and increased security lines that makes us late for our flights.[201] U.S. surveying intelligence technology and application skyrocketed, including the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act (the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act), which arguably violates the notion of privacy by providing the executive branch the power to conduct searches without warrants and wiretapping text messages and emails.[202] Put simply, the effects of 9-11 shook American interests, B, and mandated the responses of the government, A, to declare a war on terrorism and shift the politics of American society.

Yigal Amir and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin is slightly different but maintains the argument of political manifestation. Because of the religious violence hotspot that is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is a generally acceptance of violence as part of life. But such a bold attack that lead to the death of a controversial political figure would, "…shift the power from the pragmatists to the ideologues in Israel and sink Rabin's peace process."[203] Today, the ideologues appear still to dominate the politics of Israel. By construing a groundbreaking peace deal into terms of surrender, Amir was not the only one who thought

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[200] U.S. Congress, House, *The Homeland Security Act of 2002*, HR 5005, 107th Cong., 1st sess., https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/hr_5005_enr.pdf.

[201] Ibid.

[202] U.S. Congress, House, Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001, HR 3162, 107th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in House October 23, 2001, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-107hr3162enr/pdf/BILLS-107hr3162enr.pdf.

[203] Dan Ephron, "How Yitzhak Rabin's Assassin Won: New Palestinian Violence This Week Shows the Killing of an Israeli Visionary 20 Years Ago Still Reverberates," POLITICO Magazine (Politico, October 14, 2015), https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/10/israel-attacks-yitzhak-rabin-assassination-213245.

that this would, "prevent the handover of West Bank land to the Palestinians, believing that it violated the word of God."[204] Immediately after the assassination, roads were closed and Israel was brought to an awkward standstill.[205] Months after, the opposing political party, the Lukid party, who held strict anti-Palestinian views, won the election and placed Benjamin Netanyahu in the position of Prime Minister. Amir's actions showed the people of Israel that it was unacceptable to hand over land to the Palestinians, as this was against God's will. This resulted in the people, B, understanding the interests at hand, to replace the deceased Prime Minister and dysfunctional government, A, with leaders who had stricter stances, and who would not negotiate a deal flawed in the eyes of many Israelis.

I saved the Islamic State for last because it brings in to light the idea that political institutions can be destroyed and replaced, rather than just shifted and changed. The Islamic State are expansionists, and in the wake of their acquisition and growth, they dismantle existing ruling structures and replace them with ones of fear and strict Islamic interpretations. I believe this to be most evident in the removal and destruction of historical and cultural artifacts present in the lands they take. Mainly, from 2014 to 2015, ISIL destroyed at least twenty-eight historical religious buildings. This includes Shiite and Sunni mosques, churches and monasteries, ancient and medieval buildings, and libraries.[206] Implicated here is the idea that one's religion or deity, represented by the institution, has been destroyed alongside the structure, and conquered by that of ISIS.[207] Once existing institutions that were centered around the social lives of the citizens were being annihilated and replaced. This confirms the

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[204] Dan Ephron, "How Yitzhak Rabin's Assassin Won: New Palestinian Violence This Week Shows the Killing of an Israeli Visionary 20 Years Ago Still Reverberates," POLITICO Magazine (Politico, October 14, 2015), https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/10/israel-attacks-yitzhak-rabin-assassination-213245.
[205] Ibid.
[206] William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 102-105, and Christopher W. Jones, "Understanding ISIS's Destruction of Antiquities as a Rejection of Nationalism," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 6 (2018): pp. 31-58, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/697782.
[207] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 145-148.

idea that terrorism can not only shift and remodel existing political institutions, but also destroy and create. By declaring the existence of a caliphate and implementing their interpretation of Sharia law, ISIS, through violent tactics, exploited B's interests by destroying religious and historical sites, A, and replacing them with their own Caliphate and political structure. The establishment of such a Caliphate exemplifies the Islamic State's need to reclaim sacred land in order to fight a cosmological war ordained by God and how this provided them with a power over others.

