FAITH AND THE WILL TO FIGHT: A STUDY OF RELIGION
IN SECULAR MILITARIES

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GOH KOON LEONG JOSHUA, MAJOR, SINGAPORE ARMY
M.A., Science and Security, King's College London, London, UK, 2014
BSc, Chemistry, Imperial College London, London, UK, 2013

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14. ABSTRACT

Amidst the confluence of cultures brought about by modernization, nations and societies have accelerated secularization efforts as a response to increasing plurality. The militaries that serve these nations are no exception. However, the soldiers of these military forces reflect the wider society in terms of exercising their religious beliefs. Inadvertently, in their attempt to adhere to the secularity of the prevailing governments, secular militaries could overlook the religious needs of their soldiers. The danger of such a scenario is the potential erosion of individual soldiers' will to fight, leading to reduced combat effectiveness overall. In its study *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, the RAND Corporation defined will to fight as an essential human factor in war, and identified religion as an important sub-component of it. Thus, the problem facing secular militaries is the challenge of fostering religious practice while remaining secular and pluralistic.

To address this problem, this research set out to identify the means through which secular militaries can foster religious practice within the ranks. A case study analysis was performed on four secular militaries – the Indian Army, the Israel Defense Forces, the US Army, and the Soviet Army – to distill relevant insights from their experiences in creating an enabling religious environment. This research found that religion has a positive impact on will to fight, and that secular militaries can employ organizational, leadership, and policy instruments to harness the positive relationship between religion and will to fight to improve their combat effectiveness.

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Name of Candidate: Goh Koon Leong Joshua

Thesis Title: Faith and the Will to Fight: A Study of Religion in Secular Militaries

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Kevin E. Gentzler, DMgt

_____, Member
Kenneth A. Turner, M.A.

_____, Member
CH (MAJ) Jason E. Hesseling, MDiv

Accepted this 10th day of June 2022 by:

_____, Assistant Dean of Academics for
Dale F. Spurlin, Ph.D.   Degree Programs and Research

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

FAITH AND THE WILL TO FIGHT: A STUDY OF RELIGION IN SECULAR MILITARIES, by Goh Koon Leong Joshua, 155 pages.

Amidst the confluence of cultures brought about by modernization, nations and societies have accelerated secularization efforts as a response to increasing plurality. The militaries that serve these nations are no exception. However, the soldiers of these military forces reflect the wider society in terms of exercising their religious beliefs. Inadvertently, in their attempt to adhere to the secularity of the prevailing governments, secular militaries could overlook the religious needs of their soldiers. The danger of such a scenario is the potential erosion of individual soldiers' will to fight, leading to reduced combat effectiveness overall. In its study *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, the RAND Corporation defined will to fight as an essential human factor in war, and identified religion as an important sub-component of it. Thus, the problem facing secular militaries is the challenge of fostering religious practice while remaining secular and pluralistic.

To address this problem, this research set out to identify the means through which secular militaries can foster religious practice within the ranks. A case study analysis was performed on four secular militaries—the Indian Army, the Israel Defense Forces, the US Army, and the Soviet Army—to distill relevant insights from their experiences in creating an enabling religious environment. This research found that religion has a positive impact on will to fight, and that secular militaries can employ organizational, leadership, and policy instruments to harness the positive relationship between religion and will to fight to improve their combat effectiveness.

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ACRONYMS

DOTMLPF-P   Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and education, Personnel, Facilities, Policy

IDF   Israel Defense Forces

ROC   Russian Orthodox Church

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (also known as the Soviet Union)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

<u>Background</u>

Chaplains are not in the Army because government is primarily interested in the saving of men's souls. The chaplain shares the mission of all other arms of the service to *strengthen the will to victory ... Religion can and does make souls strong for battle.* [emphasis added]
       — Roger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace*

In the late nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche asserted that "God is dead," allegedly prophesying the inevitable decline of religion as a result of the Enlightenment.[1] He was expressing a long-held belief by intellectual elites that religion was an archaic superstition that would disappear with humanity's increasing development of its powers of reasoning and scientific analysis. Along with Nietzsche, the two other influential voices in modern philosophy Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud denigrated religion as an "opiate of the masses" and an "illusion," respectively. As the twentieth century dawned, this growing anti-religious chorus prompted sociologists such as Emile Durkheim to propose a "secularization theory," which concluded that religion was in its death throes and would not last beyond the new millennium as secularization became the prevailing norm in governments and societies.[2]

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[1] The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Nietzsche's Life and Works," Department of Philosophy, Stanford University, last updated September 10, 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche-life-works/.

[2] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, ed. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1915), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41360/41360-h/41360-h.htm. Secularization theory will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, Literature Review.

More than a century later, we have instead seen the opposite. "God," or rather religion is not dead, but in fact very much alive. Contrary to the predictions of sociologists and secularization theorists, religion has not declined, but instead been on the resurgence in many parts of the world. Religion continues to be a driving force in society, in state governance, and in international affairs.[3] From the return of religion in the former Soviet states after the collapse of Communism, to the rapid Christianization of the African sub-continent, to an explosion of Islamic fundamentalism (coupled with a rise in religiously inspired extremist attacks), religion's influence has endured, if not intensified over the period in which it was expected to wane.

This phenomenon is true even in modernized, secular states. America is witnessing a rise in evangelical Protestantism particularly in the south; Singapore, a highly diverse city-state known for its pragmatic sensitivity towards matters of religion (and also where the author of this thesis hails from), recently revised its policy concerning the donning of religious attire by civil servants, and acquiesced to the wishes of the minority Muslim community to allow nurses to wear the *tudung,* known in Arabic as the *hijab*.[4] Religion appears to have remained as galvanizing a force as ever before the pronouncements of its demise.

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[3] Peter Berger, "Secularization Falsified," *First Things*, last February 2008, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/02/secularization-falsified.

[4] Hariz Baharudin, "National Day Rally 2021: Muslim Nurses in Public Healthcare Allowed to Wear Tudung from November; Policy Will Apply to 7,000 Staff," *The Straits Times*, August 29, 2021, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/national-day-rally-2021-muslim-nurses-in-public-healthcare-allowed-to-wear-tudung.

These contrasting trends point to a deeper tension between the ruling elite and the masses. Peter Berger, the preeminent proponent of secularization theory in the field of sociology, described the potential dissatisfaction and disenchantment that could arise if secular governments failed to address the religious needs of the people.[5] At one end, the ruling elite—often schooled in the same Enlightenment tenets of rationalism and scientific progress underpinning the belief in religion's decline—tend towards greater secularity under the premise that increasing modernity brings with it a greater racial and religious plurality that is difficult to govern. They thus see excising religion from the public square as the easiest approach to preventing internal conflict. At the other end, the masses appear increasingly religious, and concomitantly demand for greater religious accommodation in the public sphere. Should these demands not be met, the response of the masses could range from a shift in popular support towards religiously-backed opposition parties in democracies as seen in India and Israel, or even result in a violent overthrow of the secular regime through religiously-inspired revolutions like that of Iran in 1979.[6] These counter-acting responses to secularization form a growing field of study in sociology known as de-secularization.[7]

Being public institutions, militaries are subject to the same tension between secularizing and de-secularizing forces that confront the secular governments of which

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[5] Peter L Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999).

[6] Berger, "Secularization Falsified."

[7] This thesis will explore the concepts of secularization and de-secularization in further detail in Chapter 2.

they are a part. As an arm of the government, militaries are expected to fully embrace the secularizing movements that many governments tend towards. At the same time, militaries are a microcosm of the (still-religious) societies they are drawn from, and we find the religious instinct running deep in various militaries around the world. From the dedication of a Russian Orthodox cathedral to the Russian Armed Forces within Moscow's Patriot Park; to Shinto prayers, rituals, and visits to ancestral shrines in the highly secular Japanese Self- Defense Forces; to the many prayers, sacraments, and invocations recited by soldiers of the rank and file in the US military prior to operations in Iraq, religion is very much alive in militaries today.[8]

However, in a hierarchical, efficient, and sometimes coercive organization like the military, there seems to be little concern if leaders overlook soldiers' religious needs. Indeed, militaries can potentially be less concerned than governments about a lack of popular support because they are designed to instill utmost discipline by suppressing any dissension within the ranks.[9] Furthermore, in matters where individual needs compete with that of the organization, operational considerations take precedence. To use the example of Singapore quoted earlier, the same speech announcing that nurses could wear

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[8] Bojidar Kolov, "Main Cathedral of Mutual Legitimation: The Church of the Russian Armed Forces as a Site of Making Power Meaningful," *Religions* 12, no. 11 (2021); Aaron Skabelund and Akito Ishikawa, "Japan," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, ed. Ron E. Hassner (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 23–44; Ron E. Hassner, "Religion on the Battlefield in Iraq, 2003-2009," in *Religion on the Battlefield* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 135–160.

[9] See Elisheva Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military: The Case of Religious Soldiers," *Armed Forces and Society* 34, no. 4 (2008): 615–638. Rosman-Stollman explains how militaries are "greedy institutions" that demand complete obedience and work actively to prevent parallel institutions from competing for the loyalty of its members.

the *tudung* affirmed that the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) would maintain the status quo of not allowing the *tudung* to be worn, on the basis that the SAF is one of the "impartial and secular arms of the State who are armed and enforce laws."[10] Thanks to these reasons, secular militaries often overlook the importance of religion in the ranks.

This researcher argues that militaries overlook the importance of religion at their peril. The scope of analysis of religion's impact goes beyond the concern over potential dissatisfaction and insubordination of soldiers. Its central thesis is that secularization affects militaries in the very core of its mission: its ability to wage war. Based on the RAND Corporation's recent study *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, the religious affiliation of soldiers is an important component of their will to fight.[11] A secular military that fails to provide for the needs of its religiously observant soldiers runs the risk of hollowing out its collective will to fight, ultimately reducing its combat effectiveness. These potential pitfalls form the basis for formulating the problem statement in the following section.

Problem Statement

Amidst the confluence of cultures brought about by modernization, nations and societies have accelerated secularization efforts as a response to increasing plurality. A consequence of these efforts is the apparent drive to excise religion from the public

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[10] Baharudin, "National Day Rally 2021."

[11] Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, and James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), www.rand.org/t/RB10040.

square. At the same time, recent trends among the populace of many nations indicate a religious resurgence, repudiating the theory that modernity brings about complete secularization. The result is that many nations have public institutions that are thoroughly secular while attempting to govern societies that remain deeply religious. The militaries that serve these nations are no exception, and while their structures are secular, the soldiers who comprise the military forces are a microcosm of the wider society in terms of exercising their religious beliefs. This leads to a divide between the soldiers that defend the societies, and their governments. The danger of such a divide is that militaries will overlook the religious needs of their soldiers in the attempt to adhere to the secularity of the prevailing governments. As religion forms an important component of the will to fight, the problem facing these militaries is a potential erosion of individual soldiers' will to fight leading to reduced combat effectiveness overall.[12]

Purpose and Significance of the Study

It appears that many secular militaries have recognized the value of religion in inspiring will to fight and taken efforts to promote religious accommodation, albeit to varying degrees of success. The purpose of this study is to therefore distill relevant insights from the varied experiences of such militaries so as to demonstrate the relationship between religion and the will to fight and offer practical steps that secular militaries can take to harness that relationship to improve combat effectiveness. In this way, this study hopes to forestall secular militaries from taking secularization too by

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[12] Ron E Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Cary A. Herrera and Matthew D. Quinn, "Asymmetric Warfare and the Will to Win" (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2001).

dispelling the notion that secularization is an inevitable outcome, and thus reinforce the notion that religion has been and will continue to be an important component of will to fight.

Such an effort is significant because of the untapped potential it contains. Academics and military leaders alike recognize that there is insufficient understanding of the role of religion in conflicts. If this blindness occurs in understanding one's adversary, even more so could it occur in understanding one's own strengths. Furthermore, in an increasingly contested geopolitical environment, militaries that need to mobilize large masses of soldiers to potentially engage in large-scale combat operations will need to galvanize and unify citizen soldiers. Understanding how religion can play a part in fostering cohesiveness and morale can help commanders employ it as a force multiplier, especially when facing a peer adversary that does not have the same climate of encouraging religious observance. Despite such promise, so little is said about this topic. Hence, the researcher hopes to shed light on an oft-avoided topic, and lay the groundwork for future research. The next section outlines the primary and secondary research questions that help to achieve this end.

Research Questions

To "operationalize" the importance of religion, this thesis aims to answer the primary research question of, "How can secular militaries harness the relationship between the religion of individual soldiers and will to fight as a force multiplier to improve combat effectiveness?" To answer this primary research question requires exploration of three attendant areas of study detailed in the secondary research questions (SRQs) below.

First, the lack of clarity regarding the link between religion and the will to fight often discolors military policymakers' and leaders' views to the role of religion. This ignorance is exacerbated by the prevailing environments of secular militaries that foster an easier rationalization of how matters of religion should be relegated to the realm of private matters. In order to combat such a stance, this thesis must first establish a link between religion and the will to fight. Therefore, a secondary research question is: What is the relationship between will to fight and the practice of religion in the ranks?

Second, militaries comprise essential organs of state, and are thus influenced and structured by the ruling government. Secular militaries are deliberately so by design of political masters, the founding documents of a country and the underlying assumptions of the culture about separation of church and state. At the same time, religion has the potential to motivate soldiers and units to have a greater will to fight. This leads to another secondary research question: What conditions can secular militaries set to foster the practice of religion while remaining secular?

Third, secular militaries often remain secular in order to manage the religious diversity among the ranks. Given how religions can differ so greatly in their beliefs and requirements, militaries face the challenge of accommodating the authentic practice of each religion while avoiding instances of exclusively promoting one particular religion or practice. Hence, the challenge of accommodating the religious needs of all members of the military rather than a simple majority must be surmounted. This forms the final secondary research question: How can secular militaries be pluralistic without limiting the practice of religion in the ranks?

Scope

This final section will introduce how the study is organized based on the research questions identified earlier. This study will attempt to establish a correlation between religion and the will to fight, through a qualitative case study analysis of four different secular militaries, namely the Indian Army, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the US Army, and the Soviet Army. The case studies will examine how these militaries did or did not encourage religious practice within the ranks, and the subsequent effect on their will to fight. From this analysis, the researcher will present suggestions or recommendations for secular military institutions and commanders to apply in supporting the practice of religion among soldiers.

It is important to caveat that this study does not intend to definitively attribute religion as the only determinant of will to fight, nor is its purpose to conclude that will to fight is the panacea that guarantees victory in conflict. It is well understood that conflicts and their motivations are multi-faceted and complex, and any attempt to frame an understanding of combat to religion alone would be fatally narrow-minded. Instead, this study is only meant to unveil commonly over-looked aspects of the will to fight, and to provide policymakers and leaders with a better understanding of one of the under-utilized motivators that can be harnessed to better inspire soldiers in battle.

Assumptions

The first major assumption is that will to fight is an important determinant of a military's operational effectiveness. Though the will to fight is intangible and measured through proxies, it is a well-established notion that the psychological readiness and resilience of soldiers are important contributors to their ability to perform under the

stresses of combat. At the same time, the outcomes of conflicts are decided by variables

beyond will to fight alone. To ensure that the assumption is valid, this thesis will lean

heavily on the conceptual foundation provided by RAND's study *Will to Fight:*

Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War that is discussed at greater length in the

literature review and offer some further interpretations to strengthen the assumption.[13]

The second assumption is that the religious beliefs and will of individual soldiers

have a positive impact on the collective will to fight of their units and the military at

large. This assumption is supported in the same RAND study, in which the factors that

affect individuals can be assumed to have an effect on the unit and organization overall,

by aggregating the experiences of the soldiers as a whole.

The final assumption is that secularizing trends that exist in civilian governments

will be expressed in their militaries at an institutional level. This assumption is premised

on the fact that militaries are generally subordinate to civilian control and are thus subject

to the same secularizing forces that act on the ruling government. This assumption is

central to the argument that secular militaries have to reconcile between the pressure to

secularize as imposed by the ruling government, and the demands for religious

accommodation from the soldiers they administer over.

<u>Definition of Terms</u>

This study examines an especially ambiguous topic dealing with several

intangible concepts, and therefore warrants a discussion of the definitions to be used in

this thesis. The first of such concepts is <u>religion</u>, which to date has no universally

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[13] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*.

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accepted definition because the institutions, religious texts, rituals, and worldviews of various faiths occupy a wide spectrum and are constantly changing. Hence, sociologists and religious studies experts have proposed various working definitions of religion. Those definitions range from those centered on a substantive analysis of religious texts and doctrines, to post-modern critical theories that question whether religion can even be considered as a valid concept.[14] For the purpose of this thesis, the working definition of religion will be: "Religion is a system of beliefs and practices, associated with particular organizational forms related to a supra-natural deity or powers embodying and emanating some absolute values, that has the intention of warding off misfortune, providing blessing, and obtaining salvation for adherents."[15] It is an acceptable definition because it aligns with this study's intent of examining how fostering the practice of religion by military members influences their will to fight. The definition will be discussed in further detail in the literature review.

Understanding what constitutes religion sets the stage for understanding what constitutes the secular, its opposite. Within the confines of this thesis, the classification "secular" will refer to militaries that have no expressed affiliation with a religion, nor are they established to forward the cause of any religion, national or otherwise. By this token, a significant number of militaries in the world can be considered secular, including those

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[14] The British Academy, *The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peace-Building* (London: The British Academy for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2015), 5.

[15] Created by author, as adapted from various sources as detailed in Chapter 2 of the literature review.

that serve religiously-affiliated governments such as that in Turkey, or those that have a Chaplain Corps, like the US.

Finally, a working definition of <u>will to fight</u> was derived from RAND's study which is the "disposition and decision to fight, act, or persevere as needed."[16] The authors of the study made an important distinction between the disposition and the decision components of will. This thesis builds on this study by analyzing how religion influences collective will to fight by improving the individual disposition to fight.

<div align="center">Limitations and Delimitations</div>

This study has two important limitations. First, it is qualitative in approach, because it is a first look at issues that pose challenges for measurement and implementation. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all militaries, as it lacks statistical strength. Nevertheless, this study provides impetus for future research to better quantify the effects of religion in militaries. Second, the limited amount of research time confines the research to existing literature, as opposed to primary research in the form of interviews and data collection.

This study has also set necessary delimitations given that it deals with a topic as sensitive and controversial as religion. Religion touches many aspects of governance, societal order, and culture beyond that expressed in militaries. There are established bodies of knowledge with opposing views arguing for and against the involvement of

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[16] Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, and James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 4.

religion in statesmanship. While fascinating and powerful in scope, including such studies would detract from this study's purpose of understanding the military implications of the practice of religion. Hence, to properly address an area normally taken for granted, this study will not provide a detailed commentary on the role that religion plays in nations and societies, save for its manifestation in the military realm. This study will also not comment on the merits of one religion over another, in order to examine the benefits of religious practice in general and so respect the plurality and diversity that is a military's strength. Finally, this study will also not serve to proselytize nor explore whether it is necessary for all military members to profess a religion—doing so would negate this study's utility to secular policymakers.

Summary

This chapter introduced the potential problem of an erosion in will to fight for secular militaries that inadvertently submit to secularizing pressures and thus forgo religious accommodation. The chapter also highlighted that the goal of this study is to offer practical steps for secular militaries to improve combat effectiveness by harnessing the relationship between religion and will to fight. Framing this study is the primary research question, "How can secular militaries harness the relationship between the religion of individual soldiers and will to fight as a force multiplier to improve combat effectiveness?" It is supported by three SRQs, (1) "What is the relationship between will to fight and the practice of religion in the ranks?" (2) "What conditions can secular militaries set to foster the practice of religion while remaining secular?" and (3) "How can secular militaries be pluralistic without limiting the practice of religion in the ranks?"

The next chapter will review the existing literature to establish a theoretical basis for answering these questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following on from the research questions established in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 comprises a review of the existing literature regarding religion and will to fight to inform the subsequent analysis. The literature review is organized into three sections as part of an approach that moves from the general to the particular, beginning with the broad themes of religion and will to fight, then narrowing down to focus on their application in secular militaries today.

The first section introduces the concepts of religion and secularization, and their influence on societies and state governance at large. The second section introduces the recently formulated concept of will to fight and outlines the RAND Corporation's proposed working definition. Although the concept is still being refined, this thesis will use the framework provided by RAND to identify possible elaborations of how religious belief and spiritual practices contribute to will to fight. This section also highlights the prevailing compartmentalized view of religion in military doctrine.

The final section will set the stage for understanding the evaluation criteria by revealing the consistent themes that emerge among analysts of religion's role in the military. This study will adapt these themes into the three variables: Organization, Leadership, and Policies, the most relevant components of the DOTMLPF-P framework to be applied in the analysis.

<u>Religion, Secularization, and De-secularization</u>

This literature review will first draw on three areas of scholarship to establish a theoretical foundation for understanding religion's role in the will to fight: (1) academic research regarding the theoretical definition of religion; (2) sociological studies of secularization and de-secularization; and (3) national security studies highlighting how militaries perceive religion's role. Collectively, these discussions set the context for understanding how secular governments and their militaries interact with religion.

<u>Working Definition of Religion</u>

Any research related to religion recognizes that it is a complex, multi-faceted, and difficult subject to unravel, spanning the fields of sociology, philosophy, political science, and psychology. Depending on the discipline, different definitions of religion emerge. In its extensive review of scholarly discussion regarding religion's role in conflict and peace-building, the British Academy identified that several academic definitions centered around an institutional understanding of religion, in which religion comprised a "system of beliefs and attendant organizational structures, that serve to lead believers in worship of a supra-natural deity that both represents and dictates some absolute truths."[17] However, such a definition lacks a functional understanding of the effects that religious practices have on the behavior and decisions of believers.[18] Other scholars such as Glock and Stark attempted to define religion by its attributes: (1)

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[17] The British Academy, *The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peace-Building*, 6.

