

Religion and Violence

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Does religion cause war?

- Religion-fueled riots, religion-fueled intolerance, religion-fueled murder — history is filled with chilling examples of the “righteous” driven to acts of savagery in the name of their chosen gods. In fact, the number of people killed in the name of religion through the centuries surely rivals the toll of all of humanity’s “political” wars combined.
- By Ben Cosgrove, May 26, 2014 1:20 PM EDT
- <https://time.com/3879963/vultures-of-calcutta-the-gruesome-aftermath-of-indias-1946-hindu-muslim-riots/>.



**IS RELIGION
NO. 1 CAUSE
OF WAR?**

**HISTORY'S GREAT
MISCONCEPTIONS**

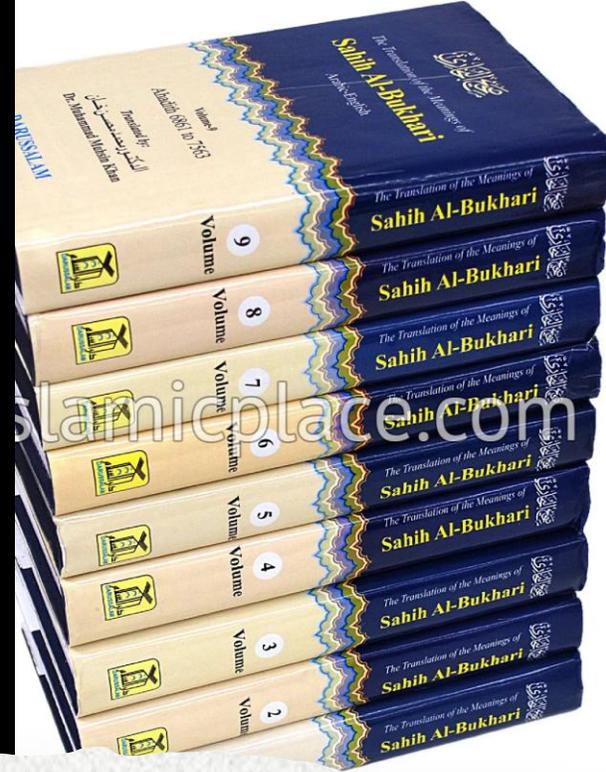


What is the comparative militancy of each major religion?

- Identify key scriptures
- Identify key words suggesting militancy
- Count militancy related words in the fundamental scriptures of each religion.
- Consider context by reviewing relevant commentators.
- Assign a value to each militancy related word
 - 5 points – command violence
 - 4 points – allow violence
 - 3 points – neutral
 - 2 points – discourage violence
 - 1 point – forbid violence
- Total points to get a doctrinal militancy score
- Compare scores with a qualitative review of historical militancy in each religion

The Holy Vedas

Rig Veda
Yajur Veda
Sama Veda
Atharva Veda



Holy Books

Fundamental Scriptures

- Christianity – the Bible
- Islam – Quran, Sahih al Bukhari
- Hinduism – Vedas, 10 Principal Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita
- Buddhism – Tipitaka
- Judaism – Tanakh, Talmud



Key Words

- Words used – war, conquer, fight, sword, battle, along with their common English extensions (plural, progressive, past).
- Battle of Yarmuk, AD 636

Buddhist Militancy

- Doctrinal Militancy Score – 2.64
 - Action of the Founder – There is no evidence that the Buddha personally engaged in physical combat or led armies. However, he collaborated with kings (Bimbisara and Pasanedi) and did not include military service in his prohibition of Right Livelihood.
- Historical Militancy review
 - Actions of early leaders (first 10 generations) - Ashoka
 - Actions of later leaders (until today) – Japan in WWII, Vietnam
 - Current situation – Myanmar

Buddhism and War



THE PARADOX OF THE BUDDHIST SOLDIER



Christian Militancy

- Doctrinal Militancy Score – 2.72
 - Action of the Founder – Jesus never engaged in physical violence, led no armies, and collaborated with no kings or other rulers
- Historical Militancy review
 - Actions of early leaders (first 10 generations) – neither the apostles nor the church fathers affiliated with the military
 - Actions of later leaders (until today) – Multiple
 - Current situation –



The Crusades

Judaism Militancy

- Doctrinal Militancy Score – 3.03
 - Action of the Founder – Moses fought personally and led armies (Amalek, Sihon, Og)
- Historical Militancy review
 - Actions of early leaders (first 10 generations) – war making was common
 - Actions of later leaders (until today) – Having not had an independent state from about 100 BC until AD 1948, Judaism lacked opportunity to engage as a state. However, the Zionist rebellion in the early 1900s is illustrative
 - Current situation – Israel is frequently at war.



King David
Hotel
Bombing
1946

Hindu Militancy

- Doctrinal Militancy Score – 3.61
 - Action of the Founder – No one knows the founder of Hinduism, if one exists.
- Historical Militancy review
 - Actions of early leaders (first 10 generations) – dating from the writing of the Rig Veda (about 1500 BC), the Hindus subjectively have average levels of militancy
 - Actions of later leaders (until today) – Mahatma Gandhi is a famous example of Hindu non-violence (ahimsa), but he is an aberration. Most Hindu leaders have behaved militantly.
 - Current situation – BJP and Hindutva suggest notable militancy.