Amir convinced other Israeli's about the sacredness of their holy land. Al-Qaeda placed fear into American hearts that urged them to implement new antiterrorism tactics at the cost of liberty and privacy. Bowers showed others that blindly believing and acting on behalf of religion created acceptance and renewal in the cause. ISIS proved that they perceived existence as a cosmological battle of religions by destroying existing architecture and places of worship to only replace them with their own systems. Blind obedience, divine command theory, cosmological warfare, sacred space, and fear, are all key to each of these attacks focused in Abrahamic traditions. Most importantly, they showed that by shifting, or even destroying and creating political institutions, terrorists are granted power. Breivik forced Norway toward a more conservative view of immigration against Muslims. Antisemitism surged in the United States after Bowers, showing popular acceptance of his ideology and white supremacy. Al-Qaeda became an organization which lured the U.S. military giant into war within two countries in the Middle East, granting them validity and recognition. Amir only further escalated the controversy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by ending a prominent peace negotiation. And ISIS became one of the first terrorist organizations of its kind, killing civilians and nonbelievers as it expanded in the Middle East in the name of the one true faith. Each of these attacks was done in the name of an Abrahamic faith to lend the tradition legitimacy against the other.

What Can Be Done?

"Peace is the highest religion. Peace is the glory of humanity." – Amit Ray[208]

First and foremost, I believe it is necessary to understand that blaming religion for the horrible accounts of terrorism we have observed here is not the aim of this work nor the reality of the situation. Blaming religion establishes this, "false and fleeting security by creating a "them" to separate from our "us."[209] By blaming religion, one will also fall into the trap of reinforcing the cosmological warfare that sparked the act of violence in the first place. Terrorists want a response; they want fear to control minds and prompt a retaliation. By blaming religion, the sacred and profane dichotomy is emphasized and the further this divide is reinforced, the further we move away from achieving the very possible notion of religious peace.

It is also significant to understand that religion and warfare share no direct relationship, meaning religion is not inherently violent.[210]Author, Alexander Bellamy, argues in his book, *World Peace: And How We Can Achieve It*, that,

> …the evidence of a causal connection between religion and war is so thin. There are at least three good reasons for thinking that religious belief and identification makes little direct difference to war-proneness. First, secular states have proven at least as aggressive as those that combine the secular and the sacred…the turn of European states away from the religious towards the secular did not make them more peaceful… Second, religious texts and beliefs are ambivalent on questions of war and peace. They can be made to do different things. The same religious texts and beliefs can, and have been, employed to support war, criticize war, and enjoin peace… Third, given that the distinction between the sacred and the secular is a relatively recent one, it is anachronistic to isolate the isolate the religious and political causes of past wars.[211]

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[208] Amit Ray, *Nonviolence: The Transforming Power* (Inner Light Publishers, 2012), 56.
[209] Serene Jones, "Don't Blame Religion for the Paris Terrorist Attacks," TIME Magazine (TIME, November 18, 2015), https://time.com/4117190/paris-attacks-religion/.
[210] Alex J. Bellamy, World Peace (And How We Can Achieve It), 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2019), 82.
[211] Ibid., 82-83.

So, not only does blaming religion for violence reinforce the dichotomy of sacred and profane and reinforce the notion of cosmological warfare, it also has no evidential backing.

As I am studying Theological Studies and International Peace and Conflict Resolution, I believe that peace through alternate means is a possible goal, especially in terms of religious violence. Dr. Serene Jones is the President of the Union Theological Seminary and was the 2016 President of the American Academy of Religion. She writes that,

> We must choose between strengthening the bonds of trust between diverse communities and fanning the flames of hatred that will destroy us. We all have it in us to choose the former. We have it in us to create expansive, global communities where violence is unimaginable, poverty is crushed, and all humans can flourish to their greatest potentials.[212]

This is certainly true, but when we live in a time of globalization, we must not leave anyone behind. Feeling abandoned and questioning the uncertainty of the future and the faith, violence becomes a greater possibility of last resort. With ideas such as blind obedience, divine command theory, sacred space, cosmological warfare, and fear, the chances of religious violence are compounded.

Therefore, it is not the religion that deserves the blame but the actors and leaders themselves who place theological doctrines considering these negative ideas. It is Robert Bowers and Anders Breivik who deserve blame for understanding Christianity as confined to Western values and under attack from religious outsiders. It is Al-Qaeda and ISIS who deserve scrutiny for perceiving themselves as under attacks and retaliating with the goals of sparking warfare. It is Amir who is responsible for the assassination of the Prime Minister who was leading Israel to peace with Palestine. As David Smock notes, "All three of the

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[212] Serene Jones, "Don't Blame Religion for the Paris Terrorist Attacks," TIME Magazine (TIME, November 18, 2015), https://time.com/4117190/paris-attacks-religion/.