[18] Alan Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World: A Sociological Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 68.

experiential (akin to feeling), (2) ritualistic (related to practice), (3) ideological (focused on beliefs), (4) intellectual (referring to mental engagement), and (5) consequential components (the effects of a person's acceptance of a religion on his ethical outlook).[19] While comprehensive, such definitions focus on what religion is made of, but lack a succinct understanding of what religion is. Hence, the authors of the British Academy review acknowledged that it is impossible and even impractical to attempt to formulate an exhaustive definition of religion.[20]

Nonetheless, this yields an important insight into how religion should be understood. Even without a single, unifying definition, religion can be studied through two broad approaches, the "substantive" and "functional."[21] The substantive approach focuses on religion's ideals, laws, and beliefs that are usually codified in sacred texts. It also encompasses the understanding of religion as an institution highlighted earlier, one in which theological mores and organizational structures play a dominant role. Conversely, the functional approach focuses on the effects on the religion's adherents, namely the experiences, identities, and moralities that they adopt.[22] The functional approach comprises the "experiential level" of religion, which complements the

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[19] Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension* (San Francisco, CA: Rand McNally, 1965).

[20] The British Academy, *The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peace-Building*, 8.

[21] Ibid., 5-6.

[22] Ibid., 5.

"intellectual and cognitive dimensions of faith" inherent to the substantive approach.[23]

These two approaches thus represent opposite ends of a spectrum along which varying

understandings of religion lie.

This thesis views both the substantive and functional to be valid approaches to

religion, as militaries interact with religion through its institutions (the substantive), and

experience the effects of religion through how its soldiers feel about combat (the

functional).[24] Therefore, a satisfactory definition would be an effective integration of the

two approaches, which is proposed as follows: "Religion is a system of beliefs and

practices, associated with particular organizational forms related to a supra-natural deity

or powers embodying and emanating some absolute values, that has the intention of

warding off misfortune, providing blessing, and obtaining salvation for adherents."[25]

While this definition is not intended to be exhaustive, it encompasses other commonly

understood variations of religion, such as "faith" and "spirituality." Within this thesis,

religion and faith are used interchangeably because militaries themselves use it

interchangeably.[26] As for spirituality, this thesis assumes that spirituality is expressed as a

[23] Scott Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[24] Hanne Eggen Røislien, "Religion and Military Conscription: The Case of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)," *Armed Forces and Society* 39, no. 2 (2013): 216.

[25] Working definition proposed by author, derived from a combination of the following sources: The British Academy, *The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peace-Building*; Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion*, ed. Steven Rendall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[26] Ronit Y Stahl, *Enlisting Faith : How the Military Chaplaincy Shaped Religion and State in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), ix.

sub-set of religion, falling under the 'functional' approach. This understanding is in line

with how militaries view religion and spirituality, such as the US Army's definition of

spirituality as "a sense of connection that gives meaning and purpose to a person's life."[27]

While spirituality is understood as a universal trait that is shared by people regardless of

religious affiliation, two of the three components of spirituality—religious identification

and hopeful outlook—have a direct relation to religion.[28] Furthermore, in examining the

interaction between secular entities of the state and the masses, religion is the more

explicit construct through which these superior agencies classify, promote, or suppress

the expression of spirituality.[29] Hence this study proposes this definition of religion as

one sufficiently broad to understand religion's role in militaries and the societies they

serve.

Secularization and De-Secularization

The next concept to grasp is secularization and its opposite de-secularization. The

difficulty in precisely defining these two concepts indicates the extent to which religion's

relation to state governance has evolved over the centuries. A modern understanding of

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[27] Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Directorate, 2020), 10-1, paras 10-1 to 10-2.

[28] Franklin Eric Wester, "Soldier Spirituality in a Combat Zone: Preliminary Findings About Correlations with Ethics and Resiliency," (Research Paper, Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership, National Defense University, 2009), 7-9, http://isme.tamu.edu/ISME11/Wester-ISME2011.pdf%5Cnpapers3://publication/doi/10.1038/490165a."Connection to others" is the last component.

[29] Ivan Strenski, "On 'Religion' and Its Despisers," in *What Is Religion? Origins, Definitions and Explanations*, ed. Thomas Idinopulos and Brian C. Wilson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 116.

secularization characterizes it as a process whereby "religion – seen as a way of thinking, as the performance of particular practices, and as the institutionalization and organization of these patterns of thought and actions – has lost influence at the societal and at the individual level."[30] This process of secularization manifested itself primarily in three aspects: (1) the separation of public institutions from religious norms, (2) the decline of religious practice and piety, and (3) the privatization of religion.[31]

However, the earliest academic discussions on the subject did not portray religion (as embodied in the Church) and the State as mutually exclusive. Fifth century Church Father, St. Augustine of Hippo's *City of God* justified the need for a government that was not necessarily divinely ordained. Augustine recognized the need for a secular state (the Earthly City) that imposed a punitive order to rein in man's unruly passions brought about by the Fall of mankind at the time of creation, with the ultimate goal of bringing humanity to be part of the City of God.[32] Augustine therefore implied that a separation between religion and governance was necessary, insofar as this allowed governance to fulfil a certain indirect divine role. These notions of how religion and statecraft could

[30] Karel Dobbelaere, "Bryan Wilson's Contributions to the Study of Secularization," *Social Compass* 53, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 142, https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768606064293.

[31] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 211.

[32] Augustine, *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/augustine-the-city-of-god-against-the-pagans/B393139853F77FE86D84B62134D18DD1; See also R. .W Dyson, *Normative Theories of Society and Government in Five Medieval Thinkers : St. Augustine, John of Salisbury, Giles of Rome, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Marsilius of Padua* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), http://dro.dur.ac.uk/950/.

perform distinct yet at times complementary functions were the foundation for the governing structure of the Constantine Empire and the subsequent monarchies of the medieval era.

The subsequent periods of the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment sowed the seeds for the modern understanding of secularization witnessed in the 20th century. This can be seen in the Reformation's rejection of the "substantive" aspects of the dominant Catholicism of the time (i.e. sacraments, indulgences and ecclesial hierarchy) and the Enlightenment's subsequent exaltation of human reason's capacity to arrive at truth, as opposed to truth being divinely revealed.[33] In the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution further reinforced the notion that what brought about true progress was rational thought premised on scientific inquiry and technological development instead of belief in the supernatural, which seemed increasingly archaic and irrelevant in contrast.[34] These developments provided the intellectual foundation for the explosion of secularism in the last five decades. Scholars and notable sociologists from the 1930s to the 1960s such as Max Weber, Peter Berger, and Karel Dobbelaere proposed a "secularization theory" that explained how modernization, industrialization, and globalization were drivers that would eventually cause religion's influence to reduce to nothing.[35] Although proponents of secularization theory welcomed the elevation of

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[33] Dylan Reaves, "Peter Berger and the Rise and Fall of the Theory of Secularization," *Denison Journal of Religion* 11 (2012): 12.

[34] Steve Bruce, *Secularization : In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[35] Max Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford

human reason while critics decried the loss of religious reverence, both parties shared the assumption that as society modernized, the world would eventually become completely secularized and religion would be completely eliminated from the public square.[36]

Interestingly, the predictions of the secularization theorists were proven wrong. From the 1980s onwards, the world witnessed a resurgence in religiosity, in what seemed to be a counter-response to ongoing secularization. In his later work, Berger (seen as the main exponent of Secularization theory) conceded that the world was as religious as ever, and perhaps even more so than before, in light of religious revivals like that of Evangelicalism in America, and Islam in the Middle East and Muslim countries around the world.[37] Several authors such as Jose Casanova and Vyacheslav Karpov also noted such trends, and proposed that these comprised a counter-response to secularization known as "de-secularization," which can be understood as "a process of *counter-secularization*, through which religion reasserts its societal influence *in reaction to* previous and/or co-occurring secularizing processes [emphasis added]."[38]

As the direct mirror of secularization, de-secularization manifested itself in the opposite direction of the same three components: (1) reconciliation between previously

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University Press, 1980), 325–359; William H. Swatos and Kevin J. Christiano, "Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept," *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 60, no. 3 (1999): 209–228.

[36] Reaves, "Peter Berger and the Rise and Fall of the Theory of Secularization," 15.

[37] Berger, "Secularization Falsified,"; Berger, *The Desecularization of the World*; Reaves, "Peter Berger and the Rise and Fall of the Theory of Secularization."

[38] Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* 211.

secularized institutions and religious norms; (2) resurgence of religious practices and piety; and (3) a "de-privatization" of religion.[39] The crux of such a definition was that people were pushing back against the secularizing trends. Berger notes that at the heart of such resistance was the perennial human pursuit of transcendence, meaning, and purpose. As such, an aggressive expansion of secularity that is nihilistic and categorical in its destruction of transcendent beliefs leaves people in an "impoverished and finally untenable condition," thus provoking a strong counter-action.[40]

The push-back against secularization in spite of modernization presents a challenge to the secularization theory and its fundamental notion that modernization and religion share a linear inverse relationship. Instead, sociologists such as Pitirim Sorokin offer a different theory in which the dynamic between secularizing and de-secularizing forces resembles a pendulum oscillating between two competing extremes. On one end is a sensate culture, representing the secularized state in which empiricism and rationality prevail. On the other end is an ideational culture, representing the prevalence of transcendent religious belief and practice.[41] Humanity and its sociocultural systems have never been exclusively at either end, but constantly moving back and forth in a

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[39] Vyacheslav Karpov, "Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 2 (March 1, 2010): 232–270, https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csq058., 240.

[40] Ibid., 266. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World*, 13.

[41] Pitirim Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics: A Study of Change in Major Systems of Art, Truth, Ethics, Law, and Social Relationships* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, n.d.).

historically repeating cycle between both states.[42] Karpov built on this concept by explaining how the aggressive secularization in the last century represented an upward swing of the pendulum towards a sensate culture, and the subsequent resurgence of religion represented a counter-swing away from a purely sensate culture to an ideational culture. Furthermore, Karpov argued that by overlaying a *mega-analysis perspective* across time and geographic boundaries, such oscillations could be observed over the span of centuries and across civilizations. He provided a metaphorical example that is worth reproducing (see Figure 1):

> Now imagine an observer who looks at the pendulum as it approaches the lowest point of its semicircular trajectory. If the observer applies a limited timeframe (of, say, two hundred years) to make sense of what is going on, s/he is likely to end up with a story of a recent linear descent. The trajectory the observer will quite honestly report will likely be a downwardly directed straight line, which, in relation to the pendulum's actual curve will be like a tangent drawn near a semicircle's lowest point. It will be difficult for the observer to envision the observed descent as a fragment of a much longer cyclical movement which is about to enter into its ascending phase. To an extent, our reports about secularization (and desecularization) are somewhat similar to the hypothetical observer's honest but shortsighted account.[43]

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[42] Karpov, "Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework," 264.

[43] Ibid., 263.
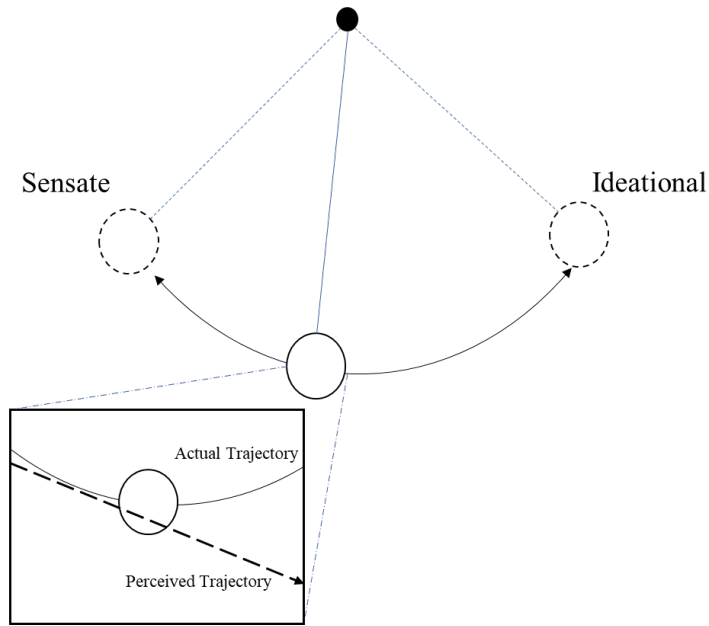
Figure 1.   Graphic Representation of Karpov's Pendulum

Source: Created by author.

The implications of such a disparity are potentially dire. Berger alludes to the unhappiness of religious masses against a secular elite.[44] Such discontent is further hampered by how the secular elite may continue to act as if religion is on a downward trend, unaware of or simply indifferent towards the de-secularizing forces that are simultaneously working in the opposite direction. The result is that an increasingly religious populace perceives a stubbornly secular ruling government as a threat to their ultimate quest for meaning and purpose. Berger provides an example in modern America, where a "Europeanization of the cultural elite" beginning in the 1930s precipitated a shift

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[44] Berger, *The Desecularization of the World*, 11.

towards secularist politics.[45] In contrast, the American people remained religious, which inevitably resulted in political clashes over hot-button issues such as public prayer in schools and abortion.[46] What resulted was that the American body politic expressed their discontent using their most powerful weapon—the ballot. Religious commitment became the "single best predictor of how people were going to vote."[47] Other countries witnessed even more violent opposition to the secularizing elite, notably in the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution which replaced the Pahlavi regime with an Islamist government.[48]

The question thus arises about what role public institutions should play within this competing dynamic, which is the focus of this thesis as earlier described in Chapter 1. The two counter-acting forces of secularization and de-secularization catch public institutions like schools, healthcare organizations, and militaries in the middle, torn between fulfilling a secular role imposed by political masters but lobbied by the people they serve to accommodate their religious beliefs and preferences. Berger's analysis sheds further light on why secularization was so rampant in the last century. Rather than attributing secularization to modernization *per se*, it is the plurality brought about by modernization and globalization that provide fuel to the fire. Religious traditions now have to contend with each other in a compressed marketplace of ideas, and the state governments administering such a "public space" often resort to a secularist approach in

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[45] Berger, "Secularization Falsified."

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

order to eliminate the problem of conflict before it begins.[49] Unfortunately, this would be akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater and can lead to the popular discontent earlier mentioned when public institutions become entirely stripped of religious norms.

Implications of Secularization on the Military

As a public institution, national militaries are no exception to being caught between secularizing and de-secularizing forces. As religion and foreign policy scholar Eric Patterson suggests, the militaries of many countries are a microcosm of the dynamic between religious and nonreligious groups or organizations in civil society.[50] If states are increasingly being secularized in response to the burgeoning pluralism brought about by modernization, what more the military?

Many militaries have mirrored the similar balancing act between secularization and religious accommodation in their attempts to grapple with pluralism brought about by modernization. In the case of America, the demographics of the US military mirror the growing religious diversity in the wider population, particularly among American youth.[51] In a bid to keep pace, the US military over the years gradually expanded its regulation of religions from the tri-faith model (Protestant-Catholic-Judaism) introduced during World War I to include the plethora of Christian denominations and other

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Eric Patterson, "Conclusion. Promising Themes, Future Approaches," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, ed. Ron Hassner (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 227–240.

[51] Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), "Religious Diversity in the U.S. Military, " (Issue Paper #22: Definition of Diversity, version 2, Arlington, VA, 2010).

religious groups seeking to gain legitimacy in the mid- to late-twentieth century. However, it continued to enforce policies that upheld a certain secularity and pluralism for the sake of practicality, such as the decision that chaplains could minister to anyone of any faith.[52] It is thus plausible to assume that militaries will follow the lead of the civilian government they serve and tend towards over-reacting to pluralism by increasing their emphasis on secularizing policies.

Furthermore, the military enterprise itself has largely restricted its own view of religion's interaction with conflict to that of an operational variable. The military and academia's myopic focus on the religious causes of conflict originated with Samuel Huntington's influential work, *Clash of Civilizations*.[53] The crux of Huntington's argument is that civilizations coalesce around religious identities, which inevitably leads to conflict as civilizations jostle with each other for dominance on the world stage. This view has gained traction particularly in the wake of the Iranian Revolution up to the present Global War on Terror. Although this seminal essay is the most cited commentary of the influence of religion on matters of national security, Huntington's analysis is limited to narrowly viewing religion's role in conflict as a causal factor.[54] Hence, even with the resurgence of religiously-inspired conflicts in the late twentieth century, the focus was on that of the adversary's religion, such as the religious motivations of

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[52] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith,* 12-13, 44.

[53] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order* (London: Touchstone Books, 1998).

[54] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace* 72, no. 3 (2015): 35–54.

extremist organizations.[55] Unfortunately, a macro view that depersonalizes the practice of religion oversimplifies the analysis and limits the understanding of religion's true potential in shaping the outcome of conflicts. To borrow the earlier terminology, academia's focus was on the substantive aspect of religion, but treated the functional aspect of religion with disinterest, which was dismissed as irrelevant to international relations and national security particularly when applied to one's own military.[56] The military's reduction of religion's role in conflict to an operational variable has confined religious practice as a phenomenon to be studied in the "other," rather than a power to be harnessed in inspiring "self."

The same struggles faced by secular regimes in regulating a religious polity will also be manifest in the military if it secularizes in response to increased pluralism in the ranks and continues to treat religion merely as an operational variable in motivating its adversaries.[57] At stake here is not so much the challenge to military authority or insubordination on religious grounds, but the disconnect brought about by secularization that hollows out a military's will to fight, ultimately depriving it of a precious commodity—combat power.[58] The following section will seek to operationalize the

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[55] Charles E. Reynolds, "The Significance of Religion as an Essential Component of the Military's Cultural Framework Strategy and Policy," (Senior Service College Fellowship Civilian Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 2010).

[56] Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield*, 6.

[57] Ron E. Hassner, "Hypotheses on Religion in the Military," *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (2016): 317.

[58] Muhammad Tariq Ghauri, "Religious Motivation : A Multiplying Force," *The Dialogue* 6, no. 2 (2009): 103–123.

importance of religion for the military by shedding light on will to fight, an under-estimated yet vitally important factor in determining the outcome of conflict, and analyze how religion plays a significant factor in constituting will to fight.

<p style="text-align: center"><u>Will to Fight and Religion as a Subcomponent</u></p>

In tandem with a growing understanding that academia has not fully appreciated religion's potential in motivating one's own troops is the similar realization that military scholarship has departed from the conception of war as a fundamentally human endeavor. The numerous instances in the last half-century of technologically outnumbered militaries overcoming vastly superior foes, ranging from the Vietnam War to the Soviet-Afghan War, brought the Clausewitzian understanding of war as a contest of wills back into focus.[59] In this spirit, the US Army engaged the RAND Corporation in 2016 to examine how will to fight was a determinant of conflicts. This next section will discuss the concept of will to fight as defined by RAND, offer perspectives on how religion can be a subcomponent of will to fight, and review the existing literature on the relationship between religion and will to fight.

<p style="text-align: center">Definition of Will to Fight</p>

With a commission from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the sponsorship of Headquarters Department of the Army G3/5/7, RAND conducted a study that sought to define will to fight and determine the impact it had on the outcome of military operations. Over a period of two years, RAND conducted extensive multiple-method research

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[59] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 75.

involving an in-depth literature review, interviews with military leaders, and quantitative

modelling. The results of the study were comprehensive yet unsurprising. The research

showed that despite the tacit acknowledgement of the importance of will to fight as a

factor in war, the American understanding of will to fight was sorely deficit, and by

extension that of its partners too.[60] The study also found that the confusion and hypocrisy

over what was professed and what was practiced were due in large part to the lack of a

consistent, concrete definition of will to fight.

Hence, the first task of the study was to propose a working definition of military

unit and organizational will to fight. The study's proposed definition is replicated as

follows: "Military unit and organizational will to fight is defined as the *disposition* and

decision to fight, act, or persevere as needed [emphasis added]."[61] While the study's

authors acknowledge the existence of a variety of unitary theories such as leadership,

cohesion, discipline, and morale that attempt to explain will to fight, they contend that an

explicit focus on any one of the factors is unfeasible. The authors are especially critical of

morale as a unitary theory, because it is a "transient, partial indicator of will to fight that

often has counterintuitive and misleading meanings."[62] In contrast, the definition of will

to fight proposed by the authors incorporates all of the unitary theories in a holistic way

that can account for and weigh the effects of different factors against each other. While

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[60] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, xi.

[61] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, 7.

[62] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,* xiii-xiv.

this thesis adopts RAND's working definition of will to fight, it also uses the other

unitary theories in the case study analysis to proxy will to fight.

A significant part of RAND's study involved the development of a framework to

improve understanding of disposition to fight. The military unit organizational model

encompassed five levels of analysis (State, Government, Organization, Unit, and

Individual), three categories of factors (motivation, capabilities, and culture), 29 major

factors, and 61 sub-factors mapped out with three different durability ratings. To validate

the framework, the military organizational disposition to fight model was applied to

historical cases in which will to fight was decisive, including the Battle of Verdun in

World War I, the Vietnam War, the First Chechen War, and the incursions into Iraq by

the Islamic State.[63] The framework was also applied to quantitative computer simulation

models, where the introduction of will to fight rendered the results of computer

simulations non-deterministic and built in a degree of human behavior into the otherwise

sterile simulations. See Figure 2.