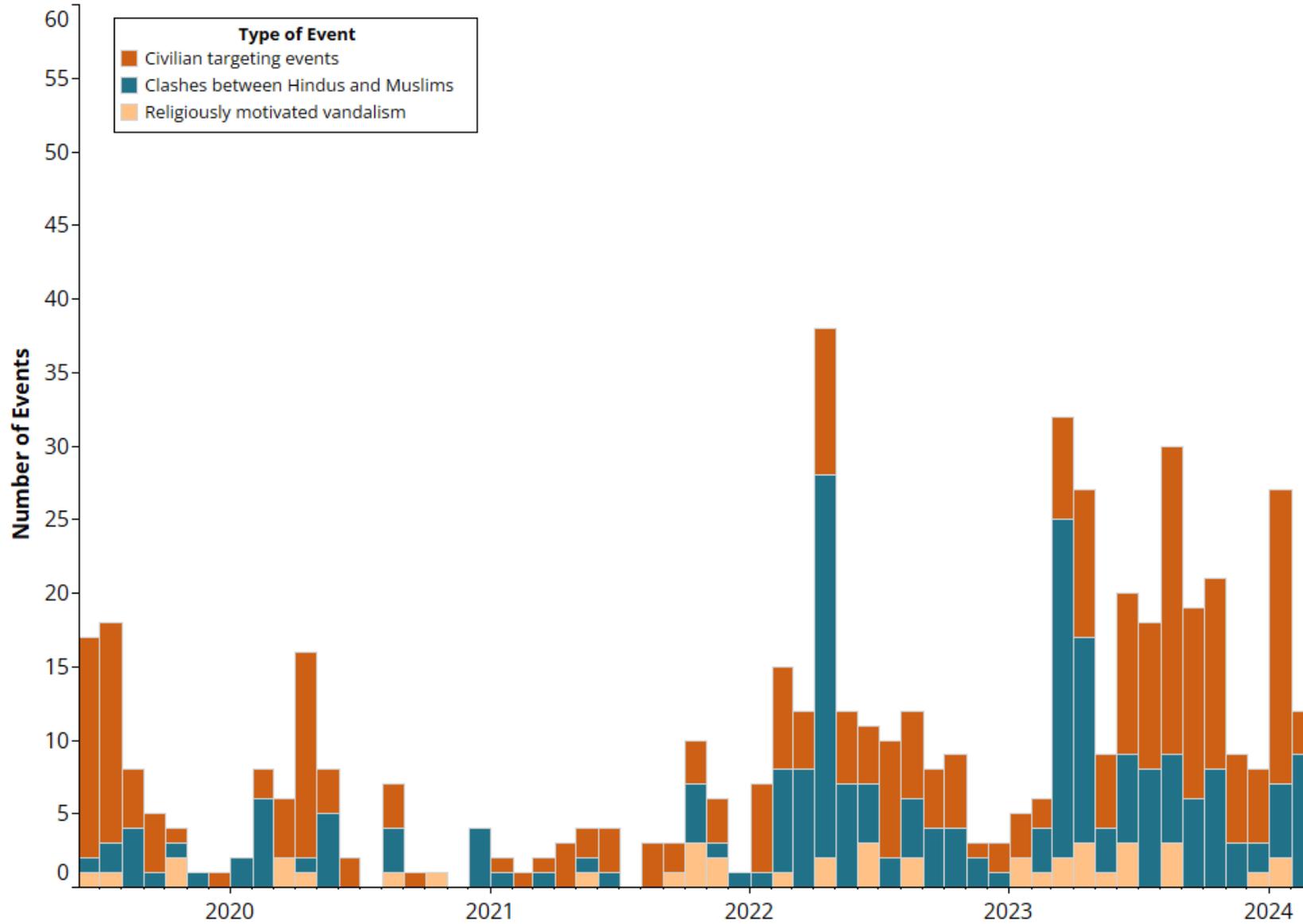
1946 Hindu-
Muslim Riots
- Calcutta



Hindu anti-
Muslim
picture

Violence Between Hindus and Muslims in India

June 2019 - March 2024



India

Islamic Militancy

- Doctrinal Militancy Score – 3.73
 - Action of the Founder – Mohammad engaged in physical violence, led many armies, and collaborated with kings and other rulers.
- Historical Militancy review
 - Actions of early leaders (first 10 generations) – Mohammad's immediate successors, the Rashidun, led armies and conquered empires
 - Actions of later leaders (until today) – Subjectively above average levels of military
 - Current situation



Political Islam and Violence





Discussion

Conclusion

References

- Mark D. Harris, *Echoes of War*, SBTS Dissertation, 2021
- Sultan-Shahin - October 10, 2016, <https://sabrangindia.in/if-islam-means-peace-how-did-so-many-its-revered-ulema-preach-hatred-and-violence/>