Abrahamic faiths contain strong warrants for peacemaking."[213] It is these religious ideals, the ones that foster love and peace, that must be promoted to negate terrorism and religious violence.

Bellamy again argues that the idea of peace is as old as humankind.[214] He also argues that the idea of peace is not just some far-fetched dream, but a realistic capability that has been worked for as long as violence has existed.[215] In terms of the Abrahamic religions, this is clearly evident,

> There are past cases of mediation and peacemaking by religious leaders and institutions. For example, the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches mediated the short-lived 1972 peace agreement in Sudan. In South Africa, various churches were at the vanguard of the struggle against apartheid and the peaceful transition. The most dramatic and most frequently cited case is the successful mediation the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio achieved to help end the civil war in Mozambique in 1992... like the Inter Faith Mediation Center mediating peace between Christians and Muslims in some of the most strife-torn regions of Nigeria. Others tackle some of the most intractable conflicts in the world, such as the Alexandria process among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders working to establish a religious peace track in Israel and Palestine. The analysis of the Iraqi Institute of Peace shows how the organization has grappled with the most critical issues currently facing a religiously fragmented Iraq. Not all the cases presented here describe dramatic success stories, but even the less decisive cases provide experiences and lessons that are instructive for future religious peacemaking in other places.[216]

These examples alone show that religion can play a role in creating peace. But religious peacekeeping must be broken into two distinct areas of analysis if it is to dismantle terrorism, especially within the Abrahamic faiths.

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[213] David R. Smock, ed., "Religious Contributions to Peacemaking: When Religion Brings Peace, Not War," Peacework No. 55 (United States Institute of Peace, October 23, 2017), https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/01/religious-contributions-peacemaking-when-religion-brings-peace-not-war.
[214] Alex J. Bellamy, World Peace (And How We Can Achieve It), 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2019), 1-9.
[215] Ibid., 1-9.
[216] David R. Smock, ed., "Religious Contributions to Peacemaking: When Religion Brings Peace, Not War," Peacework No. 55 (United States Institute of Peace, October 23, 2017), https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/01/religious-contributions-peacemaking-when-religion-brings-peace-not-war.

First, we must learn and understand what about the Abrahamic faiths can be used to promote peace rather than violence. Douglas Johnston, President of the International Center on Religion and Diplomacy, points out that religious leaders and institutions offer the following; credibility as a trusted institution (especially to followers), a set of values, morals that oppose perceived injustice, the capability to mobilize practitioners, local and even national connections, and a sense of calling or purpose that often inspires perseverance.[217] It is these exact characteristics and capabilities that terrorism exploits. By combining these attributes with the notions of cosmological war, blind obedience, divine command theory, sacred space, and fear, terrorism can and does find a home in Abrahamic beliefs.

It is here that we come about the second area of analysis. Rather than combining the attributes of religion with violent notions, we must combine them with more peaceful ones. As Bellamy stated, "Most major religions have some concept of human equality under the heavens and traditions that value tolerance and compassion towards others. These attributes can, and do, challenge war and contribute to peace."[218] Throughout the New Testament we find that peace is a constant grace given from God. Paul starts almost every letter around the idea that Peace comes from God, and Philippians 4:7 conveys to readers, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."[219] In Matthew 5:9 Jesus tells his disciples that, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the son of God." The Hebrew word "Shalom" and Arabic use of "Salaam" are translated to mean peace. In the Torah, God constantly strives to make sure his people are free of conflict. Leviticus 26:6 says "And I shall place peace upon the land,"[220] Numbers

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[217] David R. Smock, ed., "Religious Contributions to Peacemaking: When Religion Brings Peace, Not War," Peacework No. 55 (United States Institute of Peace, October 23, 2017), https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/01/religious-contributions-peacemaking-when-religion-brings-peace-not-war.

[218] Alex J. Bellamy, World Peace (And How We Can Achieve It), 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2019), 83.

[219] Phillippians 4:7, The King James Version Study Bible (Barbour Bibles, 2011).

[220] Matthew 5:9, The King James Version Study Bible (Barbour Bibles, 2011).