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[63] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, 4.
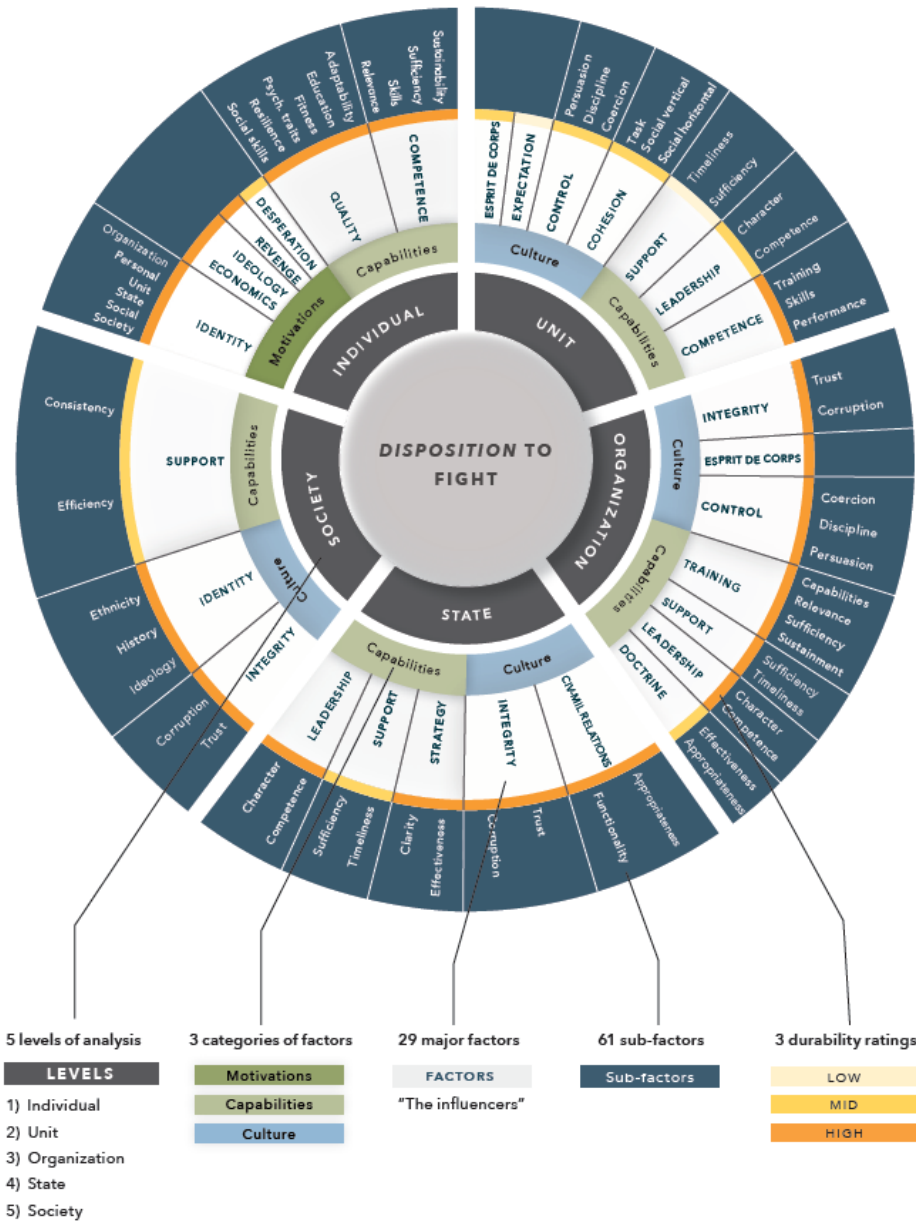
Figure 2.   Military Organizational Model of Disposition to Fight

Source: Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War Report* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), 10.

The study thus provided a convincing argument that soldier, unit, and military organizational behavior in combat are significantly influenced by will to fight. These reinforce the views of military organizations such as the US Army and the US Marine Corps that will to fight is the sole determinant of success or failure in war.[64] While will to fight may not be the most important factor in war, it is crucial to examining the human dimension of what is fundamentally a human endeavor. It is within this framework that this thesis seeks to unpack the role of religion in influencing the behavior of humans—soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen—in being disposed to, and deciding to participate in lethal combat.

Religion as Sub-component of Will to Fight

The pertinent areas in which religion can be applied are first at the individual level of analysis. Out of the five factors under the Motivation category, two are linked to religion, represented by the *Ideology* and *Identity* factors. Ideology is a "commitment to a cause or belief system"—in the religious sense, belief in the principles and values of the individual's professed religion i.e., the substantive aspects of religion.[65] In other words, the religious affiliation of a soldier has a direct effect on his motivation. At the same time, religion also has an indirect effect by influencing his individual identity and the societal identity which forms the surrounding milieu in which the soldier lives.[66] This

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[64] Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Directorate, 2016).

[65] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,* 54.

[66]Ibid., 102-103.

constitutes the Identity factor, referring to the social identities that soldiers enter the military with. Although it is a multi-faceted and highly personalized term, it is used to describe the effect of familial relationships, societal interactions, and ethnic linkages on the identity of the individual soldier.[67] When applied to the topic at hand, it becomes evident that identity broadly corresponds with the functional aspect of religion, wherein a soldier's religious affiliations have an indirect effect on motivation by forming his identity and thus his disposition to fight.

One limitation with such a comprehensive framework is that it spares little time to analyze how exactly religion operates as a sub-component within the realms of identity and ideology. The framework serves more as a foundation for future research. This thesis will be the first of hopefully future attempts to bridge the gap by tying together some of the salient insights from earlier authors who have already made suggestions regarding the influence of religion on will to fight or its understood equivalents.

Even with RAND's proposed framework, there has been comparatively less analytic rigor applied to understanding religion as inspiring will to fight, with the bulk of military scholarship focusing on religion as a cause of conflict. Nevertheless, several have attempted to unpack the complex and at times amorphous relationship between religion, will, and victory in conflict. Herrera's and Quin's thesis regarding "will to win" in their study of asymmetric warfare in the Middle East cited Jules Masseman's defense that "Man is sustained by the belief (however unfounded at times) that he is not alone and that if he does all he can to survive and the danger still grows, someone—perhaps even

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[67] Ibid., 52-54.

God—will come to his aid and save him."[68] With that intellectual foundation, they proposed four ways religion acts as a motivator in conflict: appropriateness (acting based on a sense of right), identity (related with purpose, and sense of belonging both in this life and in the afterlife), rationality (religion provides an over-arching long-term justification for near-term actions), and religion's internally consistent logic (religion cannot be disproved because the absence of God cannot be proven).[69] While the discussion is by no means exhaustive, it provides a more fine-grained view of religion's influence on will to fight, or to borrow the authors' parlance, will to win.

Over a decade later, Ron E. Hassner made greater strides in linking religion and will to fight. In his book *Religion on the Battlefield,* he argues that religion can be both a force multiplier and a force divider in conflict.[70] By examining the records of religious practices, diaries of chaplains and sacred leaders, and the accounts of soldiers in the lead-up to and during battle, Hassner proposes that religion has an important but overlooked role in influencing the decisions of individuals and units in combat. Specifically, he details how an *enabling religious environment* provides the context for religious practices to encourage the use of force, ultimately having a "motivation" effect on troops.[71] He

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[68] R. A. Gabriel, *No More Heroes: Madness & Psychiatry in War* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1987), 82.

[69] Herrera and Quinn, "Asymmetric Warfare and the Will to Win," 23-27.

[70] Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield,* 17-19.

[71] Ibid., 17.

cites the example of how religious festivals that celebrate martyrdom can spur combatants to greater fervor.[72]

As Hassner's work pre-dates the RAND study, it is interesting to note that Hassner uses the same terminology of motivation as that found in RAND's holistic framework. This corroborates the effectiveness of the model, and sheds light on how religion can influence will to fight in the event there is an enabling religious environment. This study therefore builds on Hassner's research and delves deeper into the interaction between religion and combat effectiveness by examining how the practice of religion can increase individual and collective will to fight.

These works described above provide the intellectual basis for this thesis to proceed with the understanding that religion has a positive relationship with will to fight, and will to fight in turn has a positive relationship with combat effectiveness. In summary, allowing faith to flourish within the ranks can significantly improve combat effectiveness, while suppressing religious expression in the name of secularization can severely limit it.[73] With this theoretical basis established, this thesis can then turn to its real focus of examining what constitutes that enabling religious environment.[74]

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Paul R. Wrigley, "The Impact of Religious Belief in the Theater of Operations," *Naval War College Review* 49, no. 2 (1996): 84–101.

[74] Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield,* 17-18.

Shortcomings of Current Academic Study

Unfortunately, the prevailing literature contains little study on how militaries foster an enabling religious environment to fortify will to fight in the lead-up to, and during the conduct of war. Instead, most scholarship is concentrated in the area of resilience literature, comprising psychological studies on the effect of religiosity in helping veterans cope with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[75] Within the US, the military's emphasis on such studies was spurred by the sobering statistic that approximately one-eighth of a unit becomes medically non-available after returning from combat due to PTSD.[76] This corroborated other studies which showed that one eighth of veterans wounded in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars experienced PTSD upon returning from deployment.[77]

The problem thus presented to the military was that operational readiness for future deployments was degraded because too many soldiers had been afflicted by

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[75] See for example: Abdulaziz Aflakseir and Peter G. Coleman, "The Influence of Religious Coping on the Mental Health of Disabled Iranian War Veterans," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 12, no. 2 (2009): 175–190; Howard Johnson and Andrew Thompson, "The Development and Maintenance of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Civilian Adult Survivors of War Trauma and Torture: A Review," *Clinical Psychology Review* 28 (February 1, 2008): 36–47.

[76] Michael J. Scaletty, "Disability and Readiness: The Integrated Disability Evaluation System Needs to Get Healthy," *The Army Lawyer* (June 2017): 5–17, https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/06- 2017.pdf.

[77] Thomas A. Grieger, Stephen J. Cozza, Robert J. Ursano, Charles Hoge, Patricia E. Martinez, Charles C. Engel, and Harold J. Wain, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression in Battle-Injured Soldiers," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 163, no. 10 (October 2006): 1777–83.

psychological trauma sustained during combat.[78] Recognizing the severity of the problem, several psychiatrists and military authors have offered religiously-inspired coping mechanisms as a solution. Bormann et al. proposed the use of meditations and chants of mantras from sacred texts as a possible remedy for PTSD.[79] Dini offered practical steps to aid the development of a military-specific spiritual self-assessment and cultural awareness tool.[80] These solutions address a necessary problem of the implications of trauma on future combat readiness, but their utility is premised on the assumption that future deployments will involve the same soldiers returning from existing deployments. The shortcoming of such an approach is its narrow focus on helping soldiers cope with the after effects of war through religion and spirituality, and is reactive in that it only applies when trauma is sustained. Little consideration is given for how religion can influence personnel prior to and in the midst of deployment.

Another shortcoming of the current academic discourse is its preoccupation with spirituality as a coping mechanism. The premise is that spirituality refers to "an individual's core sense of purpose, which is based on shared values and beliefs about their personal identity and contributes to their sense of dignity, meaning, and

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[78] Kevin P. Johnson, "Spirituality and the Effect on Readiness," (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2019).

[79] Jill Bormann, Steven Thorp, Julie Wetherell, Shahrokh Golshan, and Ariel Lang, "Meditation-Based Mantram Intervention for Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Randomized Trial," *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 5 (May 1, 2013).

[80] Frederick M. Dini, "Strategy for A Military Spiritual Self-Development Tool," (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2008).

philosophical connections to humanity with no reference to God or other deity."[81]

Though meritorious, the downside of such a focus on a universal spirituality can easily

degrade into humanism. As earlier established, spirituality and religion are two distinct

but interrelated concepts. As such, over-emphasizing the common spirituality that all

soldiers share would skew the balance towards an overt focus on what constitutes the

functional aspect of religion (how religion makes one feel), at the expense of paying

attention to the benefits of its substantive aspect (religion's ideals and morals).

When considering how secularizing forces often play up the same-ness of

humanity to circumvent the need for authentic religion, the potential pitfalls of an over-

emphasis on spirituality become more apparent. As religion comprises both the

substantive and the functional, any disproportionate emphasis on the functional

component (spirituality) would dilute true religious practice and ultimately descend into a

manifestation of pluralistic secularism.[82] Hence, although there is considerably more

research available regarding spirituality and its effect on combat, this thesis adopts

religion as its operative concept because it is religion that secular militaries should

encourage in the process of fostering will to fight.

In short, there lies a glaring disparity in the academic research on this topic:

religion has the potential to improve will to fight, but research thus far has concentrated

only on spirituality and its utility post-combat. This gap in understanding the beneficial

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[81] Johnson, "Spirituality and the Effect on Readiness," 2.

[82] Barry W. Lynn, "Religion in the Military: Finding the Proper Balance," in *Attitudes Aren't Free: Thinking Deeply about Diversity in the US Armed Forces*, ed. James E. Parco and David A. Levy (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2010), 15–24.

role religion can play in turn contributes to why secular militaries fail to promote religious practice. This thesis joins the efforts of scholars such as Hassner in bridging the gap, in order to enable subsequent discussions on how secular militaries may promote religious practice for its beneficial effects. To this end, the final section of the literature review will highlight common mechanisms secular militaries employ to administer and regulate faith among the ranks.

<div align="center">Religion in Secular Militaries Today</div>

Having addressed the shortcomings of the available literature in examining religion's potential to improve will to fight, this literature review will conclude with identifying the broad variables of an enabling religious environment to help frame the case study analysis.[83] The record indicates that secular militaries have reluctantly, at times begrudgingly, accommodated the practice of religion within the ranks in recognition of the power of religious beliefs in fostering will to fight, particularly at the point of battle.[84] As such, these militaries have adopted policies, created structures, and appointed personnel in various ways to foster an enabling religious environment. Although different militaries have produced outcomes with varying degrees of success, this thesis has identified three enduring yet distinguishable traits of an enabling religious environment that apply to all militaries: Organization, Leadership, and Policies.

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[83] Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield*, 17.

[84] Dale R. Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001).

These three factors were derived from two sources. The first is Hassner's earlier work, *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, a comparative study of the relationship between religious practice and war in nine different militaries. To guide the efforts of the contributing authors, Hassner specified five focus areas for analysis of their respective militaries—demographics, force structure, rituals and practices, sacred leaders, and operations.[85] The five focus areas yielded rich insights that were the subject of the remainder of the book, adding veracity to their utility as an analytical framework. The second source is the US Department of Defense (DoD) DOTMLPF-P framework, used in the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) to design solutions aimed at addressing capability gaps.[86] Based on the literature review thus far, it is apparent that will to fight can be considered a capability gap in many militaries. As such, the DOTMLPF-P framework is an appropriate analytical tool to identify the best solution that produces high will to fight.

<div align="center">Organization</div>

This thesis synthesizes both frameworks and derives three factors that are relevant to religion's impact on will to fight. Hassner's "demographics" and "force structure" can be combined under "Organization" of DOTMLPF-P. Based on the JCIDS Manual, Organization pertains to a "joint unit or element with varied functions enabled by a

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[85] Ron E. Hassner, *Religion in the Military Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/religion-in-the-military-worldwide/C700E4705A22ED5150DD7094E38284F6.

[86] J-8, Joint Staff, *Manual for the Operation of The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (JCIDS Manual), (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2018), B-E-1 to B-E-4.

structure through which individuals cooperate systematically to accomplish a common

mission and directly provide or support joint warfighting capabilities [emphasis

added]."[87] This factor therefore examines the religious demographics of the militaries in

the subsequent case studies, and compares it with the organizational force structure to see

whether the proportions of soldiers of different religions at the subordinate unit levels

match that of the overall religious proportions.

Using Organization to examine how militaries design their force structures in line

with demographics is a well-established practice that features heavily in research on

military manpower policy and ethnic demography. Militaries have paid much attention to

the ethnic demographics of its subordinate units, out of concerns of avoiding ethnic

tension, and also attempting to mirror the diversity in society at large.[88] They have

selected specific recruitment models, adopted organizational structures that either

promote diversity or suppress tension and discrimination, and introduced external

structures that act as advocacy groups for ethnic minorities within the militaries.[89] It is

reasonable to assume that militaries do the same for religious groups, and indeed this is

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[87] Ibid., B-G-F-2.

[88] Alon Peled, *A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multiethnic States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501737466; Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980).

[89] David R. Segal and Naomi Verdugo, "Demographic Trends and Personnel Policies as Determinants of the Racial Composition of the Volunteer Army," *Armed Forces & Society* 20, no. 4 (July 1, 1994): 619–632, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X9402000408; Todd D Woodruff, "Who Should the Military Recruit? The Effects of Institutional, Occupational, and Self-Enhancement Enlistment Motives on Soldier Identification and Behavior," *Armed Forces & Society* 43, no. 4 (March 24, 2017): 579–607, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X17695360.

the case, as is found in examples such as Pakistan where religion was an organizing principle for its armed forces.[90]

In addition to the design of its military, the application of the Organization variable also includes an examination of what organizations the military creates or cooperates with to manage religious diversity.[91] In Elisheva Rosman-Stollman's work, she classifies such organizations as "mediating structures" which stand "between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life."[92] These mediating structures can be internal to the military (like the chaplaincy), or external to it (like civilian religious organizations). These structures help to advocate for the needs of religious individuals within the military, and transmit messages from the military and religious leadership to the individual, thus helping to relieve the pressure on religious individuals to fulfil competing obligations to faith and military service.[93]

Hence, these studies support the selection of Organization as an evaluation criterion to examine if and how militaries incorporate considerations of religious accommodation into designing the structure of their units, as well as the potential creation of organizations that act as advocacy groups for religious minorities.

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[90] C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, ed. Ron E. Hassner (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 91–113.

[91] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military."

[92] Peter L. Berger and John Richard Neuhaus, *To Empower People: From State to Civil Society*, ed. Michael Novak (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1996).

[93] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 617-618.

Leadership

Hassner's sacred leaders, or more commonly known as chaplains, comprise

religious professionals within the formal military structure. It is also possible that

militaries without religious professionals may nominate military leaders to undergo some

form of religious training, and thus perform some of the functions a religious professional

would have done. This would map "sacred leaders" with the "Leadership and Education"

consideration. The JCIDS manual defines Leadership and education as the "professional

development of joint leaders that is the product of a learning continuum that comprises

training, experience, education, and self-improvement."[94] In this light, Leadership

examines how leaders within the militaries can provide religious guidance and pastoral

support. In particular, this thesis will examine the different ways different militaries

organize their chaplain corps, and if no chaplain corps is present, how such roles are

fulfilled with an end towards identifying the effect of sacred leaders on will to fight.

Out of the three evaluation criteria, the chaplain corps (or its equivalent)

represents the most tangible representation of the intersection between religion and the

military. This is corroborated by the plentiful sources of literature about the roles of

chaplains, the politics of the selection of chaplains, and the challenges that chaplains face

in managing religious diversity.[95] Indeed, the temptation of writing a thesis on religion

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[94] J-8, Joint Staff, JCIDS Manual, B-G-F-4.

[95] Pauletta Otis, "An Overview of the U.S. Military Chaplaincy: A Ministry Of Presence And Practice," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 7, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 3–15, https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2009.9523410; Grace Davie, "The Military Chaplain: A Study in Ambiguity," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 39–53, https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2014.998581; Ines Michalowski, "What Is at Stake When Muslims Join the

and the military would be to focus primarily on chaplains given the readily available information. However, this would narrow the recommendations available to secular militaries, and prematurely suppose that the only way in which religion can influence military operations is by having a chaplain corps.

While the truth is far from that, the utility of chaplains in fostering will to fight is an enduring theme in many of the militaries examined and should therefore be explored. This study leans on Hassner's analysis of the role of sacred leaders as motivating factors.[96] In *Religion on the Battlefield*, Hassner posits that one of the expected tasks of sacred leaders (i.e., chaplains) was to "instill discipline, the will to win, and a 'fighting spirit'."[97] By drawing on soldiers' accounts, chaplains' diaries, and communiques by senior military leaders, Hassner demonstrates that chaplains have an indelible value in galvanizing their fellow troops to action in the face of near-certain death.

Furthermore, Hassner offers an insight into the unique effect that chaplains' vulnerability has on will to fight—by choosing to accompany their fellow men into the thick of battle, risking their lives to administer rites while unarmed and under fire, and even entering prisoner-of-war (POW) camps along with them, these chaplains set an example of almost-unbelievable courage that inspired the men around them.[98] Therefore,

Ranks? An International Comparison of Military Chaplaincy," *Religion, State and Society* 43, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 41–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2015.1021189.

[96] Ron E. Hassner, "Who? Sacred Leaders and War," in *Religion on the Battlefield* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 87–109.

[97] Ibid., 89.

[98] Ibid., 101-105.

it is appropriate for this thesis to adopt Leadership as an evaluation criteria to analyze

how militaries employ sacred leaders to inspire will to fight.

Policies

The rituals and practices defined in Hassner's study do not immediately fall under

any of the DOTMLPF-P considerations. However, a deeper examination reveals that

religious practices such as the affixing of symbols, the accommodation of religious attire,

and the apportionment of prayer time for believers are all regulated by military dictums,

known as "Policies." The policy DOTMLPF-P consideration consists of "any DoD,

interagency or international policy issues that may impact effective implementation of

changes in the other DOTMLPF-P considerations."[99] In this light, Policies refers to the

military directives and regulations governing the behavior of soldiers with respect to

exercising their beliefs. These include policies on donning religious attire, setting aside

time for prayer and sacred rituals, and the accommodation of religious diets within

collective dining facilities.

A useful encapsulation of the common components relevant to Policies is found in

Guide on Religion and Belief in the Armed Forces, a policy document published by the

British Ministry of Defence (MoD).[100] The guide articulated the MoD's approach to

religious accommodation as derived from the UK's Equality Act 2010, which was to

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[99] J-8, Joint Staff, JCIDS Manual, B-G-F-5.

[100] Ministry of Defence United Kingdom (MoD UK), *Guide on Religion and Belief in the UK Armed Forces*, 2011, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-on-religion-and-belief-in-the-armed-forces.

"give those [in the Armed Forces] who wish to do so the opportunity to practice their

religious observances wherever possible subject to vital considerations of operational

effectiveness, health and safety and business needs."[101] Within the guide, several sections

are devoted to providing policy guidance in specific areas of religious observance. These

sections include "Time Off and Facilities for Prayer during the Working Day," "Dress,"

and "Dietary Needs."[102] The MoD's publication of such a document is a useful example

that demonstrates how militaries use Policies to apply religious accommodation within

the daily lives of soldiers. It reaffirms the selection of Policies as a final variable to be

used in analyzing the case studies.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This chapter has established the conditions for analysis by providing the

theoretical underpinnings to understand secularization and de-secularization, will to fight,

and religion's role in inspiring will to fight. The literature review has identified the

dangers posed to a military by inadvertently adopting an overly secularist approach to

manage a possibly de-secularized mass. This danger is manifest in the erosion of will to

fight, of which religion is an important sub-component. However, the literature lacks

sufficient rigorous analysis of how religion is fostered as a catalyst for will to fight,

because the scholarship is narrowly focused on religion as a coping mechanism for post-

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[101] MoD UK, *Guide on Religion and Belief in the UK Armed Forces*, 4.

[102] Ministry of Defence United Kingdom, *Guide on Religion and Belief in the UK Armed Forces*., 9-10.

combat trauma. Other related narratives only play up a humanistic understanding of religion known as spirituality which is incomplete.

To aid in the analysis, the literature review has yielded three evaluation criteria comprising common themes among secular militaries, namely Organization, Leadership, and Policies. These form the universally applicable variables of any military with regard to how religion is accommodated among the ranks. Applying these variables to the subsequent analysis will shed light on the degree to which religion influences will to fight in the militaries selected for examination. The methodology selected to analyze the conditions that best foster the practice of religion, in answer of the primary research question, will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter will detail the selected methodology for this study and will provide a brief discussion of why a qualitative method was selected. The research methodology will serve to answer the primary research question of "How can secular militaries harness the relationship between the religion of individual soldiers and will to fight as a force multiplier to improve combat readiness?" This research question necessitates the answering of three secondary research questions, the first of which pertains to the relationship between religion and the will to fight, while the latter two pertain to the ways in which secular militaries can foster the practice of religion while retaining their secular character and without showing deference to any particular religion.

The literature review has afforded a theoretical context in which to conduct the analysis. Importantly, it identified three evaluation criteria—organization, leadership, and policies—that represent the means through which militaries foster, ignore, or suppress the expression of religion. This chapter will detail how the evaluation criteria will be applied in a case study analysis of four militaries, and briefly describe the means of data collection and presentation.

<u>Method</u>

Based on the nature of the research question and the data available, this thesis will adopt an inductive approach, employing a qualitative methodology comprising an exploratory case study approach as a research strategy.[103]

Qualitative Methodology

As the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between religion and will to fight and the factors that influence this relationship, the preferred choice of methodology is qualitative. John Creswell, a notable academic authority on qualitative research, emphasized that the qualitative methodology is best suited for research problems which "address the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem."[104] This is because the qualitative method allows the researcher to explore a problem or issue through the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks while holding certain assumptions.[105] This approach aligns with the intent of this thesis to explore the meaning that secular militaries could and should ascribe to religion and will to fight.

Case Study Strategy

Within the qualitative tradition, the case study strategy is the most feasible approach. Creswell defines case study research as a "qualitative approach in which the

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[103] M. Saunders, P. Lewis, A. Thornhill, and A. Bristow, *Understanding Research Philosophy and Approaches to Theory Development*, *Research Methods for Business Students* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2012), http://oro.open.ac.uk/53393/ .

[104] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2013), 44.

[105] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2014).

investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple

bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving

multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case themes." [106] The

advantage of this approach is that drawing on the various experiences of different secular

militaries helps to affirm the importance of religion in fostering will to fight, and also

provides practical recommendations with regard to organization, leadership, and policy

decisions that can apply to all militaries around the world. Furthermore, the case study

strategy is preferable when examining "complex social units consisting of multiple

variables of potential importance," which accurately describe religion and will to fight.[107]

<div align="center">Limitations of a Quantitative Approach</div>

The quantitative approach has limited utility in this study because religion and

will to fight are complex social phenomena that cannot easily be quantitatively measured

within the timeframe allowed for this research. The ongoing academic discourse

highlighted in Chapter 2 about what constitutes a consistent, concrete definition of

religion is evidence that it would not only be difficult, but misleading to attempt to define

religion in quantitative terms. Similarly, the authors of the RAND study on will to fight

acknowledge that "disposition to fight and human agency defy meaningful

quantification," but these should not be reasons to ignore any analysis of it.[108] Indeed,

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[106] Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 45-46.

[107] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 50-51.

[108] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,* 4.

given their importance to a military's combat effectiveness, religion and will to fight should be examined in detail – but not with the quantitative, data-driven mentality characteristic of modern militaries.[109]

<center>Data Collection</center>

The data will be derived from historical accounts of battles, doctrinal publications, journal articles, policy regulations, chaplains' diaries, and other secondary sources related to the theme of "religious support." The search terms used to gather data will include "religion," "faith," "spirituality," "morality," as representative of religion in militaries; and "will," "morale," "commitment," "cohesion," "discipline," and "courage" will be used to proxy will to fight.

This study will focus exclusively on the army branch of the military in each of the case studies, as the land forces component comprises the largest branch of the military and would offer the most insight into the control of religion by its sheer size. The analysis could include data from the naval and air forces, but only where relevant so as not to complicate the already complex analysis.

The secular armies of four countries, namely India, Israel, the United States of America (US), and the Soviet Union (USSR) are selected as the cases for analysis. They represent a spectrum of conditions in three areas: (1) differing degrees of secularization (from least secularized in India to atheistic in USSR); (2) different methods of recruitment (all-volunteer force versus draft); and (3) different cultures and geography (North America, Asia, Europe, and Middle East). Analyzing cases that differ significantly

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[109] Ibid., 4-5.

can possibly yield perspectives that can be extrapolated to cases elsewhere. The time frame for analysis will be bounded from World War II onwards until present-day, less the Soviet Union which was dissolved in 1991. This time period is valid because it corresponds with the period during which the US and USSR rose to prominence as global powers, and also when India and Israel became independent sovereign nations (in 1947 and 1948 respectively). See Figure 3 for an overview of the research methodology.
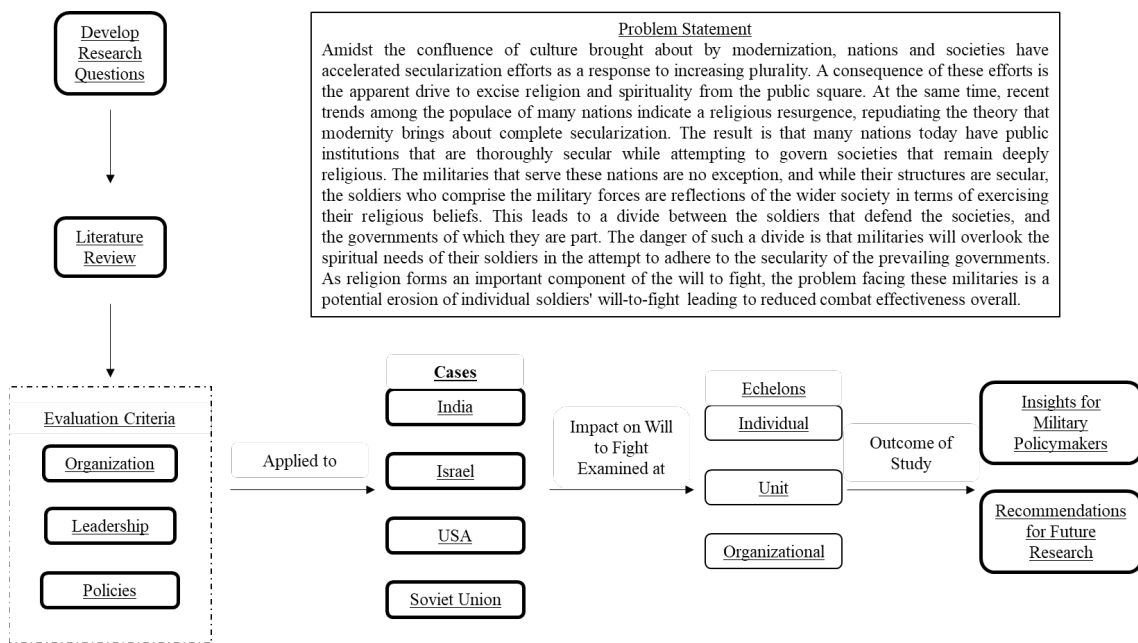
Figure 3.   Overview of Research Methodology

Source: Created by author.

Data Analysis

The three evaluation criteria of organization, leadership, and policies described in Chapter 2 form the basis for analysis. Each case will begin with a brief discussion of that military's history and purpose, and its involvement in recent wars and operations (at least

one large-scale combat operation (LSCO) and an unconventional war in the twentieth to twenty-first century) with a qualitative assessment of the significance of will to fight in those wars. For example, the Soviet-Afghan War will be a focal point used to examine the correlation between the levels of will to fight and the Soviet military's performance.

Subsequently, the military's actions with regard to each of the three variables will be assessed as to whether those actions improved or degraded the will to fight, ultimately affecting the outcome of the wars in question. Using themes from the literature review, each variable is broken down into sub-components for finer-grained analysis. These results will be populated in a table for graphical representation, and each intersection between the case and the variable will be ascribed a value of "+," "-," or "/." Ascribing a "+" would indicate that the military's actions in that variable had a positive impact on will to fight through religion, which led to a positive outcome in war. Conversely, a "-" indicates that the military's decisions regarding that variable had a degrading effect on will to fight, resulting in a negative impact on the military's combat effectiveness in war. Finally, a "/" would indicate that the military's actions did not favor or degrade will to fight.

Building on the earlier example of the Soviet-Afghan War, a possible assessment under the "Leadership" variable could be that the lack of sacred leaders led to low will to fight in the Soviet military, leading to their eventual failure in the war. This would translate into a "-" value being ascribed to the appropriate sub-component in the table. See Table 1 for a description of the variable sub-components and the corresponding interpretation of a "+," "-," or "/."

Table 1.   Descriptions of Sub-components and Values

Variable	Sub-component	Definition of a +	Definition of a -	Definition of a /
Organization	Degree of homogeneity at unit level (Did the military organize units according to religion?)	Units are homogeneous in religion, facilitating religious practice	Units are completely heterogeneous	Religious affiliations are a consideration in organizing units, but not all units are homogeneous
	Establishment of mediating structures (Did the military have structures to accommodate diversity?)	Organizations are created to help advocate for religious accommodation	No external structures exist to advocate for religious accommodation	Some organizational structures exist but have limited effect
Leadership	Presence of sacred leaders (Did the military have sacred leaders?)	Military units have sacred leaders	No sacred leaders present in units	Military has no sacred leaders but allows external sacred leaders to interact with units
	Vulnerability of sacred leaders (Did the military's sacred leaders involve themselves in battle?)	Sacred leaders accompany units to the frontline	Sacred leaders are not present at the frontline	Sacred leaders have limited influence on morale at the frontline
Policies	Degree of accommodation for prayers and rituals (Did the military allow time for prayer and sacred rites?)	Special provisions are made for prayer time	No provisions are made for prayer time	Some considerations are given to allowing for prayer
	Degree of accommodation for attire and bearing (Did the military make provisions for special religious attire and bearing?)	Special provisions are made for religious dress	No provisions are made for religious dress	Some considerations are given to religious dress
	Degree of accommodation for diet (Did the military make accommodations for special religious diets?)	Special provisions are made for specific religious diets	No provisions are made for specific religious diets	Some considerations are given to specific religious diets

Source: Created by author.

At the conclusion of each case, the results will be collated in a table for ease of representation, and an overall value assigned for each of the variables. See Table 2.

Table 2.   Summary Table for Each Case

Variable	Sub-component	Result
Organization	Degree of homogeneity at unit level	+ or - or /
	Establishment of mediating structures	+ or - or /
	Overall assessment	+ or - or /
Leadership	Presence of sacred leaders	+ or - or /
	Vulnerability of sacred leaders	+ or - or /
	Overall assessment	+ or - or /
Policies	Degree of accommodation for prayers and rituals	+ or - or /
	Degree of accommodation for attire and bearing	+ or - or /
	Degree of accommodation for diet	+ or - or /
	Overall assessment	+ or - or /

Source: Created by author.

Finally, at the end of the chapter, the results from all the cases will be consolidated in a summary table for ease of comparison. A brief synthesis of the points will be provided for each variable. See Table 3 for the summary table.

Table 3.   Data Analysis Framework

Variable	India (1947–Present)	Israel (1948-Present)	US (1941–Present)	USSR (1939–1991)
Organization				
Leadership				
Policies				
Analysis				

Source: Created by author.

<u>Summary</u>

In summary, this study will employ a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study strategy to examine how secular militaries can build an enabling religious

environment to foster greater will to fight. The selection of a qualitative approach

supports the analysis of religion and will to fight, which are variables that do not lend

themselves to quantitative measurement. The study will examine four cases, namely

India, Israel, US, and the Soviet Union, using the three evaluation criteria of organization,

leadership, and policies. The analysis will be elaborated on in Chapter 4 and summarized

in a comparative table at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

To answer the primary research question of "how can secular militaries harness the relationship between religion of the individual soldiers and will to fight as a force multiplier to improve combat readiness?" this chapter will apply a case study analysis of four different militaries (India, Israel, US, and USSR) in that order to examine the relationship between organizational, leadership, and policy considerations in the realm of religious accommodation and will to fight.

The researcher will examine each case study to introduce the role of religion in the nation itself, the characteristics of the military in question, and the military's performance in combat with a brief discussion of its level of will to fight. The researcher will then analyze in detail the military's approach to the three variables of organization, leadership, and policies. After each case study is reviewed, the researcher will summarize the information analysis with a consolidation of the results in a representative table.

<u>India</u>

The Indian Armed Forces is a concrete example of a religiously diverse military charged with the defense of a constitutionally secular state while commanding a numerous force of religiously observant personnel. Its land component, the Indian Army, is the second-largest ground force in the world in terms of active-duty personnel.[110] Its

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[110] Nick Routley, "Mapped: All the World's Military Personnel," Visual Capitalist, March 11, 2022, https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapped-all-the-worlds-military-personnel/.

origins date back to the colonial-era Indian armed forces comprising the British East India Company's armies and the armies of the Indian princely states. Upon attaining independence from British rule in 1947, these forces were nationalized and gathered into the modern Indian Army.[111] The Indian Army is primarily a territorial army charged with the defense of India's sovereignty against external threats along its borders, safeguarding India's national security interests. The Indian Army also has a mission to quell internal disputes. It consists of approximately 1.25 million active-duty personnel, and is capable of a range of military operations, be it deterrence at the low end of conflict to large-scale combat operations (LSCO) in war.[112] The Indian Armed Forces is also only one of seven militaries in the world to have successfully tested nuclear weapons, with its neighbor Pakistan also ranking as one of the seven.

India itself is a secular state, even though its citizens are highly religious. Despite being majority Hindu, India chose a secular orientation at independence to demonstrate its openness to all religious communities as a means of contesting its neighbor Pakistan's establishment as a state for Muslims.[113] Hence, India has maintained a secular constitution which prescribes freedom of religious expression.[114] Despite these secular

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[111] Elisheva Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass: The Case of the Indian and Israeli Armed Forces," *Journal of Church and State* 58, no. 3 (2016): 440–461., 446.

[112] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "India: Military and Security," The World Factbook, accessed April 3, 2022, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/india/#military-and-security.

[113] Berger, "Secularization Falsified."

[114] Amit Ahuja, "India," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, ed. Ron E. Hassner (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 159.

overtones, the Indian nation is both religiously diverse and highly religious.

Demographically, Hindus comprise the majority at 79.8 percent, Muslims at 14.2 percent,

Christians at 2.3 percent, Sikhs at 1.7 percent, and others and unspecified at 2 percent.[115]

India is therefore not spared from the inter-religious tensions that bedevil most multi-

religious states, starting with communal violence between Hindus and Muslims during

Partition in 1947-1948, leading up to bloody clashes between Hindus and Christians over

religious sites even as recently as 2008.[116]

It is within this religiously charged political environment that the Indian Army is

expected to operate, and from which it draws its soldiers. Despite the potential for intra-

military religious clashes, the Indian Army has performed commendably in most of its

major operations in the last half-century. Since independence, it has been involved in four

wars with its neighbor Pakistan, and one with China.[117] Even today, it maintains a

significant military presence on the borders with Pakistan and China as a deterrent in

flashpoints such as Kashmir and the Siachen Glacier. Within the same time period, the

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[115] CIA, "India: Military and Security," based on 2011 estimates.

[116] Robin Gomes, "Eleven Years after India's Deadly Anti-Christian Violence, Faith Still Growing," *Vatican News*, August 2019, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-08/india-kandhamal-odisha-christian-persecution-anniversary-barwa-m.html.

[117] David E. Johnson, Jennifer D. Moroney, Roger Cliff, M. Wade Markel, Laurence Smallman, and Michael Spirtas, "India," in *Preparing and Training for the Full Spectrum of Military Challenges: Insights from the Experiences of China, France, the United Kingdom, India, and Israel* (San Francisco, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 180–183, http://www.jstor.org.lumen.cgsccarl.com/stable/10.7249/mg836osd.13.

Indian Army has also been used as a domestic tool to quell unrest and maintain the integrity of the federated states.[118]

The majority of these operations have turned out in the Indian Army's favor, and its will to fight entering these operations was high. Notably, many of its units performed ably when facing seemingly insurmountable odds. One such instance was during the Kargil Conflict in 1999. Though debate still remains over whether it should be considered the Fourth Indo-Pakistan War, the conflict was strategically significant because both India and Pakistan had recently attained nuclear-armed status.[119] As part of Operation *Vijay,* the Indian Army's counter-offensive to the Pakistani attack, Indian regiments tasked with recapturing outposts along the Tololing Ridge had to overcome extreme cold weather and daunting elevations of at least 16,000 feet that gave the defending Pakistan-supported Northern Light Infantry (NLI) paramilitary forces a significant advantage.[120]

Despite these circumstances, units such as the 8 Sikh Regiment that were sent into combat performed with distinction and eventually dislodged the entrenched NLI forces.[121] The Pakistan Army leadership had underestimated the Indian Army's "will and capacity" to employ all means possible to retake seemingly impregnable outposts,

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[118] ADG Strat Comms, "Indian Army: Know Your Army," The Official Webpage of the Indian Army, last updated 2022, https://indianarmy.nic.in/.

[119] Peter R. Lavoy, "Introduction: The Importance of the Kargil Conflict," in *Asymmteric Warfare in South Asia*, ed. Peter R. Lavoy (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2-3.

[120] John H. Gill, "Military Operations in the Kargil Conflict," in *Asymmteric Warfare in South Asia*, ed. Peter R. Lavoy (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 104.

[121] Ibid., 114-115.

demonstrating that even in relatively modern conflicts, the Indian Army had high will to fight.[122] This evidence is corroborated in the Indian Army's excellent performance in other wars, such as the Third Indo-Pakistan War in 1971 which saw the Indian Army gain a decisive victory over the Pakistani Army within just 13 days, taking 93,000 Pakistani soldiers prisoner, and liberating then-East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) from oppressive rule.[123] Having established this qualitative assessment, the analysis will turn to an examination of how religion played an enabling role in ensuring high will to fight in the Indian Army.

Organization

The Indian Army is a positive example of how its organization of units facilitates the creation of an enabling religious environment. The Indian Army is an all-volunteer force and organizes its units according to three archetypes: (1) "single class" units, (2) "fixed class" units, and (3) "all India all class" units.[124] The single class units are ethnically homogeneous units, with their legacy traced back to regiments raised during British colonial rule in line with the "martial race" theory. They make up the bulk of the

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[122] Kargil Review Committee, *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1999), 18-20.

[123] BS Web Team, "1971 War: The Story of India's Victory, Pak's Surrender, Bangladesh Freedom," *Business Standard*, last updated December 16, 2018, https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/vijay-diwas-how-india-ended-pak-s-atrocities-and-ensured-freed-bangladesh-118121600120_1.html.

[124] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 447.

infantry and armor formations, accounting for nearly 60 percent of the Indian Army.[125]

The fixed class category contains units that are heterogeneous at large but comprise

homogeneous sub-units like companies or platoons. Finally, the All India All Class

category includes completely ethnically heterogeneous units.[126]

The basis for this three-category model is the use of ethnicity as an organizational

principle. Under British rule, the colonial Indian military was cognizant of the power of

religion as a rallying force against internal military structures following the Sepoy Revolt

of 1857 and had since then been careful not to use religion as a primary organizing

principle, while at the same time guaranteeing some degree of religious accommodation.

The modern Indian Army continued the same practice and abolished any religious

reservations in its civil service and thus by extension the military.[127] This was to harness

ethnicity and religion as "cross-cutting cleavages" to keep communal tensions under

control in a multi-faith, multi-ethnic nation.[128]

At the same time, although ethnicity was used as the organizing principle, race is

often tied to religion. As regiments draw from the populace of the state in which they are

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[125] Martial race theory was introduced by British colonial authorities as a premise to raise colonial armies from ethnic minorities, on the basis that these groups had a more masculine character and were thus more suited for military service. Omar Khalidi, "Ethnic Group Recruitment in the Indian Army: The Contrasting Cases of Sikhs, Muslims, Gurkhas and Others," *Pacific Affairs* 74, no. 4 (Winter 2001-2002): 540.

[126] Ibid., 542.

[127] Steven I. Wilkinson, *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy since Independence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 17-19.

[128] Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1956), 78-79.

raised, these units take on the prevailing ethnic and religious character of the region, which is further reinforced by how Indian states are typically organized along ethnic lines. For example, most of the Sikh Regiments are drawn from the Punjab, in which Sikhism is the dominant religion; similarly, the Rajputana Rifles and Gurkha Regiments are drawn from Hindu-majority states, thus resulting in Hinduism being the dominant religion in the units.[129]

This organizational model allows for religious accommodation to be tailored to the prevailing religion of the unit. In homogeneous units (single-class or fixed-class), religious accommodation is straightforward because coordination of prayer times, religious dress, attire, and religious ceremonies are specific to the religion the unit's majority professes. Even battle cries are adapted to the unit's religious beliefs.[130] At the same time, the Indian Army balances religion's influence by rotating homogeneous units out of the region in which they were raised to serve in operational formations located in other states.[131] For example, an operational brigade usually consists of battalions from different regiments, resulting in instances where an ethnically homogeneous battalion could be serving alongside battalions comprising other ethnic groups.

Heterogeneous All India All Class regiments comprise the minority of the Indian Army, and are typically special purpose units such as the Parachute Regiment and the

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[129] Ahuja, "India," 166, 171.

[130] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 452. Sikh units have been known to cry *"Jo Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal"* (Blessed is the one who proclaims the truth of God), whilst Muslim soldiers in the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles regiment have used the battle cry *"Allah hu Akbar"* (God is great).

[131] Ahuja, "India," 166.

Signal Corps.[132] These regiments were raised after independence, partially in response to calls from Indian nationalist politicians to revise the martial race policy and diversify the military.[133] In heterogeneous units, creative means are employed to be more accommodating of differing views, for example, battle cries are made more generic to include soldiers from all beliefs.[134]

Although mixed units and operational formations lack the homogeneity that is conducive to religious accommodation, the encouragement of religious practice within diverse units is managed by the Indian Army's officer class. The Indian Army trains and employs its officer corps to act as an internal mediating structure to advocate for accommodation across all religions, as part of what Amrit Ahuja terms "elite control."[135] Importantly, the organizational principles of religion and ethnicity are relaxed for officers, where officers are assigned to regiments regardless of their religious or ethnic identities; a Hindu officer can command a Gurkha battalion, or a Sikh officer can command Bengali troops. The Indian Army reinforces the officer's role as an interlocutor by segregating them from soldiers, whether it be through separate dining and recreational

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[132] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 447.