25:12, "Behold and I give him my covenant of peace,"[221] and, even more directly, Psalms 34:15, "Seek peace and pursue it."[222] Islam and the Quran are constantly referred to as a religion and doctrine of peace. The sacred text quotes, "Believers, do not allow your oaths in God's name to hinder you from doing good, being mindful of God and making peace between people."[223] "The Quran also that God is the primary, "Source of Peace."[224] Lastly, it can be argued that Islam can be translated to mean peace or submission, and therefore, those who "enter wholeheartedly into submission" are entering wholeheartedly into peace.[225]

All three traditions also have within their foundations the notion of reconciliation rather than revenge. The Quran states that reconciliation must come before all else, "… make a just and even-handed reconciliation…God loves those who are even-handed.[226] In the Torah, rather than seeking revenge on his brother, Esau embraces his brother, Jacob.[227] In the book of Corinthians, Paul informs the reader that God has given us the ministerial task of reconciliation.[228] These three traditions also focus on the concepts of forgiveness and mercy. The Jewish Selichot prayers are known as the thirteen attributes of Mercy and are given to Moses who tells Israel to recite them in repentance for forgiveness.[229] In Genesis, Joseph is betrayed by his brothers. When Joseph holds power in Egypt during a famine, instead of turning away his family in need, he invited in his brothers and father with compassion and forgiveness.[230] The New Testament tells its readers that mercy and forgiveness triumphs over

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[221] Leviticus 26:6, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).
[222] Number 34:15, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).
[223] 2:224, M.A.S Abdel Halem, tran., The Qur'an: A New Translation, Reissue (OUP Oxford, 2008).
[224] 59:33, M.A.S Abdel Halem, tran., The Qur'an: A New Translation, Reissue (OUP Oxford, 2008).
[225] 2:208, M.A.S Abdel Halem, tran., The Qur'an: A New Translation, Reissue (OUP Oxford, 2008).
[226] 49:9, M.A.S Abdel Halem, tran., The Qur'an: A New Translation, Reissue (OUP Oxford, 2008).
[227] Genesis 33:4, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).
[228] 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).
[229] Exodus 34:6-7, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).
[230] Genesis 46-48, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).

judgement. [231] Lastly, the Quran dedicates a whole entire chapter to the beauty of mercy, known as the Surah Rahman.[232]

Rather than combining the attributes of religion with the negative components of Abrahamic terrorism described within this work, the attributes should be inseparable from peacemaking, reconciliation, mercy, and forgiveness. But how do we convey this to those leaders and followers who perceive cosmological warfare as the present situation? Berman argues that we must incentivize them as it is all an economic game.[233] But money and opportunity does not mitigate theological interpretation. Rather, faith-based communities must push for interfaith dialogue. We have international leaders, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, successfully implementing interfaith peace negotiations, but it is not enough for individual actors to do so. Communities and congregations must also work outside of their own populations to create networks of support and positive change. As David Smock states in his book, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, when organized creatively (meaning that there is no single interfaith dialogue approach, it must be localized and specified), interfaith dialogue has the potential to engage with all, from leaders to those who feel left behind.[234]

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[231] James 2:23, *The King James Version Study Bible* (Barbour Bibles, 2011).

[232] 55, M.A.S Abdel Halem, tran., The Qur'an: A New Translation, Reissue (OUP Oxford, 2008).

[233] Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 187-196.

[234] David R. Smock, ed., "Religious Contributions to Peacemaking: When Religion Brings Peace, Not War," Peacework No. 55 (United States Institute of Peace, October 23, 2017), https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/01/religious-contributions-peacemaking-when-religion-brings-peace-not-war.

Conclusion

"A conclusion is simply the place where you got tired of thinking." – Dan Chaon[235]

Religious terrorism is not a new concept, but it is a rapidly evolving one. Religious terrorism has also been a problem especially within the Abrahamic traditions in the most recent decades, take for example the planes flown into the World Trade Center buildings and the Pentagon on September eleventh or the numerous bombing campaigns in Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, and other African nations that often escape our media presence. But, because of different experiences with terrorism at different times and different locations, not to mention with different outcomes and responses, there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. The League of Nations tried to define terrorism following World War I, but the definition did not carry over into its predecessor, the United Nations. In the best attempt to include all of the broad aspects of terrorism, this project settles on a definition provided by the Department of Defense, "Terrorism is often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs and committed in the pursuit of goals that are usually political." This work is an attempt to expand upon this definition by including the use of power that coms from political changes after a terrorist attack.