[133] Wilkinson, *Army and Nation,* 6-7.

[134] DDE Editor, "Indian Army Regiments and Their War Cry [Goosebumps]." *Defence Directed Education* (blog), July 22, 2021. https://defencedirecteducation.com/2021/07/22/indian-army-regiments-war-cry/. For instance, in the Parachute Regiment, the war cry is "*Sarvada Shaktishali*" (Ever Powerful) and does not address any particular gods.

[135] Ahuja, "India," 167.

facilities, or recruiting officers from a higher socio-economic class of society.[136] In this way, the officer corps is established as a mediating structure to help represent the diverse needs of various religious groups of soldiers and ease tensions should they arise, because the officer is seen as religiously neutral.

In sum, the Indian Army employs the Organizational variable to considerable effect in creating an enabling religious environment, as the majority of its units are religiously homogeneous thus allowing a common religious identity within the regiments. In the fixed class or all class units, the Army employs the officer corps as a mediating structure to address the needs of religious minorities. The use of Organization as a consideration to foster religious accommodation is not limited to peacetime, and features significantly in operations—in the Kargil conflict earlier described, the 70th Brigade in the key Batalik sector comprised battalions from homogeneous regiments such as the 14 Sikh (Sikh) and 1/11 Gurkha Rifles (Hindu), as well as mixed units such as the 5 Para SF.[137] These units fought with distinction during the conflict (5 Para SF earned the Chief of Army Staff Citation), suggesting that the organizational measures the Indian Army took to foster religious accommodation was one of the reasons why will to fight was high in combat.

Leadership

While the Indian Army does not have a formal chaplain corps, it appoints sacred leaders at the unit level in the form of religious teachers. They hold the rank of junior

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[136] Ahuja, "India," 167.

[137] Gill, "Military Operations in the Kargil Conflict," 100.

commissioned officers, wear civilian clothing instead of uniforms while in garrison, and

are charged with conducting prayers and religious ceremonies, officiating at military

funerals, visiting sick or imprisoned soldiers, and teaching religious studies to interested

personnel.[138] The religious teachers fall under five broad categories: pandit, granthi,

maulvi, priest, or monk, according to the main religions represented in the Indian Army,

and the ratio of religious teachers is maintained at 1 to every 1,000 soldiers, equivalent to

a battalion size.[139] These religious teachers first undergo a basic training program in

Regimental Training Centers to prepare them for their pastoral role. Subsequently, they

are periodically sent for advanced training at the centralized Institute of National

Integration, where they interact with religious teachers from different faiths and so gain

an appreciation of the other religions represented in the Indian Army.[140]

Despite the shortage of formal scholarship, there is sufficient evidence to indicate

that sacred leaders have a significant influence in inspiring will to fight in the Indian

Army. These teachers not only remain with the unit while in garrison for extended

periods of time, but also follow the unit in operations to the forward operating areas.

They preach uplifting sermons prior to combat, using anecdotes and quotes from sacred

scriptures such as the Hindu Mahabharata and Sikh Dasam Granth to enliven a sense of

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[138] Joint Indian Army, "Indian Army JCO (RT) Religious Teacher Online Form 2022," last updated 2021, https://www.joinindianarmy.co/indian-army-jco-religious-teacher-rrt/.

[139] Ahuja, "India," 161.

[140] N. C. Guha, "Religion in India's Army," *Hinduism Today*, July 1, 2005, https://www.hinduismtoday.com/magazine/july-august-september-2005/2005-07-religion-in-india-s-army/.

fervor and pride in the unit. They dispense blessings for soldiers, pray for victory, and even lead in worship of weapons through special rites.[141] Even the remote mountainous combat zones of Jammu and Kashmir are not excluded, where visits by religious teachers greatly enhance the morale of the soldiers.[142]

The effect that these sacred leaders have on their units is buoyed by the fact that the majority of the Indian Army units are religiously homogeneous. Religious teachers are thus assigned to units that share the religious belief they profess and are able to minister directly to personnel in the unit who are of the same faith. In this way, using the Organization variable to create ethnically (and therefore religiously) homogeneous units multiplies the effect of the Leadership variable, because the religious teachers are able to appeal to the religious identities of soldiers sharing the same faith. In mixed units, the Indian Army has allowed for multiple religious teachers based on the largest religious groups represented, confirming that the religious teachers are viewed with great importance in ensuring high will to fight.[143]

<center>Policies</center>

The Indian Army's policies on the whole are supportive of the practice of religion. The religious uniformity of many units allows decision-making regarding

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[141] Ahuja, "India," 161-163.

[142] Guha, "Religion in India's Army."

[143] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 631.

religious accommodation to be decentralized to the unit level.[144] This is complemented

by the fact that the officer corps is expected to be pluralistic, allowing unit commanders

to lead by example and participate in the observance of religious festivals and ceremonies

in the unit with their soldiers, regardless of differences in faith.[145]

As a result, the Indian Army has a vibrant religious life that is integrated into unit

culture and routines. The unit temple, known colloquially as *sarva dharma sthal,* is the

focal point of any unit's religious activities within the garrison compound. The temple

contains shrines devoted to the majority religion's deities, but also has worship spaces

allotted for adherents of other religions.[146] Attendance at weekly *Mandir* (temple)

parades is mandatory, in addition to the typical commander's parades found in other

militaries around the world. Although the Indian Army has no formally recorded policies

regarding leaves of absence during religious holidays, units plan their training schedules

to commemorate sacred days of festival.[147]

Units organize prayers and rituals to invoke divine assistance for success in

operations, even designating patron deities to which special devotion should be accorded.

For example, the Garhwal Rifles Regiment reveres the Badri Vishal, an icon of the Lord

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[144] Ahuja, "India," 162-163. Ahuja's interviews with several senior Indian military officials indicate how unit commanders are given considerable latitude in deciding how best to implement religious accommodation in their units.

[145] Ibid., 160.

[146] Ritu Singh, ed. "Separated by Religion, United by Faith: This Pic of Indian Army Soldiers Praying Is Making People Proud," India.com, August 12, 2020, https://www.india.com/viral/separated-by-religion-united-by-faith-this-pic-of-indian-army-soldiers-praying-is-making-people-proud-4109449/.

[147] Guha, "Religion in India's Army."

Vishnu located in Badrinath, Garhwal. As recorded by a retired Indian Army lieutenant colonel, "For the Garhwal Rifles personnel, Badrinath is of supreme significance. The name of Lord Badri even embellishes the Garhwal Rifles' war cry and is their ultimate motivating force."[148] Religious rites not only have significance in boosting morale before operations, but also help units honor their war dead. Notably, in the 1999 Kargil Conflict, the repatriation of remains from the frontlines provided an opportunity to elevate fallen soldiers to the status of martyrs and national heroes through highly publicized funeral processions, inspiring even greater fervor and support for the fight against Pakistan.[149]

The Indian Army's policies of religious accommodation extend to the realms of religious attire and diets. The Army's dress regulations permit Hindus to wear sacred threads, Muslim and Sikh soldiers to grow beards in the military, and Sikhs to wear military-provided turbans.[150] For religious diets, commanders of ethnically homogeneous units are able to tailor the menus of their mess halls through their unit mess committees to accommodate the religious preferences of the majority. In mixed units, the extent to which Muslim soldiers are accommodated is unclear, although the vegetarian option that is provided for strictly observant Hindus is also made available to Muslims.[151]

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[148] Guha, "Religion in India's Army."

[149] Praveen Swami, "The Impact of the Kargil Conflict and Kashmir on Indian Politics and Society," in *Asymmteric Warfare in South Asia*, ed. Peter R. Lavoy (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 262-264.

[150] SSBCrack, "Religious Articles and Uniformed Personnel of The Armed Forces," last updated April 24, 2019, https://www.ssbcrack.com/2019/04/religious-articles-and-uniformed-personnel-of-the-armed-forces.html.

[151] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 629.

Operation Blue Star

The religiously supportive environment of the Indian Army was put to the test in a

complex counter-insurgency operation known as Operation Blue Star in 1984. The

insurgency was initiated in the Punjab region by Sikh separatists who were agitating

against the federal Indian government for an autonomous Sikh state. The leader of the

extremists, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, occupied the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple),

Sikhism's holiest shrine, turning it into a stronghold which he knew the military forces

would be reluctant to attack.[152] Initially, the Indian Army had taken pains to ensure

religious accommodation was considered in its operational planning and demonstrated

sensitivities towards the reverence accorded to the site. A Sikh general was selected to

lead the operations, no Sikh regiments were tasked in the operation, only light weapons

were permitted, and Sikhs within mixed units that were sent to evict the extremists were

given the opportunity to opt out of the mission.[153] Eventually, after repeated attempts by

the Indian military to dislodge the militants, earlier restrictions on the use of heavy

weapons were lifted, and tank fire was allowed to suppress sniper firing positions. This

allowed the task force to enter and subsequently eliminate the extremists, but at the

expense of extensive damage to many of the shrine's buildings.[154]

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[152] The Editors of Encylopaedia Britannica, "Sikh Separatism," Enclopaedia Britannica Inc., 2022, https://www.britannica.com/place/India/Sikh-separatism#ref486527.

[153] Ahuja, "India," 168-169.

[154] Ibid., 169-170.

The damage to the shrine angered Sikhs around the country, culminating in the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards later in the year, which itself triggered further communal violence that had not been witnessed since partition. Within the Indian Army, the incident caused a mutiny among Sikh soldiers, which was quickly quelled by the military authorities.[155] In this vein, religion appeared to have negative effects on will to fight, working instead against the military establishment.

However, closer analysis reveals that the Indian Army's mechanisms introduced to accommodate religion had helped prevent the mutiny from spiraling out of control. Amit Ahuja highlights how the officer corps was employed as the "primary bulwark against the widespread breakdown of discipline," acting as an internal mediating structure to address the grievances of disaffected Sikh soldiers and thus contain the rebellion.[156] Furthermore, the prevailing religiously supportive environment which had introduced "norms of interfaith respect" prevented the Indian Army from descending into anarchy, and there were no instances of Sikh on non-Sikh violence in the military despite the highly charged environment outside of it.[157]

In this respect, the Indian Army is cognizant of the tightrope it must tread between accommodating religion and preventing it from becoming a destabilizing force among the ranks. The fact that the Indian Army invested significantly in organization, leadership, and policies to foster an enabling religious environment even after religiously-

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[155] Wilkinson, *Army and Nation,* 148-152.

[156] Ahuja, "India," 172.

[157] Ibid., 173.

charged conflicts such as Operation Blue Star demonstrates how the Army views religion as an important component of will to fight.

Summary

The Indian Army's blend of organizational, leadership, and policy actions form a model that created an enabling religious environment in which religion fostered will to fight to a great extent. The existence of religiously homogeneous units plays a large role in laying the foundations for the selection of sacred leaders and the implementation of policies. However, while religious accommodation is easier in homogeneous units, the Indian Army's welcoming approach to religion is prevalent in mixed units as well, enabled by the officer corps as a mediating structure to help represent the interests of religious minorities.

Even though the Indian Army is expressly secular as an offshoot of India's secular constitution, religious practice has fostered a greater sense of belonging, identity, and ultimately will to fight. These are implicitly evident in the Indian Army's success in large scale operations like the Kargil Conflict, and to a reasonable extent in counter-insurgency operations such as Operation Blue Star. Having recognized the importance of religion as a contributor to will to fight, the Indian Army has organized its force structure, designated sacred leaders, and crafted its policies to best harness the relationship between religion and will to fight to ensure combat effectiveness. Overall, the Indian Army registers many "+" for all the sub-components of the analysis. See Table 4.

Table 4.   Summary Table for India Case Study

Variable	Sub-component	Indian Army
Organization	Degree of homogeneity at unit level	+ Very homogeneous
	Establishment of mediating structures	+ Secular officer corps
	Overall assessment	+
Leadership	Presence of sacred leaders	+ Junior commissioned religious teachers
	Vulnerability of sacred leaders	+ Accompany units to operational areas
	Overall assessment	+
Policies	Degree of accommodation for prayers and rituals	+ Mandir parades; unit commander prerogative; prayers and rites even before battle
	Degree of accommodation for attire and bearing	+ Even in joint units, various religious dress allowed
	Degree of accommodation for diet	/ Homogeneity helps; if minorities, then unit commander has prerogative
	Overall assessment	+

Source: Created by author.

Israel

This thesis moves from the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and religiously observant world of India to the almost complete opposite in Israel. Israel is a fairly homogeneous society with 81 percent of the population identifying as Jewish.[158] This

[158] Pew Research Center, *Israel's Religiously Divided Society: Deep Gulfs among Jews, as well as between Jews and Arabs, over PoliticaL Values and Religion's Role in Public Life* (Washington, DC, March 8, 2016), 5, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2016/03/08/israels-religiously-divided-society/.

statistic naturally places Judaism as Israel's dominant religion, but this does not

automatically equate to every Israeli Jew identifying as a pious observer of Judaism.

Judaism holds a unique position in Israeli society by having a dual meaning; on one hand,

a theological understanding of Judaism as the "religion of the Jews," and on the other

hand, an ethnic understanding of Judaism as the "culture and heritage of the Jews."[159]

Due to this ambiguity, the religiosity of Israeli Jews spans a spectrum that comprises four

general categories: (1) *Hiloni*, literally meaning "secular," making up 40 percent of the

population; (2) *Masorti*, referring to "traditionalists," making up 23 percent of the

population; (3) *Dati*, referring to "religious" or "Orthodox," making up 10 percent of the

population; and (4) *Haredi*, referring to the "ultra-Orthodox," making up 8 percent of the

population.[160]

Principally, the Orthodox Jews (Haredi and Dati) see themselves as Jewish first,

Israeli second, and maintain that a key role of Israel's government is to promote religious

beliefs and values. Conversely, secular (Hiloni) Jews see themselves as Israeli first,

Jewish second, and advocate the separation of religion from government policy.[161]

Furthermore, although Israel is a nation of Jews, Judaism is not expressly codified as the

State religion, thus making Israel a secular state.[162] At the formation of the modern

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[159] Røislien, "Religion and Military Conscription," 217.

[160] Pew Research Center, *Israel's Religiously Divided Society*, 5.

[161] Ibid., 6.

[162] Natan Lerner, "Religion and the Secular State in Israel, " in *Religion and the Secular State* ed. Javier Martínez-Torrón and W. Cole Durham Jr. (Madrid: Publishing Service of Complutense University Law School, 2015), 422, https://www.iclrs.org/blurb/religion-and-the-secular-state-national-reports/.

Jewish nation in 1948, the origins of the country were rooted in more nationalistic rather than religious tones. Indeed, the wording of the Proclamation of Independence contains only vague references to the Almighty, and is more a "reminder of the secular vision of the founding fathers … [that] Israel was to be a modern democratic state, an expression of Jewish nationalism rather than Jewish faith."[163] As such, Israel has existed in an uneasy equilibrium between its national and religious identities, constantly having to reconcile the sharp differences between the secular and the religious quarters of Jewish society over divisive issues such as the Occupied Territories and military conscription.[164]

The need to reconcile these differences has arisen most prominently in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The IDF serves two purposes. It is first charged with the defense of Jewish nationhood and identity, given the lingering memory of the Holocaust and the volatile geopolitical situation in which Israel is immersed.[165] At the same time, the IDF is the principal organization in which the nation-state is forged, seen as the institution that brings together disparate factions of Jewish society by being a "people's army."[166] The IDF achieves the second objective principally through universal conscription, enshrined in the 1949 Defense Service Law that applies to both males and females from the age of

[163] Eric Silver, "Sacred and Secular in Contemporary Israel," *The Political Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (1990): 169–176.

[164] Pew Research Center, *Israel's Religiously Divided Society*, 7.

[165] The Editors of Encylopaedia Britannica, "Israel Defense Forces," Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., Last updated August 30, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Israel-Defense-Forces.

[166] David Ben-Gurion, "Address to Newly Commissioned Officers, 1949," in *Yihud Ve-Yi'ud [Collected Speeches]* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1971), 81.

18 onwards.[167] Being a secular institution (in accordance with the state), the IDF has had

to reconcile the competing tensions between the military obligations it imposes on the

soldiers it enlists, and the prevailing religious obligations they entered with.[168] This

challenge is compounded by the diversity of enlistees according to the four categories

earlier mentioned.

In spite of these challenges, the IDF's history is replete with instances of excellent

performance in war characterized by high will to fight under dire circumstances. The IDF

has been engaged in conflict since its inception, where the moment Israel was declared

independent on 14 May 1948 marked the beginning of the First Arab-Israeli war. Since

then, the IDF has fought seven wars and numerous limited operations, emerging as the

victor in the majority of the engagements.[169] Notable instances of exceptional will to

fight are in the 1967 Six-Day War, where Israel was outnumbered in a war against three

of its neighbors' armies (Egypt, Syria, Jordan) simultaneously, culminating in a pitched

battle for the Golan Heights.[170] Similarly, the IDF overcame initial strategic surprise and

near-defeat during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and staged a decisive counter-attack

against Syrian armored forces occupying the Golan Heights that turned the tide of the

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[167] Røislien, "Religion and Military Conscription," 217.

[168] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 440.

[169] IDF Editorial Team, "70 Years of Defending Israel," Israeli Defence Forces, July 5, 2018, https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/our-soldiers/70-years-of-defending-israel/.

[170] Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2003); Eyal Ziser, "June 1967: Israel's Capture of the Golan Heights," *Israel Studies* 7, no. 1 (2002): 168–194.

war.[171] The IDF's illustrious battle record thus provides a rich area of study to examine the role of religion in fostering will to fight.

Organization

The vast majority of the IDF's units are in principle religiously heterogeneous, in keeping with the original intent of making the IDF an integrative institution.[172] At the same time, the varying religious demands of the different groups within Israeli Jewry have been a major factor in how the IDF organizes its units. In particular, the IDF has made special concessions to accommodate the religious observances of the ultra-Orthodox community. The most fundamental exception was in the form of the Tal Law, an amendment to the Defense Service Law that granted exemption from military service to Haredi youth who were enrolled in *yeshivas* (Jewish religious academies), on the basis that they had dedicated themselves to a life of scriptural study.[173] Despite running counter to the principle of universal conscription, Israel's founding prime minister and defense minister David Ben-Gurion granted this exemption on the basis that the number of Haredi exemptions (as of 1948) was small.[174] Furthermore, Ben-Gurion was adamant that the IDF would be a "people's army," and vetoed any proposals of allowing religiously

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[171] HistoryNet Staff, "Yom Kippur War: Sacrificial Stand in the Golan Heights," History Net, June 12, 2006, https://www.historynet.com/yom-kippur-war-sacrificial-stand-in-the-golan-heights/.

[172] Stuart A. Cohen, "Israel," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, ed. Ron E. Hassner (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 118.

[173] Røislien, "Religion and Military Conscription," 219.

[174] Cohen, "Israel," 120.

observant Jews to serve in segregated units.[175] Hence, it seemed feasible for the IDF to grant exemption to the ultra-Orthodox Jews in recognition of how military and religious obligations seemed incompatible. However, the rapid increase in the population of Haredi and Dati Jews since independence vis-à-vis the declining birth rate of the secular Jews has led to an exponential increase in exemptions, with approximately 50,000 deferments granted in 2010 accounting for over 10 percent of the potential recruitment population.[176]

With the growing proportion of Haredi Jews in Israeli society, the IDF could not afford to maintain a large standing professional army while allowing the exemption of significant numbers of eligible males due to religious pursuits. To address the looming shortfall in manpower, the IDF has introduced a variety of internal initiatives over the years to encourage enlistment among Haredi and Dati Jews.[177] Interestingly, in 1999, the IDF even created a segregated unit, the 97th *Netzah Yehuda* (or more commonly, Nahal Haredi) battalion for Haredi Jews who wanted to upkeep a religiously observant lifestyle but were unable to qualify for draft exemptions because they lacked the academic ability to pursue theological studies.[178] Though this contradicted the policy of heterogeneous

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[175] Cohen, "Israel," 118.

[176] Cohen, "Israel.", 119-120.

[177] Ibid., 118-119. Initiatives include tailored service tracks known as Shachar that provide Haredi enlistees with technical skills upon completion of military service which are transferrable to the civilian working world; and revisions to the Tal Law to allow more mature Haredi men to enlist individually into regular units for significantly reduced terms of service. However, these still take place within the realm of heterogeneous units.

[178] Ze'ev Drori, *Between Faith and Military Service: The Haredi Nahal Battalion* (Jerusalem: Floersheimer Studies, 2005).

units, the Nahal Haredi battalion remains the only homogeneous unit of ultra-Orthodox Haredim in the IDF, constituting an exception rather than a new norm.[179]

Though the IDF has demonstrated a willingness to accommodate the religious needs of the Haredim through internal mechanisms, the results have been mixed. On the one hand, optimists point to a rising trend in Haredi enlistment through these initiatives.[180] Furthermore, the Nahal Haredi battalion has performed ably in numerous combat operations, demonstrating that religious practice and combat performance are not mutually exclusive.[181] However, the IDF's continued emphasis on keeping units heterogeneous has limited the effectiveness of these initiatives for two reasons. First, the vast majority of Haredi still do not enlist, reflecting a long-standing (valid) concern of the ultra-Orthodox that their adherents would lose the faith when coming into contact with secular Jews in the heterogeneous units.[182] Secondly, the inequitable burden of service has discolored cordial relationships between Hiloni and Haredi soldiers within heterogeneous units, leading to a disintegrative rather than integrative effect.[183] In this

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[179] Cohen, "Israel," 120.

[180] Ibid., 121.

[181] See for example: Jonathan Rosenblum, "Nahal Haredi Comes of Age," *Jewish Action*, last updated 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20110727160330/ http://www.ou.org/index.php/jewish_action/article/69714/; Yoav Zitun, "A Haredi Battalion in the Eye of the Storm," *Ynetnews.com,* December 17, 2018, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5427152,00.html.

[182] Cohen, "Israel," 133.

[183] Røislien, "Religion and Military Conscription,"221-223.

way, the heterogeneous unit policy has instead ironically polarized Israeli society further, leading to the IDF's internal initiatives only achieving success at the margins.

In contrast to the limited efficacy of internal initiatives, the IDF has enjoyed better results in collaborations with external religious institutions acting as mediating structures to address the religious needs of Haredi soldiers. Two of such institutions are the *Yeshivot Hesder* (literally "Talmud Academy Arrangement") and the *Mekhina* ("preconscription") programs, which comprise a combination of Talmudic study and military duty over varying periods of service.[184] Haredi Jews enrolled in these programs have the best of both worlds, in that they are able to fulfil their pursuit of fervent religious studies while simultaneously satisfying a civic duty. Furthermore, these institutional programs act as mediating structures between the IDF and the religious soldiers. Program officials keep regular correspondence with their enlisted students and help raise concerns to IDF agencies when they face dilemmas between religious and military obligations.[185] At the same time, these institutions help to relay messages from the IDF to their students, generally helping to advocate military service.[186]

These initiatives have produced more favorable outcomes in encouraging Haredi enlistment, together accounting for up to 40 percent of the total number of graduates from

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[184] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 622.

[185] Aharon Lichtenstein, "The Ideology of Hesder," *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* 19, no. 3 (April 10, 1981): 199–217, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23258619.

[186] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 622.

the Yeshiva religious academies.[187] Furthermore, graduates of these programs have often volunteered to enlist in combat formations, leading to an over-representation of Haredim in these units.[188] For the Hesder program in particular, graduates are typically assigned to formations with peers of the same cohort due to their enlistment patterns, which has the follow-on effect of encouraging more religious soldiers outside of the program to enlist in the same combat formations to be among like-minded peers.[189]

Overall, while the IDF has attempted to employ the Organizational variable to accommodate the religious observances of the Haredim, its efforts to increase Haredim enlistment have been hampered by its fixation on heterogeneous units in accordance with its identification as a people's army. The IDF has mitigated its reliance on internal organizational initiatives by co-opting external religious institutions, who have been effective in acting as mediating structures between religious soldiers and the IDF thus producing more noticeable outcomes in improving Haredi participation.

Leadership

The IDF employs sacred leaders in uniform in the form of the IDF rabbinate, a military chaplaincy organization formed in 1948 at the same time the IDF was born.[190] In its early years, the IDF rabbinate initially focused on catering to the specific needs of the

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[187] Cohen, "Israel," 125.

[188] Ibid., 123.

[189] Stuart A. Cohen, *The Sword or the Scroll?* (Lanham, MD: Harwood, 1997).

[190] Israel Defense Forces, "Military Rabbinate," accessed April 9, 2022, https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/military-rabbinate/.

religiously observant minority. Subsequently, with the growth of the Hesder and Mekhina programs that stepped in to act as advocates for the Haredi and Dati troops, the IDF rabbinate was able to expand its role to focus on educating the wider population on Judaism and religious traditions as a means of troop integration.[191]

The attention of the IDF rabbinate thus shifted from religious accommodation to the provision of "spiritual guidance and comfort before, during, and after battle," which for the large segment of traditionalist Jews was a more pressing demand than clarifications regarding religious customs.[192] This shift was supported by the establishment of a Combat Values Branch (later re-named the Jewish Awareness Department) and the recruitment of rabbis with experience in combat units, which helped the IDF rabbinate empathize with the troops in the field.[193] This new role was evident in Operation Cast Lead (end 2008 to early 2009), where the Chief Military Rabbi led military and civilian rabbis to join the troops in order to "elevate" them "spiritually," and allayed soldiers' fears of urban combat.[194] The IDF's establishment of a formal military chaplaincy has therefore had a positive impact on the IDF's will to fight by increasing religious support at the unit level.

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[191] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 454.

[192] Cohen, "Israel," 124.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Yagil Levy, "Religious Authorities in the Military and Civilian Control: The Case of the Israeli Defense Forces," *Politics & Society* 44, no. 2 (March 31, 2016): 315-316.

However, in terms of vulnerability, the IDF rabbinate has had a mixed record. Granted, the institution has had a "tradition of battlefield valor" exemplified by its rabbis who brave enemy fire to retrieve fallen soldiers for burial and has constantly sought to uplift troop morale at the most desperate points of battles.[195] However, the effectiveness of the IDF rabbinate in raising will to fight is blunted by the inherent discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities within the IDF. Several authors have documented the under-representation of ethnic minorities such as the Druze, the Bedouins, and the Circassians in the IDF, as well as the differentiated treatment they receive.[196] By virtue of being ethnic minorities, these groups are also religious minorities, and in addition to the racially differentiated policies these groups have to endure, they also lack non-Jewish chaplains to minister to them and address their religious needs.[197] Although small in numbers, these groups still comprise the fighting order of battle of the IDF, and the failure of the IDF rabbinate to provide religious support to these non-Jewish individuals runs counter to the notion of a people's army. In practical terms, the military rabbinate only made itself vulnerable for some, but not all segments of the IDF, leading to an imbalanced effect on will to fight.

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[195] Cohen, "Israel," 123.

[196] See for example Shi Ming Wong, "Negotiating Race: Military Manpower Policy in Multiethnic States," (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2015); Røislien, "Religion and Military Conscription."

[197] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 623.

Policies

The IDF generally implements policies that favor religious accommodation, but only insofar as these policies support its over-arching goal of remaining an integrative institution.[198] Although not strictly defined, the IDF's policies reflect a moderate variant of Judaism representing a blend of the Masorti, Dati and Haredi practices that appeal to a wide audience, an important consideration in maintaining its heterogeneous policy while trying to appear welcoming to ultra-Orthodox Jews.[199] This has resulted in a semi-religious climate permeating the IDF's activities, ranging from the quoting of passages from the Torah during official ceremonies, to holding graduation ceremonies at significant yet controversial locations like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.[200]

In terms of prayer times and religious holidays, unit training programs are designed to provide time for soldiers to pray and fast, with fasting soldiers allowed to sit out of physically strenuous activities.[201] The Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest, is accorded special significance and no training activities are meant to be scheduled on Saturdays in the training calendar. Although units at times contravene Sabbath rules without

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[198] Yagil Levy, "Theorizing Desecularization of the Military: The United States and Israel," *Armed Forces and Society* 46, no. 1 (2020): 106.

[199] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 456.

[200] Ibid., 453; Cohen, "Israel," 115.

[201] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 623.

appropriate religious justification, all ranks are cognizant of the prevailing policy that *Halakhic* law regarding the Sabbath should be upheld to the greatest extent possible.[202]

The IDF adopts a similar approach to religious diets and attire. Military kitchens are required to accommodate Jewish dietary restrictions (*kashrut*), and mealtimes have to be adjusted to let fasting soldiers eat before and after the fast.[203] As part of maintaining kashrut, the IDF rabbinate periodically sends rabbinical supervisors to inspect the ritual cleansing of IDF kitchens.[204] For attire, minor modifications in service dress are in place for ultra-Orthodox soldiers to don the knitted skullcaps (*kippah serugah*) during official ceremonies. However, few concessions are made to allow any religious modifications to combat uniforms during operations.[205]

The IDF's policies on religious accommodation extend to the non-Jewish religious minorities, albeit to a limited degree. Non-Jewish soldiers are also allowed a religious day of rest in accordance with their religion (Muslims on Friday, and Christians on Sunday), but they are not allowed to observe Saturday too.[206] In addition, the similarities between Jewish and Muslim dietary laws allow Muslims to dine in IDF

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[202] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 623. The *Halakh* refers to the laws and ordinances in Judaism that prescribe regulate religious observances and daily conduct.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Hassner, *Religion in the Military Worldwide*, 1.

[205] Cohen, "Israel," 123.

[206] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 453.

military mess halls.[207] However, due to the small numbers of such non-Jewish minorities, the IDF has no impetus to amend its policies further to cater to the religious needs of these groups, and is content to make minor adjustments to its policies geared towards accommodating religiously observant Jewish soldiers.[208]

<div align="center">Disengagement from the Gaza Strip (2005)</div>

The delicate balance between the religious and military identities of ultra-Orthodox soldiers drew attention during Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005. Set against the backdrop of the long-drawn Israel-Palestine Peace Process, then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon authorized the use of the IDF to dismantle Jewish settlements who refused to evacuate the Gaza Strip.[209] This order was complicated by the fact that a significant proportion of the settlers in the Occupied Territories (Gaza Strip and West Bank) came from the Haredi and Dati groups, premised on the belief that those territories had been given by God to Israel.[210] Hence, the settlers perceived that the Israeli government was conceding sacred land to Palestinian authorities, which was tantamount to going against a divine decree.

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[207] The IDF's policies regarding non-Jewish minorities were extracted from Chief of Staff Order 34.0310, *Religious Accommodation for Soldiers of Non-Jewish Minorities* (Israel, 2006), quoted in Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 623.

[208] Cohen, "Israel," 114.

[209] Jerusalem Post, "Gaza Disengagement Plan: Knesset Approves Disengagement Implementation Law," Jewish Virtual Library, February 16, 2005, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/knesset-approves-disengagement-implementation-law-february-2005.

[210] Pew Research Center, *Israel's Religiously Divided Society*, 37-38.

Naturally, the religiously observant soldiers of the IDF were caught in a dilemma, especially those belonging to units assigned to execute the disengagement operation. Rabbinic communities issued denunciations of the decision, with some of the yeshiva national-religious schools calling for their students in the IDF to disobey orders.[211] The media even stoked fears and suspicions that the ultra-Orthodox soldiers would constitute a "fifth column" in the IDF ranks, possibly sparking a civil war should the religious soldiers refuse to obey their commanding officers.[212]

In reality, the concerns about the loyalties of the religious IDF soldiers were unfounded. Only sixty-three soldiers directly refused orders, while thousands of others including religiously observant men and women participated in the operation without shirking their duties.[213] Orthodox soldiers who grappled with the dilemma had recourse to their Hesder program mentors, who helped to reconcile the competing obligations between religious and national duty.[214] Ultimately, despite their own misgivings, the majority of these rabbis encouraged their students to align with the national interests, thus preserving national unity.[215]Although the opposition to the Disengagement did not degenerate into a general revolt among the religiously observant soldiers, the incident

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[211] Cohen, "Israel,"129.

[212] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 455-456.

[213] Stuart A. Cohen, "Tensions between Military Service and Religion: Real and Imagined," *Israel Studies* 12, no. 1 (2007): 103–126.

[214] Rosman-Stollman, "Religious Accommodation as a Civil-Military Looking Glass," 455.

[215] Cohen, "Israel," 130.

demonstrated the potential for religious accommodation (or the lack thereof) to impact organizational will to fight. Similar to the Indian Army's experience in Operation Blue Star, the IDF had to tread a fine line between accommodation and loss of control over religious segments of its troops.

Summary

The IDF is a formidable military machine that has proven its high will to fight in multiple wars and conflicts waged since the day of its inception. Its high levels of will to fight are supported in no small part by the emphasis it places on the dominant religion, Judaism. Although a secular military by definition, the IDF has actively attempted to encourage enlistment among the ultra-Orthodox segments of Jewish society by promoting an image of adherence to Jewish religious practices through the IDF rabbinate (sacred leaders) and permissive military regulations (policies).

However, the success of these measures has been blunted by the IDF's insistence on heterogeneous units (organization), which continue to disincentivize the ultra-Orthodox from enlisting. To counter this, an encouraging trend is the growing influence of the national-religious Hesder programs, acting as mediating structures between religiously observant soldiers and the IDF. Finally, although the IDF takes pride in its reputation as a people's army, its approach to religious accommodation is generally limited to the religiously observant segments of Jewish society, while the religious needs of non-Jewish soldiers are accorded less of a priority. Overall, the IDF registers several "/" results in an analysis of the variables it has applied. See Table 5.

Table 5.   Summary Table for IDF Case Study

Variable	Sub-component	IDF
Organization	Degree of homogeneity at unit level	- Heterogeneous
	Establishment of mediating structures	+ Hesder and Mekhina programs
	Overall assessment	/
Leadership	Presence of sacred leaders	+ Well-established IDF Rabbinate
	Vulnerability of sacred leaders	/ Lack of chaplains for non-Jewish minorities
	Overall assessment	+
Policies	Degree of accommodation for prayers and rituals	+ Prayer times incorporated into training
	Degree of accommodation for attire and bearing	/ Skull caps allowed
	Degree of accommodation for diet	+ Kashrut kitchens
	Overall assessment	+

Source: Created by author.

US

The US resembles the cases of India and Israel but contains important differences.

Similar to India, it is an expressly secular country in which one religion is dominant

(Hinduism in India, Christianity in the US), but religious diversity and religious

observance are generally welcome.[216] Similar to Israel, US Christian identity has both

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[216] Pew Research Center, *America's Changing Religious Landscape* (Washington, DC, May 12, 2015), 3, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

religious and nationalistic undertones, and American Christianity itself resembles the diversity of Israeli Judaism in having multiple traditions (mainline Protestantism, evangelical Protestantism, Catholicism, Orthodox, etc.).[217] However, two key differences distinguish the US case study. First, a significant and growing proportion of the American population identify themselves as religiously "Unaffiliated," constituting approximately 15 percent of Americans. Given that they are not expressly agnostic nor atheistic, this group has been described as "Spiritual but Not Religious," who seemingly prefer to favor the functional approach to religion over the substantive.[218]

Second, the US represents a country of religious masses governed by an increasingly secularized elite, or in Peter Berger's words, "a nation of Indians ruled by an elite of Swedes."[219] Although the US enshrines the protection of religious freedoms in its Constitution within the First Amendment, revisionist efforts in the last half-century have sought to recast the interpretation of the First Amendment as the embodiment of a complete Church-State separation, providing constitutional justification to excise religion from the public square altogether.[220] Conversely, fundamentalists (particularly evangelical Christians) have countered such claims with the notion that the First

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[217] Pew Research Center, *America's Changing Religious Landscape*, 4-5.

[218] Ibid., 10-11.

[219] Peter L. Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 12. India represents the most religious country in the world, while Sweden is the most secular.

[220] Lynn, "Religion in the Military."

Amendment was written to reflect that America was always meant to be a Christian nation "under God," and raised vociferous protest against efforts to define it otherwise.[221]

The implications of this for the American military is that tensions between church and state that go on in society are played out in the military, because the military draws from the people to form its ranks. As a public institution upholding the Constitution, the American military (and in particular the US Army) has had to deal with the tension between the Establishment and the Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment.[222] This has resulted in a balancing act of religious accommodation for the US Army, because it is required to allow the free exercise of all religions while not imposing a single state religion.[223] As the role of the military and of religion in American society evolved over the years, the US Army had to adapt in order to maintain that balance between competing tensions. Initially, the draft which existed from the 1940s and ended in 1973 brought the melting pot of cultural America into the Army's ranks, confronting military leaders with the challenge of integrating a diverse army.[224] Yet, even after transitioning to the all-volunteer force following the Vietnam War, the US Army had to contend with plurality among the members it recruited, because it required an expansive reach in order to staff its massive manpower-heavy order of battle which was driven by

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[221] Pauletta Otis, "United States II," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 201–204.

[222] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith,* 7. While the Establishment Clause proscribes the establishment of a state-sponsored religion, the Free Exercise Clause guarantees that every American citizen should be allowed to exercise his/her religion freely.

[223] Otis, "United States II," 205-206.

[224] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith,* 17-19.

the Cold War and the desire to prevent the spread of communism, especially in Europe.[225]

Despite the challenges of accommodation in a religiously diverse military, the US Army has actively employed religion to achieve state goals. Whether it was used in World War II as a means of keeping draftees out of moral trouble or as a coping tool for PTSD, religious practice has played a significant role in the Army's ranks.[226] This recognition was even articulated in the Army's doctrine in the recent move to improve the resilience of Soldiers with the development and publication of Field Manual (FM) 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F).* Included in the FM is a section related to "spiritual readiness" as one of the five major domains of H2F.[227] The importance of religion becomes more distinct when considering how the American Way of War is fundamentally premised on wars fought beyond America's shores, for national interests that may not resonate with the individual American soldier sent to defend them.[228] In this context, religion played a role of helping to legitimize causes and sacrifice at the unit and individual level.[229]

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[225] Eyal Ben-Ari, Elisheva Rosman, and Eitan Shamir, "Neither a Conscript Army nor an All-Volunteer Force: Emerging Recruiting Models," *Armed Forces & Society* (December 5, 2021): 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X211048216.

[226] Johnson, "Spirituality and the Effect on Readiness,"; William R. Sterner and Lisa R. Jackson-Cherry, "The Influence of Spirituality and Religion on Coping for Combat-Deployed Military Personnel," *Counseling and Values* 60, no. 1 (2015): 48–66.

[227] HQDA, FM 7-22, 10-1 to 10-7.

[228] Brian M. Linn and Russell F. Weigley, "'The American Way of War' Revisited," *The Journal of Military History* 66, no. 2 (2002): 501.

[229] Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains,* 34.

The US Army is not only a religiously diverse military—it is the world's preeminent ground-based force in terms of technology, operational reach, and manpower.[230] Notably, its commendable performance in some of the most decisive wars of the twentieth century have been due in large part to its high will to fight.[231] In World War II, US industrial might and the fighting spirit of its soldiers overcame the tough resistance of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan to turn the tide of the war in the face of overwhelming odds in difficult battles such as Normandy, Guadalcanal, and Bastogne.[232] Flashes of American will to fight were once again witnessed decades later in Operation Desert Storm against a well-equipped and organized Iraqi Army.[233] The US Army's ability to maintain high will to fight in these key battles was commonly attributed to factors such as good leadership, but as this thesis will uncover, religion played an important but overlooked role.[234] The next sections will therefore examine how the US Army was generally able to foster an enabling religious environment and so employ religion as a force multiplier on the battlefield, despite the religious plurality and even tension that characterized American society.

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[230] Routley, "Mapped: All the World's Military Personnel."

[231] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, 4.

[232] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,* 159-161.

[233] Ibid., 193. In the wake of Operation Desert Storm, the US Army began to embrace will to fight concepts, prompted in part by the rapid capitulation of the Iraqi Army.

[234] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,* 102-103.

Organization

Although the US Army has undergone drastic changes in its organization and force structure over the past seventy years, it has remained consistent in how its units have remained largely heterogeneous in terms of religion. When segregation was still in force, the US Army organized units by ethnicity; subsequently, after desegregation was announced in 1948, the US Army began the long slow process of forming integrated units.[235] However, in both segregated and integrated units, religious affiliation was not the primary organizing variable.[236] In this way, the US Army resembles the IDF in that both militaries desire an army that is broadly reflective of wider societal demographics, despite the US Army being all-volunteer and the IDF being a conscript force.[237] In addition, adopting a heterogeneous approach to organizing units provides maximum flexibility for the US Army to conduct operations abroad and maintain its significant presence OCONUS.[238] As the US Army does not apply religious homogeneity in organizing its units, the challenges inherent to religious accommodation discussed in the IDF case study of balancing uniformity with diversity also apply to the US Army.

To circumvent these challenges, the US Army relies heavily on an internal mediating structure, the Chaplain Corps. The Chaplain Corps is the primary instrument

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[235] Wong, "Negotiating Race," 37-40.

[236] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 44-65.

[237] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 623-626.

[238] Bryan Frederick, Stephen Watts, Matthew Lane, Abby Doll, Ashley L. Rhoades, and Meagan L. Smith, *Understanding the Deterrent Impact of U.S. Overseas Forces* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2533.html.

through which the US Army promotes religious accommodation by expecting its chaplains to serve a multi-faith audience regardless of their religious orientation.[239] This means that unit chaplains have a dual role of acting as a clergy person who performs services appropriate to their own faith group, while simultaneously fulfilling the role of a universal religious leader who can promote faith and spirituality to all soldiers regardless of religion.[240] As part of this ecumenical approach, chaplains learned to adapt their methods of engaging soldiers, even developing the "ministry of presence" to be able to reach out to soldiers of a different faith from theirs.[241]

In this respect, the US Army's experience is vastly different from that of the Indian Army and the IDF. Whereas the Indian Army can designate religious teachers specific to the religion of its homogeneous units, the US Army's mixed units preclude this ability. Conversely, while the IDF has heterogeneous units, its IDF rabbinate is staffed predominantly by Jewish rabbis. With the immense size of the US Army (approximately 485,000 Regular Army personnel), even small proportions of religious minorities translate into significant numbers that warrant chaplains of their faith group to be part of the Chaplain Corps.[242] Coupled with the broad spectrum of the religious

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[239] Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains,* 46.

[240] US Army, "Army Chaplain," accessed April 20, 2022, https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/specialty-careers/chaplain.html.

[241] Naomi K. Paget and Janet R. McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2006), 27. The ministry of presence refers to the chaplain's ability to be present both physically and emotionally with soldiers, giving them an avenue to voice grievances and seek counsel.

[242] Routley, "Mapped: All the World's Military Personnel,"; Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 38-39.

affiliations of soldiers, appointing unit chaplains to represent each of the religions present in a unit would be a logistical nightmare. Hence, the US Army Chaplain Corps occupies a unique space in which its purpose is based upon the guarantee of soldiers' constitutional rights to freedom of religious expression, yet it is meant to carry out that purpose through a broad-based ecumenical approach.[243] In this way, the Chaplain Corps acts as an internal mediating structure for the variety of religions and denominations under its charge.

However, there are inherent limitations with a universal, ecumenical model.[244] As early as World War II, the Chaplain Corps has had to defend its policy that one chaplain can serve all faiths against resistance from leaders of religious communities, soldiers, and even the chaplains themselves.[245] In the present day, the Chaplain Corps has to administer over a military that is even more religiously diverse than that in World War II, especially with a significant rise in the proportions of non-denominational Protestants and "Spiritual but Not Religious" groups, accompanied by declining trends in mainline Protestant groups.[246] In short, the enlisted ranks of the US Army are diversifying faster than the Chaplain Corps can keep up to provide religious support, undermining the merits of the ecumenical approach because of a lack of dedicated, authentic religious accommodation. To mitigate its inability to act as a mediating structure for all the diverse

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[243] Otis, "United States II," 205-206.

[244] Martin L. Cook, "United States I," in *Religion in the Military Worldwide* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 183.

[245] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith,* 44-46.

[246] Melissa Halller, *Forecasting Religious Affiliation in the United States Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation Arroyo Center, 2021), 42-48.

groups of the US Army, the Chaplain Corps could leverage civilian religious organizations as external mediating structures, as in the case of the IDF and the Hesder programs.