But of course, religion cannot be so simply defined either. I noted that religion has developed into a modern quandary of confusion with politics and power. However, like the definition of terrorism, one needs to be cautious of the western perspective of religion, as they have emphasized western notions of individualism and politics. Religion is therefore various truth claims combined with faith and organization to establish an institutional power. Power is then also useful to define. Through a discussion of Lukes, Foucault, and Digeser, I have demonstrated that there are many dimensions and types of power. However, I have

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[235] Dan Chaon, *Stay Awake* (Ballantine Books, 2012).

argued idea that power through politics comes from forces that alter the interests of the governed who then pressure or elect new leaders change policies regarding the protection of those interests. These definitions come together to help understand that religious terrorism, within the Abrahamic tradition, results in power. This power not only comes through shifts in the subject's interests, but also change or destruction and creation of political institutions and policies.

I have shown this by identifying four key elements of Abrahamic terrorism that result in the acclamation of said power. First is blind obedience and divine command theory. Blind obedience is adherence to the theology of a leader without question, but more importantly, divine command theory is the idea that actors are adhering to the perceived will of God as it is the moral and good thing to do. The second component is cosmological warfare, the idea that the practitioner is fighting for their deity that establishes purpose in a war that transcends human experience. Third is the proposition of sacred land. Each religion has regions and places that hold meaning and serve symbolic and ritualistic purposes. With the Abrahamic traditions sharing many sacred spaces, along with the notions of cosmological warfare and blind obedience/divine command theory, violence is sure to occur. Lastly, and most importantly, fear is a common theme between Abrahamic terrorism, and it radiates from the attacks and the other themes such as in the aftermath of September eleventh and the Norway attacks by Anders Breivik. Fear is meant to not only stall business as normal, but also make believers of the other faith question the foundations of their own religion.

The existence of many traditions implies that every claim to the afterlife cannot be true, only one Abrahamic faith can have the right answer to life after death. Since each tradition poses its own way of achieving the promise of life beyond death, one will question whether they are doing the right things to achieve an afterlife that is not a certain guarantee. There are two options to mitigate this anxiety. One tradition can assimilate the other through

conversion, but this is time consuming and next to impossible to gauge. The second option is the complete eradication of the other. Through terrorism, this second opinion is seemingly possible, as the other will suffer and possibly lose membership by questioning the foundations of their own faith. The attacked identify themselves with the victim and question the promise of the afterlife their religion poses and start this violent cycle once again.

Abrahamic terrorist attacks give way to power by using fear to shape the politics of the victims. Because terrorism kills, people who share common characteristics, such as faith, associate themselves with the victims and begin to understand that they could be the next target. The citizens, B, thus understanding their own interests and need for protection or retaliation, force the governing institution, A, to change, often favorably for the terrorists. But I also noted how these political institutions can be destroyed and rebuilt in favor of the terrorist. Throughout the paper, I have given multiple examples of terrorists using blind obedience and divine command theory, cosmological warfare, fear, and this explanation of power. For instance, I argued how September eleventh led to a retaliation with a War on Terror in the United States, but also ramped up security measures such as the U.S. PATRIOT Act. Other examples included Robert Bower and his attack on the Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue, Anders Breivik and his massacre in Norway, ISIS and the expansion and declaration of a Caliphate, and Yigal Amir's assassination of Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin.

One fair criticism is that not every example of terrorism conducted in the name of an Abrahamic faith fits this exact model as suggested by Lukes. While in an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, I would agree that this is correct, as other power politics are also at play. However, as I suggest, Lukes theory of coercion through alternate means, in this case the shifting of political interests by the subjects, is the dominant power model applicable to instances of Abrahamic terrorism. Another counterargument may be that not all subjects

share the same interests, and changes in policy might not be universally accepted. Again, I would agree with this claim. September eleventh proves this, as there was much public resistance to the PATRIOT act, the War on Terrorism, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, regardless of this opposition, there was enough interest to force these policy changes and shifts in political conduct. Despite the amount of opposition, the PATRIOT act still passed the Senate on a ninety-eight to one vote.

To conclude, I argue that to blame religion for terrorism is a fallacy. It would be exactly what the terrorists seek and only fuel the fire of the cosmological war and increase the sacred/profane dichotomy. But also, blaming religion for violence is not backed by historical evidence of such, as suggested by author Alexander Bellamy. Religion can also be used to foster peace. To understand how, the analysis of religious peacekeeping must be divided into two separate categories; the first of the attributes of religion that can be manipulated both into promoting terrorism and promoting peace, and the second the characteristics of religion that must be used with the attributes to foster such peace. Rather than combining the attributes of religion with cosmological warfare, blind obedience/divine command theory, sacred space, and fear, they must be combined with the notions of peace, mercy, reconciliation, and love.

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