Nonetheless, the limitations of the Chaplain Corps to act as a mediating structure in increasing diversity and plurality are mitigated by their ability to galvanize troops on the battlefield and increase disposition to fight. The means through which the Chaplain Corps achieves this will be discussed in the subsequent section, by expanding the analysis of the US Army's reliance on its Chaplain Corps.

Leadership

Though chaplains are not unique to the US Army, the extent to which the US Army employs its Chaplain Corps to enhance combat motivation is unparalleled.[247] In his analysis of "Sacred Leaders," Ron Hassner detailed how the US Army Chaplain Corps was organized to improve combat motivation through a variety of means, ranging from the "provision of religious services to entertainment, counseling, teaching, and fiery battlefield sermons."[248] As a member of the clergy, chaplains had the basic task of religious support which comprised performing religious ceremonies and rituals for confessionally similar soldiers. This already had a positive effect on will to fight, as commanders viewed soldiers who had participated in religious rites as more disciplined, resilient, and unwavering in combat.[249] US Army chaplains also acted as para-

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[247] Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains*, 8-9.

[248] Hassner, *Religion on the Battlefield*, 87-88.

[249] Hassner, "Who? Sacred Leaders and War," 91.

counsellors, with their status as commissioned officers helping them act as accessible

intermediaries between the ranks, further enhanced by the confidentiality with which

chaplains treated the conversations with soldiers.[250] Chaplains were instrumental in

ensuring discipline and morality through lectures and sex education talks, which

increased disposition to fight, particularly when dealing with conscripts by keeping them

out of trouble as military commanders were concerned with the degradation on

operational effectiveness if the men were plagued by vice.[251] Finally, US Army chaplains

employed the pulpit to raise the courage of soldiers by reassuring them of God's presence

and protection as they went into battle; other chaplains even used their sermons to

provide religious sanction of military objectives.[252]

Despite several attempts (beginning with James Madison) to disband the Chaplain

Corps, it has remained a fixture in the US Army because both military leaders and

Congressional representatives have recognized the ability of chaplains to improve troop

motivation, morale, and even advance state socialization goals.[253] Furthermore, even as a

sharply divided Supreme Court deemed in 1963 that Bible reading in public schools was

considered unconstitutional, it agreed that the Chaplain Corps' existence did not violate

the First Amendment but in fact upheld it.[254] The justification that the federal judges

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[250] Hassner, "Who? Sacred Leaders and War," 93.

[251] Ibid., 94.

[252] Hassner, "Who? Sacred Leaders and War.", 95-96.

[253] Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains*, 17.

[254] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 12.

provided was that a "lonely soldier" in a faraway post or frontline would need "pastoral guidance" especially in life-and-death situations, thus requiring chaplains to facilitate the free exercise of religion in these remote and often dangerous locations.[255] In this way, the institutional role of chaplains was cemented within the US Army based on a recognition of their fulfilment of the Free Exercise clause and their contribution to will to fight.

Notably, the ability of US Army chaplains to raise will to fight was not only because of the means employed above, but it was due in large part to the vulnerability they demonstrated on the battlefield.[256] In other words, the willingness of US Army chaplains to enter into a combat zone unarmed in order to "share so far as [they] might in what the troops endured" served to galvanize the will to fight of the soldiers around them.[257] These actions were not taken without significant risk, resulting in the US Army Chaplain Corps having the third highest number of casualties (as a percentage of personnel) in the Army in World War II, after the Air Force and infantry.[258] Yet, in spite of the risk, US Army chaplains demonstrated exceptional bravery throughout America's wars, evidenced by eight chaplains awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.[259] The

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[255] Cook, "United States I," 183.

[256] Hassner, "Who? Sacred Leaders and War," 102-103.

[257] Oswin Creighton, *With the 29th Division in Gallipoli* (New York, NY: Longmans, Green, 1916).

[258] Robert L. Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy 1920-1945* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2004), 141.

[259] Eric Jorgensen, "U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Medal of Honor Recipients," U.S. Army, March 24, 2021, https://www.army.mil/article/244530/u_s_army_chaplain_corps_ medal_of_honor_recipients.

effect that their courage in the face of near-certain death had on their fellow soldiers is

best understood through excerpts from some of the Medal of Honor citations, all taken

from the same US Army webpage listing the Chaplain Corps' Medal of Honor recipients.

Chaplain (Captain) Charles Liteky was serving with the 199th Infantry Brigade in

1967 during the Vietnam War. The record of his courage under fire is as follows:

> Chaplain Liteky was participating in a search and destroy operation when Company A came under intense fire from a battalion size enemy force. Momentarily stunned from the immediate encounter that ensued, the men hugged the ground for cover. Observing two wounded men, Chaplain Liteky moved to within 15 meters of an enemy machinegun position to reach them, placing himself between the enemy and the wounded men. When there was a brief respite in the fighting, he managed to drag them to the relative safety of the landing zone. *Inspired by his courageous actions, the company rallied and began placing a heavy volume of fire upon the enemy's positions*. In a magnificent display of courage and leadership, Chaplain Liteky began moving upright through the enemy fire, administering last rites to the dying and evacuating the wounded. [emphasis added][260]

Similarly, Chaplain (Captain) Emil Kapaun was serving with the 3rd Battalion, 8th

Cavalry Regiment in 1950 during the Korean War when his unit came under attack from

Chinese Communist Forces.

> On 1 November, as Chinese Communist Forces viciously attacked friendly elements, Chaplain Kapaun calmly walked through withering enemy fire in order to provide comfort and medical aid to his comrades and rescue friendly wounded from no-man's land. Though the Americans successfully repelled the assault, they found themselves surrounded by the enemy. Facing annihilation, the able-bodied men were ordered to evacuate. *However, Chaplain Kapaun, fully aware of his certain capture, elected to stay behind with the wounded*.

> Shortly after his capture, Chaplain Kapaun, with complete disregard for his personal safety and unwavering resolve, bravely pushed aside an enemy soldier preparing to execute Sergeant First Class Herbert A. Miller. Not only did Chaplain Kapaun's gallantry save the life of Sergeant Miller, but also *his unparalleled courage and leadership inspired all those present, including those*

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[260] Jorgensen, "U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Medal of Honor Recipients."

who might have otherwise fled in panic, to remain and fight the enemy until captured. [emphasis added][261]

While in captivity, Chaplain Kapaun worked relentlessly to lift the spirits of his fellow prisoners of war (POWs), secretly foraging for food, leading prayer services, and singing hymns spontaneously, leading them to view him as their leader and even savior.[262]

The Medal of Honor recipients represent only the tip of the iceberg of commendations and recognition accorded to chaplains by all ranks for their work in boosting morale and fighting spirit.[263] These statements testify to how the unique vulnerability of chaplains helped their soldiers' disposition to fight. Therefore, the US Army's effective use of sacred leaders to enhance combat motivation underscores the potential positive impact that religion has on will to fight.

Policies

The US Army's policies regarding religious accommodation today are derived from Department of Defense Instruction 1300.17, *Religious Liberty in the Military Services* (dated 1 September 2020), which categorically spells out the maintenance of "mission accomplishment, military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, [and] discipline" as the principal consideration for any accommodation.[264] The same policy also delegates

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[261] Jorgensen, "U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Medal of Honor Recipients."

[262] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith,* 156.

[263] Hassner, "Who? Sacred Leaders and War," 109-110.

[264] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (P&R), Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1300.17*, Religious Liberty in the Military Services* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2020), 4.

authority for approval of religious accommodation requests to the lowest appropriate level of command or supervision, insofar as the requests are consistent with Military Department and Military Service regulations or policies.[265] On the surface, these policy directives suggest that the US Army is very accommodating towards religious practice in the ranks.

In reality, these documents represent the product of a long, ongoing process of negotiating the complicated balance between religious accommodation and military uniformity. The policies regarding religious attire, symbols, and prayer times are tightly controlled in a religiously diverse military like the US, given the need for uniformity in a vast military made up of heterogeneous units.[266] Over the past five decades, pointed disagreements over how constitutional religious practices in the US military are have resulted in legal battles, such as the lawsuits raised by Evangelical Christians and atheists attesting that prayers at mandatory formations are insufficiently religious or overly religious respectively.[267] These and other legal challenges prompted the US Army to cautiously relax some of its restrictions while trumping up the emphasis on readiness, cohesion and discipline as a common denominator.

In recognition of the potential sensitivity of prayer times and worship, Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy,* specifies the authorities of a commander with regard to worship services, in that "worship services, holy days,

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[265] P&R, DoDI 1300.17, 9.

[266] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 11.

[267] MLDC, "Religious Diversity in the U.S. Military," 5-6.

Sabbath and similar religious observance requests will be accommodated to the extent possible, consistent with mission accomplishment."[268] Similarly, FM 7-22 makes broad recommendations to leaders to "facilitate dialogue and flexibility regarding free exercise of spiritual readiness practices," reinforcing the US Army's emphasis on decentralized decision-making to the unit level.[269]

In terms of attire, the US Army updated AR 670-1, *Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia,* in 2017 to allow hijabs, beards, and turbans, settling a decades-long dispute.[270] Accommodations are made for other items of religious apparel to be worn while in uniform as well, except where the items would "interfere with the performance of military duties or the items are not neat and conservative."[271] Interestingly, the uproar among CENTCOM staff over GEN Schwarzkopf's decision to disguise chaplain insignia so as not to offend Arab ally sensitivities during Operation Desert Storm indicated the importance of attire and symbols as a reflection of religious identities, which they felt was a component of disposition to fight.[272]

Finally, in terms of religious dietary requirements, AR 600-20 again places the responsibility of religious accommodation on commanders to "ensure adequate menu

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[268] Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Directorate, 2020), 184.

[269] HQDA, FM 7-22, 10-4.

[270] Stahl, *Enlisting Faith,* 264.

[271] Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Regulation (AR) 670-1, *Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Directorate, 2021), 20.

[272] Wrigley, "The Impact of Religious Belief in the Theater of Operations," 92-93.

planning and operational rations for Soldiers with religious dietary requirements."[273] FM 7-22 reinforces these points, stating that "the Army places a high priority on individual Soldiers' rights to exercise their religion, to include following religious-based dietary practices."[274] Similar to the policy on prayers and rites, authority is delegated to the unit commander level to make exceptions where possible. In addition, centrally produced Meals Ready to Eat that are compatible with Muslim and Jewish dietary laws are available.[275] However, central dining facilities on garrisons still lack a halal/kosher section, hence the religious accommodation of Jewish and Muslim soldiers in the US Army is limited due to their small numbers.[276]

Overall, the US Army's policies are characterized by a comprehensive, centrally determined set of regulations, with considerable latitude granted to the lowest echelon of commanders possible to make exceptions and approve accommodation requests. Although this approach is feasible because the US Army is all-volunteer, there is a risk that the burden of accommodation is disproportionately weighed on lower levels of command who might not have the requisite background in comparative religions to make a qualified decision.[277]

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[273] HQDA, AR 600-20, 183.

[274] HQDA, FM 7-22, 10-5.

[275] Defense Logistics Agency, "Meal, Religious, Kosher/Halal," DLA Troop Support Subsistence, accessed April 30, 2022, https://www.dla.mil/TroopSupport/ Subsistence/Operational-rations/relkoshhal/.

[276] Rosman-Stollman, "Mediating Structures and the Military," 625.

[277] MLDC, "Religious Diversity in the U.S. Military," 5-6.

Vietnam War (1965-1975)

In contrast to the US Army's record of high will to fight, its long-drawn participation in the Vietnam War represented a nadir in its will to fight. As one commentator noted, the "morale, discipline and battle worthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States."[278] The protracted conflict sapped the American military and American nation's commitment to a war that had constantly shifting objectives, whereas the will to fight of the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was strong.[279] Vietnamese general Vo Nguyen Giap stated, "Our intention was to break the will of the American Government to continue the war … In war there are the two factors—human beings and weapons. Ultimately, though, human beings are the decisive factor. Human beings! Human beings!"[280] Although the failure of the American enterprise in Vietnam has been thoroughly debated, one aspect that is worth highlighting for the purpose of the study is the religious dimension of the conflict.

Having established how effective the US Army's chaplains are at raising combat motivation, where were they in the jungles of Vietnam? As it turns out, the highly politicized nature of the war and the fallout from the atrocities committed made many

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[278] Col. Robert D. Heinl Jr., "The Collapse of the Armed Forces," *Armed Forces Journal* (June 1971), https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/Vietnam/heinl.html.

[279] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units,* 20.

[280] Stanley Karnow, "Giap Remembers," *New York Times*, June 24, 1990, https://www.nytimes.com/1990/06/24/magazine/giap-remembers.html.

Christian denominations and communities question the morality of the war.[281] As a sign

of protest, many of the mainline Protestant churches withdrew their nominations to the

chaplaincy, limiting the supply of sacred leaders to the frontlines.[282]

It is within this context then, that the American soldier, pulled from the streets and

sent to the jungles to fight a war against a people he had no quarrel with and for a

government he increasingly did not trust, had no recourse to the religious support he once

had in World War II and even the Korean War.[283] Though it would be contentious to

suggest that America's failure in the Vietnam War was attributed to a shortage of

chaplains, it is reasonable to conclude that the vacuum left by the objecting chaplains had

some part to play in producing a dispirited, ill-disciplined, and ultimately defeated

American forces.[284]

It is instructive that just as the US Army underwent a transformation after the

Vietnam War with the transition to the all-volunteer force, its Chaplain Corps similarly

regrouped and reorganized in order to better serve its constituents.[285] The gap left by the

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[281] Jacqueline Earline Whitt, "Conflict and Compromise: American Military Chaplains and the Vietnam War," (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 2008), 184.

[282] Anne C. Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military, 1942-1993* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

[283] Ronit Y. Stahl, "Moral Objection and Religious Obligation," in *Enlisting Faith* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 196–225.

[284] John Donellan Fitzmorris III, "Bearing the 'Double Burden': Chaplains in Combat during the Vietnam War," (Ph.D. diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2016), 98-101.

[285] Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1993), 24-25.

mainline Protestant churches were filled by growing numbers of Evangelical chaplains, who later accounted for much of the religious revival within the Chaplain Corps from the 1990s onwards.[286] This paved the way for the religious support that returned to the frontlines in future conflicts such as Operation Desert Storm.[287]

Summary

The US Army's experience in employing religion to foster will to fight in a large and religiously diverse military has proven successful. Although its units are not religiously homogeneous, the US Army relies heavily on its Chaplain Corps as sacred leaders who advocate for the needs of religious minorities, instill discipline and morality in the ranks, and inspire courage in their soldiers by putting their lives at risk at the frontlines. The US Army has also demonstrated a cautious flexibility in its policies of religious accommodation, delegating authority to lower echelon commanders for the majority of requests for accommodation, but retaining the authority to deliberate on exceptions to policy at the highest levels of command.

This model supports the religiously heterogeneous organization of the US Army, and its competing need for uniformity which is particularly important given its immense size and global reach. However, the US Army cannot afford to remain static, as the growing religious diversity of its ranks (including the "Spiritual but Not Religious") requires further adaptation to ensure an enabling religious environment is preserved.

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[286] Anne C. Loveland, *Change and Conflict in the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps since 1945* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2014).

[287] Wrigley, "The Impact of Religious Belief in the Theater of Operations," 88-89.

These adaptations could include initiatives such as cooperating with external religious

organizations to act as mediating structures between religious soldiers and the US Army.

See Table 6.

Table 6.   Summary Table for US Army Case Study

Variable	Sub-component	US Army
Organization	Degree of homogeneity at unit level	- Heterogeneous
	Establishment of mediating structures	+ Pluralist Chaplain Corps
	Overall assessment	/
Leadership	Presence of sacred leaders	+ Well-established Chaplain Corps
	Vulnerability of sacred leaders	+ Distinguished service and sacrifice at the frontlines
	Overall assessment	+
Policies	Degree of accommodation for prayers and rituals	+ Commanders can authorize leave
	Degree of accommodation for attire and bearing	+ Updated AR 670-1
	Degree of accommodation for diet	+ Codified in AR 600-20
	Overall assessment	+

Source: Created by author.

USSR (Soviet Union)

The Soviet Union is incorporated in this analysis as a counterpoint to the earlier

three cases, to demonstrate the potential erosion of will to fight arising from a lack of

religious accommodation. Following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the end of the

Russian Civil War in 1925, the Soviet Union was established with Marxism-Leninism as its worldview.[288] This worldview was fundamentally atheistic and held a derogatory view of religion as an obstacle to overcoming unjust socio-economic relations, as well as an ideological and organizational threat to the regime.[289]

Hence, successive Soviet regimes practiced a religious policy of persecution, in which religious organizations were at best suppressed and at worst brutally targeted.[290] This persecution continued despite the fact that the Soviet Union was ethnically and religiously diverse, with the first complete census in 1926 recording 188 ethnic categories and large communities of adherents of major religions such as Christianity (including Protestantism and Catholicism), Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.[291] Although the religious persecution varied with the changes in Soviet leadership between punitive and lenient extremes, the common factor of hostility towards religion persisted from World War II

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[288] Olle Sundström and Andrej Kotljarchuk, eds., *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union: New Dimensions of Research* (Stockholm: Elanders, 2017), 17.

[289] Sundström and Kotljarchuk, *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union*, 18; J. M. Kelly, "Searching for Spiritual Security: The Tangled Relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian State and Religious Freedom," *University of Miami International and Comparative Law Review* 25, no. 2 (2018): 272-274.

[290] Kelly, "Searching for Spiritual Security," 274-275; Robert Weinberg, "Demonizing Judaism in the Soviet Union during the 1920s," *Slavic Review* 67, no. 1 (2008): 120–153.

[291] Sundström and Kotljarchuk, *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union,* 21.

onwards through the Cold War until the fall of Communism and the subsequent

dissolution of the Soviet Union beginning in 1991.[292]

During the same time period, the Soviet Armed Forces was one of the largest and

most technologically advanced militaries in the world, and was a key instrument of the

Soviet regime in its strategic competition with the US.[293] The ground forces component

of the Soviet Armed Forces, the Soviet Army, was a behemoth, numbering three to five

million personnel during the period of the Cold War.[294] However, it was also inherently

fragile, as it was built on conscription which brought the diverse groups of the Soviet

Union into the rank and file. Despite its diversity, the Soviet Army adhered strictly to the

authoritarian, atheistic bent of the Soviet regime, leading to an under-representation of

ethnic (and therefore religious) minorities in the Soviet military and the suppression of

religious expression, including even the Russian Orthodox Church.[295]

The cracks within the Soviet Army were most evident in the misadventure of the

Soviet-Afghan War from 1979 to 1989, indicating the culmination of a gradual erosion of

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[292] *Religious Persecution in the Soviet Union (Part II): Hearing before the Subcommittees on Europe and the Middle East and on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,* 99th Cong., 2nd sess., (July 30, 1986).

[293] Harriet Fast Scott and William Fontaine Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 142.

[294] William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 39.

[295] Wong, "Negotiating Race."

the Army's will to fight.[296] In spite of their numerical and technological superiority, the

Soviet 40th Army was defeated by lightly armed Afghan *mujahideen.* By denying the

Soviets the "high-tempo, high-speed, mechanized warfare" that they hoped to employ,

the *mujahideen* had forced the Soviet behemoth into a long conflict in which will to fight

was decisive—as Brigadier General (Ret) Mataxis records, "In the end, the *mujahideen*

national will was stronger than that of the Soviet leadership, and the Soviet Army

withdrew."[297] This observation was corroborated by Les Grau's record of abysmal

morale at the tactical level as follows:

> The conscript's morale was not great when he was drafted. At the training centers, conscripts were told that they were going to fight Chinese and American mercenaries. When they got to Afghanistan, they soon discovered that they were unwelcome occupiers in a hostile land. Morale further plummeted at this realization.[298]

The negative impact on the military's will to fight had wider implications, as the

disillusionment of the 40th Army's soldiers with the Soviet system cascaded to the rest of

Soviet society on their return home, proving the final straw in the eventual collapse of the

Soviet Union.[299] The next sections will elaborate how the removal of religion from the

military contributed to the Soviet Army's lack of will to fight, and also highlight unique

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[296] Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan.* (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

[297] The Russian General Staff, *The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost*, ed. Lester W. Grau and Michael A. Gress (University Press of Kansas, 2002), xiv-xv.

[298] Ibid., 313.

[299] Ibid., xxv.

instances in which religion was permitted, corresponding with higher levels of will to fight.

Organization and Policies

Throughout World War II and the Cold War, the Soviet Army did not use organizational means nor the introduction of policies to accommodate religion. The only considerations in unit organization that were distantly related to religious affiliation was ethnicity.[300] The Soviet authorities maintained that Slavs, the majority race in the Soviet Union, were superior fighters and thus constituted the "Slavic backbone" of the Soviet Army, a view which denigrated the contributions of ethnic minorities.[301] Furthermore, as the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was under continuous persecution, its influence with the Soviet Army was strictly curtailed.[302] Hence, any religiously observant soldiers in the Soviet Army, if they existed, had no recourse to external organizations to act as mediating structures. No religious accommodations were codified in policies for any religions, neither the majority Russian Orthodox religion nor minority faiths.[303]

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[300] Alexander Alexiev and Enders Wimbush, *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 121, 153.

[301] Daniel Bradfield, "Comrades In Arms? : Russian & Muslim Soldiers In The Red Army During World War II," (Master's Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2016), 78.

[302] Sundström and Kotljarchuk, *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union,* 17.

[303] Bradfield, "Comrades In Arms?," 66.

Leadership

Although the Soviet Army did not employ any religious leaders as chaplains, it relied heavily on political commissars to foster the will to fight of its units, with the commissars being "responsible for matters such as morale, motivation, combat readiness, discipline, political socialization and so on."[304] Commissars were assigned down to the company level while reporting to GlavPUR, the Soviet military's secular equivalent of the Chaplain Corps—with the key difference being that commissars were expected to preach a "religion" of Marxist-Leninist dogma.[305] However, the political commissars were only as effective as Communism was in promoting will to fight. As greater numbers of soldiers grew disillusioned with the disparity between promise and reality, the commissars were increasingly unable to invoke Communism as a "sacred cause" to rally soldiers around.[306]

The inefficacy of the commissars to inspire will to fight was exacerbated by their lack of vulnerability. While US Army chaplains distinguished themselves by valor and sacrifice at the frontlines, the Soviet Army's political commissars enjoyed privileges that were more than that accorded to the rank and file, belying a hypocrisy between the Soviet ideology they preached and the life that they lived.[307] Their lack of identification with the

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[304] Herspring, *Soldiers, Commissars, and Chaplains,* 161-162.

[305] Ray C. Finch, "Ensuring the Political Loyalty of the Russian Soldier," *Military Review* (July-August 2020): 54-55, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/July-August-2020/Finch-Russian-Political-Loyalty/.

[306] Ibid., 57.

[307] Ibid., 55-57.

lived experience of the soldiers facing combat undermined their ability to motivate the

troops, leading them to be alienated and disrespected.[308]

World War II

Despite the hostile environment towards religious observance, World War II was

a noteworthy instance during which the Soviet Army softened its stance on religion to

foster greater will to fight. To the Soviet Union, World War II, or the Great Patriotic War

in Russian terms, represented the pinnacle of Soviet will to fight, as an exhausted,

beleaguered Soviet defense was able to repel superior Nazi German forces and ultimately

gain momentum to counter-attack into Germany.[309] The period coincided with a

relaxation of the persecution that Stalin's regime had wrought on the ROC, partly

because Stalin saw the value of faith in rallying the will of the soldiers and the Soviet

people, and also partly because he was concerned about how the Germans could

potentially incite Orthodox clergy of the Soviet Republics to act as a "fifth column."[310]

In response, the ROC clergy not only inspired the people to greater courage

through sermons in support of the "defense of the sacred borders of our Motherland," but

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[308] Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*.

[309] Connable et al., *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War,* 4.

[310] Oleg Yegorov, "Why Did Stalin Rehabilitate the Russian Orthodox Church?," Russia Beyond, December 4, 2019, https://www.rbth.com/history/331371-stalin-orthodox-church.

organized fundraising efforts for tank columns, air squadrons, and other defense needs.[311]

Similar to how US Army chaplains accompanied their units into battle, ROC clergymen

released from the *gulags* joined units at the frontlines and many were awarded

commendations in recognition of their bravery.[312] Other priests in the Nazi-occupied

territories joined the underground detachments, where they not only provided religious

support services, but even participated in operations themselves.[313]

   In particular, an anecdote in a recent article from the typically agnostic military

weekly *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, shows how "faith helped fighters in the most

hopeless situations."[314] The Soviet Army successfully invaded Konigsberg (Kaliningrad)

in April 1945, although it was heavily defended by the Nazis. One account of the Nazi

surrender attributes it to a "religious procession moving along the front line" that made

the Nazis "suddenly drop their weapons and … run away," ostensibly because their

weapons ceased to function.[315] Though the veracity of the story cannot be confirmed, it

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[311] Boris Egorov, "How the Russian Orthodox Church Helped the Red Army Defeat the Nazis," Russia Beyond, March 29, 2021, https://www.rbth.com/history/333593-how-russian-orthodox-church-helped.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Egorov, "How the Russian Orthodox Church Helped the Red Army Defeat the Nazis."

[314] Quote from *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* cited in Ray C. Finch, "Faith and Russian Military Victory," *OE Watch: Foreign News and Perspectives of the Operational Environment* 10, no. 6 (2020): 4, https://community.apan.org/cfs-file/__key/telligent-evolution-components-attachments/13-14882-00-00-00-33-66-32/OE-Watch_2C00_-Vol-10_2C00_-Issue-06-Jun-2020.pdf?forcedownload=true.

[315] Ibid.

demonstrated how an avowedly atheistic military valued religion in the most desperate moments when will to fight was decisive.

Summary

The Soviet Army represents the danger of taking secularism in militaries to the extreme. Despite being a multi-religious military, the Soviet Army adopted a militant attitude towards religion, and did not organize its units with any consideration for religious affiliations nor did it introduce policies that facilitated religious accommodation. The Soviet Army had no religious sacred leaders but relied heavily on political commissars for unit cohesion which ultimately backfired as soldiers became increasingly disillusioned with Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Ironically, the military victory most glorified by the Soviet regime for its representation of the strength of the people's will was the Great Patriotic War, which corresponded with a relaxation of the religious persecution that the regime had been exacting on the ROC. The Soviet Army's experience thus serves as a cautionary tale to militaries that inadvertently excise religion from the ranks, but also demonstrates that even under the most secular conditions, religion still had a role in building will to fight. See Table 7.

Table 7.   Summary Table for Soviet Army Case Study

Variable	Sub-component	Soviet Army
Organization	Degree of homogeneity at unit level	- Heterogeneous
	Establishment of mediating structures	- Persecuted ROC
	Overall assessment	-
Leadership	Presence of sacred leaders	- No religious leaders
	Vulnerability of sacred leaders	- Hypocritical commissars
	Overall assessment	-
Policies	Degree of accommodation for prayers and rituals	- Militant atheistic policy towards religion in any public institution
	Degree of accommodation for attire and bearing	
	Degree of accommodation for diet	
	Overall assessment	-

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the analysis of how four different armies (Indian Army,

the IDF, the US Army, and the Soviet Army) employed the variables of Organization,

Leadership, and Policies to manage religious diversity among the ranks. The researcher

found that the armies which fostered an enabling religious environment were generally

characterized by a high will to fight in most military engagements in the last five decades

of the twentieth century; the one military (Soviet Army) that repressed religious

expression suffered low will to fight. Each case study also discussed a counterexample in

which religion briefly worked against will to fight but subsequently recovered, except for

the Soviet Army in which will to fight was improved during a brief period of religious

accommodation in World War II. See Table 8.

Table 8.   Summary of Data Analysis

Variable	India (1947–Present)	Israel (1948–Present)	US (1941–Present)	USSR (1939–1991)
Organization	+	/	/	-
Leadership	+	+	+	-
Policies	+	+	+	-
Analysis	Most enabling religious environment, built on homogeneous units	Accommodation of Orthodox Jews hampered by fixation on "people's army" policy.	Heavy reliance on pluralistic Chaplain Corps, which is challenged by rapidly increasing diversity.	Militant atheistic approach in all variables, ultimately contributing to low will to fight.

Source: Created by author.

The research also found that the different armies applied varying blends of

organizational, leadership, and policy variables in accordance with the unique context

that each military operated in. These included the role religion played in the wider

society; whether the military was conscript or volunteer; and whether the military was

raised primarily for self-defense or conducted its missions overseas. The results of the

analysis and these additional observations will be discussed in the final chapter, in answer

of the primary and secondary research questions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the heart of this study was the question of whether faith makes a force better at fighting. The tendency towards increasing secularization, or at least the perception that secularity is necessary, has been used by states to manage increasing plurality within the ranks of incoming soldiers, either through conscription or as volunteers. At one level, this can give rise to the problem of discontentment among religious masses within the military forces towards their secular leadership. Militaries, as microcosms of the societies they serve, grapple with the same issues too. But is the problem as acute for militaries, and what do they stand to lose by continuing to ride the wave of secularism? This thesis argues precisely that the implications are more far-reaching than just the risk of discontent. Militaries are built upon cohesive units. Any lack of religious accommodation has a more pronounced effect within militaries as divides within the ranks undermine cohesion and erode combat power. Conversely, militaries miss out on a potential multiplier of combat power in failing to harness the beneficial effects of religious practice on will to fight, given that robust religious practice bears a close affinity with sub-components of will to fight such as ideology (commitment to a cause or belief system) and identity. At the same time, this study recognized that militaries face real, difficult challenges when trying to accommodate religion.

If religion has a beneficial impact on will to fight, then why are militaries generally reluctant to introduce means of accommodation? Militaries are hierarchical, dominant organizations that demand compliance and conformity from its members, and religion is perceived, often with valid concerns, as a threat to this structure. Furthermore,

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religion is often compartmentalized as just a variable contributing to the threat level in the operational environment, without consideration for the intrinsic effect it has on one's own troops given the lack of available scholarship explicating these effects. In light of these challenges, militaries find it more expedient to avoid the issue of religious accommodation and instead foster secular environments that are inimical to religious practice.

This presents secular militaries with a dilemma: accommodate religion and run the risk of religious fervor stoking insubordination, or excise religion altogether and risk an erosion of will to fight. This thesis sought to establish a *via media* between the two poles and demonstrate that it is possible for militaries to strike the right balance. From this motive arose the primary research question of examining *how* militaries could create conditions and employ levers to foster an enabling religious environment, i.e., ""How can secular militaries harness the relationship between will to fight and the religion of individual soldiers as a force multiplier to improve combat readiness?"

This primary research question was supported by three secondary research questions, aimed at helping secular militaries reconcile the competing tensions of plurality, accommodation, and military obedience. The literature review provided a theoretical lens of Organization, Leadership, and Policies with which to understand what constituted an enabling religious environment (or the lack thereof) in each case. Case study analyses of the armies of India, Israel, US, and USSR viewed these militaries through this theoretical lens, yielding an over-arching conclusion: secular militaries *can* and *should* encourage religious expression among the rank and file to maintain or even improve will to fight. The next two sections elaborate on both parts of that conclusion

respectively; the first section examining the relationship between organizational, leadership, and policy variables (*can*), and the second section exploring the relationship between religion and will to fight at the individual, unit, and organizational levels (*should*). The final section will round off the thesis with suggestions for future research and concluding thoughts.

<div align="center">How can secular militaries create an enabling religious environment?</div>

The case study analyses in Chapter 4 examined militaries that were secular for various reasons: the Indian Army and the US Army due to constitutional obligations enshrined in the governance of a multi-religious population; the IDF due to Judaism's dual functions as a theological religion and as a national identity being interwoven and inextricable; and the Soviet Army due to the USSR's founding Marxist-Leninist ideological tenets. Yet, these militaries (less USSR) represented cases in which they harnessed religion as part of will to fight. All of them had varying approaches to religious accommodation, and they employed different combinations of the three variables thus producing varying outcomes.

Hence, despite the reluctance of secular militaries to create enabling religious environments, this section shows that by answering the primary research question of "how," it suggests that secular militaries actually "can" strike a balance between too much and too little religion in the ranks. This naturally flows into answering the second and third SRQs, which are "What conditions can secular militaries set to foster the practice of religion while remaining secular?" and "How can secular militaries be pluralistic without limiting the practice of religion in the ranks?" The answer to the primary research question and these two SRQs is in the affirmative, in that secular

militaries *can* create an enabling religious environment while remaining secular and pluralistic, by employing a combination of organizational, leadership, and policy levers in line with the operational context that the military is situated in. The following paragraphs discuss the interplay between the three variables and suggest possible combinations that secular militaries can adopt.

Among the three variables, Organization was found to produce the greatest effect, and served as a foundation for the other two variables to be employed with greater facility. The Indian Army demonstrated this example best. By raising "single-class" and "fixed-class" units, it introduced significant degrees of religious homogeneity into its ranks and facilitated the religious accommodation through leadership (assigning religious teachers of the same faith as that of the unit) and policies (commanders can take a uniform approach to the majority religion within the unit). At the same time, the example of homogeneous units cannot be replicated across all militaries, as in the case of the IDF and the US Army which maintained heterogeneous units for reasons of nation-building and operational flexibility. Nonetheless, the Indian Army's experience reveals that religious affiliation should be one of the considerations militaries factor in as part of designing their force structure under their manpower policies, both at the point of recruitment and in operational units.

As an alternative, secular militaries can employ the Organization variable to great effect by either creating internal organizations or cooperating with external organizations to act as mediating structures that help to represent the religious needs of minorities. This is an important mechanism to deal with plurality, which was present in the IDF (Hesder program), the US Army (the Chaplain Corps), and even in the Indian Army (the secular

officer corps). A suggestion therefore is for secular militaries that cannot have homogeneously organized units to invest instead in mediating structures.

The case studies also showed that the Leadership variable significantly contributed to building an enabling religious environment, as sacred leaders within the military hierarchy were a visible representation of the interaction between religion and military life. From the religious teachers recruited in the Indian Army, to the rabbis of the IDF rabbinate, to the chaplains of the US Army Chaplain Corps, all of the sacred leaders served the common purpose of religious instruction and religious support.

Furthermore, within the realm of improving will to fight, these religious leaders had an additional effect that went beyond the provision of religious services. Through their sermons, their accessibility, and simply their presence, these ministers increased morale among the troops, leading to improved performance in battles; even the Soviet Army, by relaxing its persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church, saw a surge of combat motivation in World War II after Russian Orthodox priests were allowed among the ranks again. More importantly, these sacred leaders had the greatest effect on will to fight when they were most vulnerable, placing themselves in the thick of battle alongside the soldiers they were ministering to. Conversely, once sacred leaders failed to be present with the troops when the threat was most imminent, they had a counter-productive effect on morale, as seen in the resentment towards the political commissars of the Soviet regime.

Finally, Policies act as a complementary variable as its effectiveness is closely tied to how a secular military employs the Organization and the Leadership variables. Indeed, militaries rarely formulate policies in a vacuum, as it would be difficult for a

military to enact policies encouraging maximum freedom of religious expression but without the supporting organizational considerations nor sacred leader structures. Yet, policies are important because soldiers live in a world of rules and regulations that go towards ensuring uniformity and discipline. Therefore, policies are a visible manifestation of a military's approach towards religious accommodation, thus forming the final mechanism through which militaries can create an enabling religious environment.

It is worth noting that a secular military can vary its emphasis on each of the three variables to produce its desired outcome, as seen in how each of the cases employed different permutations of the variables. However, the variables all interact to form an overall environment of religious accommodation (or lack thereof), forming a type of "three-legged stool" in which no single leg should be disproportionately shorter or longer than the others. In other words, for a secular military to produce the best outcomes in religious accommodation, it should strive to achieve a good balance between the different variables. As an example, the US Army could overcome the limitations faced by a pluralistic Chaplain Corps in dealing with an increasingly diverse group of religiously unaffiliated soldiers by co-opting civilian religious groups as external mediating structures, while maintaining its heterogeneous approach to the organization of units and sustaining its emphasis on the Chaplain Corps' ministry of presence at the frontlines.

<u>Should secular militaries create an enabling religious environment?</u>

At the close of this study, it is important to return to the deeper question underpinning it: *should* militaries be using these three variables to foster an enabling religious environment? Restated another way, this section seeks to answer the first SRQ:

"What is the relationship between will to fight and the practice of religion in the ranks?" RAND's organizational will to fight model provided a theoretical basis to understand the relationship between religion and will to fight. A closer examination of the four cases has illuminated finer-grained insights into that relationship, demonstrating that the practice of religion in the ranks has a positive impact on will to fight, and is manifest at the individual, unit, and institutional levels.

At the individual level, religious expression improves will to fight by giving a sense of purpose and hope. When confronted with the possibility of death in combat, soldiers who turn to faith likely do so because they believe that a divine power is in control of the outcome. Providing a soldier with the opportunity to pray and observe religious practices allows him to exercise his belief in the divine power's ability to preserve him from death, or at the very least guarantee an afterlife.

Even the atheistic Soviet regime recognized the human desire for transcendence that the Marxist-Leninist ideology was unable to provide in the face of dire circumstances during World War II. Hence, Stalin relieved the restraints on the Russian Orthodox Church, due in large part to the Soviet regime's desperation to use all means possible to inspire the Russian people to continue fighting. Similarly, the exemplary courage of individual US Army chaplains who entered combat zones unarmed inspired their fellow troops to believe that God was with them even in the face of imminent danger. Even though this study does not venture to answer whether the divine power soldiers were entreating was indeed responsible for whether they lived or died, the important takeaway is that their religious belief itself was sufficient to raise their will to fight.

At the unit level, religion improves the disposition to fight by enhancing the cohesiveness of the unit. This was evident in the Indian Army's homogeneous units, which were brought together by mandir parades, collective prayers, and even battle cries invoking the intercession of their unit deities. The veneration of unit deities was almost synonymous with the regiment's pride and identity. As the unit took part in religious rites together, they solidified their commitment to each other, improving the disposition to fight. However, these observations do not mean that religion is the most important contributor to will to fight. The operational successes of the Indian Army were due also to good leadership and discipline enforced by strong organizational control through the officer corps. These components of will to fight cannot be substituted by religion alone.

At the institutional level, religious accommodation enhances will to fight by improving the trust and credibility of the military organization as a whole. If done successfully, religious accommodation of potentially disaffected minorities can lead to their greater commitment to the military institution. This was observed in the IDF's drive to make military service attractive to the ultra-Orthodox Jews by enforcing policies that facilitated observance of *halakhic* law and cooperating with civilian institutions such as the Hesder programs. Gradually, the IDF's efforts encouraged increasing numbers of Haredi soldiers to enlist, and kept not only these conscripts, but the wider ultra-Orthodox religious community committed to the IDF's purpose despite controversial operations like the disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005. Although the IDF still has some way to go in fully accommodating the ultra-Orthodox Jews and the other religious minorities (Druze, Christians, Circassians, etc), its ability to project itself as a trusted organization to the ultra-Orthodox community is a promising start.

Although this thesis has demonstrated why secular militaries should foster an enabling religious environment, it also registers a note of caution to avoid viewing religion as a silver bullet in building will to fight. If secular militaries veer to the other extreme of aggressively promoting (one) religion for the ostensible reason of enhancing combat motivation, then the danger is the promotion of a single dominant belief system to the exclusion of all others, which would ultimately be just a religious variant of the secularist worldview so prevalent today.

This is best demonstrated in present-day events. As an epilogue to the Soviet Army case study, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a brief resurgence of religion in post-Soviet Russia.[316] After a brief flowering of different faiths in the 1990s, the Russian government began a process of reinstalling the Russian Orthodox faith as the de facto state religion.[317] Under Putin, this process has accelerated, with visible developments such as the construction of the vast Cathedral of the Armed Forces that opened in June 2020 to commemorate Russia's military victories, the most notable (and controversial) of which was the Great Patriotic War. The monument's construction represented how Russia has recast its history in patriotic rather than communist tones and

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[316] Jerry Pankhurst, "Religious Culture : Faith in Soviet and Post-Soviet," ed. Dmitri N. Shalin, Center for Democratic Culture, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2012, 2-4, https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/russian_culture/7/.

[317] Kirill A. Tsekanovskiy, "Military Clergy in the Modern Armed Forces of the Russian Federation," (Masters Thesis, University of Washington, 2013).

blended a "post-Soviet civil religion" in to ensure the narrative resonated with the people.[318]

While this supports the argument that religion can improve cohesion and commitment, the danger is that it is but a variant of secularism, imposed from the top down to crowd out any other competing narrative, and can potentially work against will to fight in ways that a dominant secularist narrative similarly would.[319] Although the efficacy of this state-sponsored religion in inspiring will to fight in the Russian Army has yet to be tested, it is interesting to note that recent accounts of poor Russian Army will to fight in its invasion of Ukraine are juxtaposed against high Ukrainian will to fight.[320] What is even more telling is that Ukraine is a religiously pluralistic country, which largely employed the variables of Organization, Leadership, and Policies to foster religious expression of the various faiths represented in its armed forces.[321]

It appears that the Ukrainian Army's model of promoting an enabling religious environment contributed to its victories over the monolithically religious Russian Army.

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[318] Shaun Walker, "Angels and Artillery: A Cathedral to Russia's New National Identity," *The Guardian*, October 20, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/20/orthodox-cathedral-of-the-armed-force-russian-national-identity-military-disneyland.

[319] Finch, "Ensuring the Political Loyalty of the Russian Soldier," 52.

[320] Jim Garamone, "Russian Forces Invading Ukraine Suffer Low Morale," *DoD News*, March 23, 2022, https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2975508/russian-forces-invading-ukraine-suffer-low-morale/.

[321] Karpov, "Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework," 257. Karpov characterized Ukraine as a "pluralistic, inclusive, and liberal regime that leaves a considerable amount of decision-making and control in the hands of secular authorities which use secular ideologies to legitimate their policies aimed at desecularizing a limited number of social institutions and cultural domains."

Although it is too early to confirm such an observation given that the war is in progress at the time of writing, the developments in the Russia-Ukraine conflict would still be an excellent source of analysis to understand religion's importance to both parties.[322] At the very least, current events in Ukraine and the Russian Army's performance provide a cautionary tale to secular militaries who might seek to harness religion's effects on will to fight but do so in an exclusionary model, by instituting a state "religion."

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

Although this study addressed several case studies at length, it merely scratched the surface of understanding religion's potential as a force multiplier within secular militaries. Significantly, the relationship between religion and will to fight can be examined in greater detail through quantitative means. Future research can build on the variables identified from this qualitative study and generate metrics to measure religion's influence on will to fight.

Future research can also build on this study by expanding the aperture of which militaries and which religions are examined. As this study focused exclusively on secular and religiously diverse countries, subsequent studies could apply the same variables and tease out the influence of religion on will to fight in religiously homogeneous militaries such as the Iranian Republican Guard, the Pakistani Army, and the militaries in predominantly Catholic Latin America. While this study assumed that religions in general

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[322] Knox Thames, "Putin Is after More than Land—He Wants the Religious Soul of Ukraine," *RNS: Religion News Service*, February 24, 2022, https://religionnews.com/2022/02/24/putin-is-after-more-than-land-he-wants-the-religious-soul-of-ukraine/. Interestingly, demands for greater alignment of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the Russian Orthodox Church are one of the points of dispute in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

had a positive influence on will to fight, future sociological research could determine the degree to which different religions contributed to will to fight among militaries, and thus serve to enrich a military's understanding of both its adversaries and its allies who are likely to profess different faiths. Finally, by developing a more quantitatively rigorous model of measuring religion's impact on will to fight, more accurate estimates can be made about the levels of will to fight in large, technologically advanced, but ostensibly areligious militaries like that of China.

In conclusion, this thesis set out to demonstrate that jumping on the secularization bandwagon could be detrimental for militaries. In the process, it found that religion still has a role to play in militaries and in the world. Having understood that what happens in society resonates in militaries, perhaps the reverse is true as well. Indeed, the demoralizing effects of the Soviet 40th Army's performance in Afghanistan caused ripples which eventually gathered into a tsunami of popular discontent that toppled the Soviet Union. Hence, rather than being a passive recipient of secularizing forces from the state, militaries could take the lead in fostering religious accommodation while remaining secular, thus setting the example for the rest of society to follow.

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