Clerical Persuasion and Religious Extremism:

An Experiment among Sunni and Shia Muslims in Northern India

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September 27, 2017

Abstract

How does an anti-violence religious message by a cleric affect extremism? Do such appeals work differently across groups? I argue that exposure to such an appeal from an in-group cleric reduces extremism for members of a non-victimized group but not for members of a victimized group. The latter retain extremism to guard against anticipated threats. I present evidence from an audio recording experiment among 2,100 Sunni and Shia young adult men in Lucknow, the Indian city where sectarian violence is highest and the Shia perceive themselves as victimized. I randomly assigned subjects to listen to an anti-violence religious argument from either an in-group cleric; out-group cleric; both; or none. Results show that the in-group message significantly reduces extremist behaviors up to 8 hours later for Sunni but not Shia subjects. Additional analyses and qualitative research emphasize the plausibility of the victimization logic. Furthermore, the out-group message and the interaction do not significantly change behavior for either group. I argue that intergroup inequalities matter for understanding the effectiveness of elite persuasion and discuss policy implications.

1. Introduction

Religious extremists around the world use scripture to justify and mobilize violence. Pro-peace clerics counter extremism with religious arguments of their own. After the formation of the Islamic State group, for instance, the *New York Times* described the scale of anti-violence appeals by Muslim clerics as tantamount to a "theological battle" against extremists (Times 2016). In Sri Lanka, the Sarvodaya organization and related groups use Buddhist scripture to refute militant interpretations of that faith (Bond 1992, 261). And in the riot-hit city of Jos in northern Nigeria, Christian clerics promote peace to youth with reference to biblical teachings and norms (Nozell and Hayward 2014).

There is little evidence whether such religious persuasion actually works. In interviews that I conducted, officials from governments and inter-governmental organizations emphasized that effective policy and progamming is hampered by a dearth of scientific evidence. Since many counter-extremism programs rely on clerics to promote peace, the demand for evidence on approaches related to religion is particularly high. [1]

For political scientists, this policy gap reflects an important research question: how do ethnic elites affect extremist behavior? In addition to incentives and forced recruitment, prominent models of ethnic conflict claim that elites employ persuasion to shape their followers' extremism as part of the production of conflict (Wilkinson 2006; Kaufman 2006*b*; Varshney 2003). Yet these accounts largely assume that elite persuasion works. The question of whether, how, and to what extent elite persuasion shapes extremist behavior receives little attention in the literature. A related gap is whether such appeals work differently within the groups in conflict.

I report the results of one of the first experimental investigations on how elite persuasion affects extremist behaviors. For ethical and security considerations, I look at persuasion away from extremism. My study examines the case of extremism among Sunni and Shia Muslims in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state. Lucknow is home to higher levels of Sunni-Shia violence than any other Indian city.

I implemented an audio recording experiment among a random sample of 2,100 Sunni and Shia young adult men. The sample was recruited and treated on small side streets in the Old City district, where nearly all of the city's sectarian violence occurs. I convinced a real, local Sunni and Shia cleric to record detailed religious arguments against violence for study purposes. The experimental design mimicked a common feature in religious conflicts: individuals are exposed to pro-peace messages by in-group and out-group clerics. Therefore, I randomly assigned subjects

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[1]Multiple interviews with officials at the Hedayah Institute, Abu Dhabi, UAE, December 2015; U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials, May 2015.

to listen to either the in-group cleric message (5 minutes); out-group cleric message (5 minutes), both, with order randomized (10 minutes); or neither. Enumerators used headphones to deliver the recordings, which were preloaded on their mobile phones. In order to obtain a relatively hard test of pro-peace appeals, I timed the experiment to begin a few days after the end of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar when sectarian violence in Lucknow—and many parts of the Muslim world—is highest.

Two face-to-face endline surveys eight hours apart measured proxies of extremist behaviors. The measures capture a relatively costly expression of extremism while posing minimal risks to subjects and research staff. The first measure was taken immediately following treatment: enumerators offered for purchase (at a small cost) a pro-peace wristband stating "Sunni-Shia" unity in Urdu. Approximately eight hours later, a different enumerator re-contacted subjects by phone to arrange a second in-person interview. The second behavioral item was measured unobtrusively: enumerators recorded if subjects wore the wristband at the follow-up interview. The third item measured violent speech using an open-ended question. Subjects were asked to speak briefly about whether they would take part in collective violence against the outgroup if their group was hypothetically insulted by an outgroup cleric. To analyze pre-specified mechanisms, the survey administered additional questions after the three behavioral measures.

The core finding of this study is that exposure to an anti-violence religious argument from an in-group cleric reduces extremism for members of a non-victimized group (here: the Sunni) but not members of a victimized group (the Shia). Since the latter seek to maintain group survival in the face of anticipated threats, they are expected to retain extremism even when discouraged to do so by one of their religious leaders. Members of a non-victimized group, for their part, do not face a comparable threat and are thus expected to comply with an anti-violence religious appeal by an in-group cleric. I developed this theoretical argument based on qualitative insights from my field research in Lucknow and a previous experimental study that I implemented there (Sharma 2017*b*).

In this study, the experimental results show that the in-group cleric message significantly reduces extremist behavior on all three measures of extremist behavior for Sunni but not Shia subjects. By contrast, the out-group cleric message and the interaction of both messages did not significantly reduce extremist behaviors on any measure for the Sunni or Shia samples. I suggest that the latter two findings can be explained by applying a version of the reactive devaluation hypothesis from political psychology: the out-group cleric's message may not have been effective as it may have raised suspicion or confusion about the intentions of a perceived enemy who issues a friendly gesture.

I took several steps to examine the effect of the in-group cleric message between the Sunni and Shia samples. First, I show that the in-group cleric message works significantly less effectively in reducing extremism among the Shia on each of the three outcome measures. I then explored

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the mechanisms by which the message changed extremist behavior for the Sunni sample. This analysis shows that the in-group message operated not only by increasing concerns of clerical sanctioning for noncompliance, but also by shifting prescriptive norms regarding the permissibility of violence, increasing confidence that the outgroup will punish its own extremists, and reducing personal willingness to punish outgroup extremists.

Lastly, I used additional analyses to examine the plausibility of the proposed victimization logic. It could be the case, for instance, that characteristics other than religious identity might explain the differential effect of the in-group message. To investigate, I regressed a standardized index of the three extremism measures on the treatments interacted with Shia identity. I show that even when including enumerator fixed effects and covariates, the ingroup cleric message works significantly less effectively in reducing extremism for Shia subjects. I then probed whether this pattern remains statistically significant even when accounting for interactions of the treatment with each other covariate. The result is that the in-group message also elicits a differential effect between unemployed and employed subjects but that the difference in effects of the message between sects remains significant ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that there is an economic component to the differential effect of the in-group message but also a religious component. No such pattern obtains for the other covariates.

This study offers three main contributions to political science and policy. First, whereas past work on persuasion has focused on attributes of speakers, recipients, or messages (Chong and Druckman 2007), I argue that intergroup inequalities matter for understanding the effectiveness of elite persuasion. In demonstrating this finding in the domain of conflict-related behavior, I extend a similar argument in research on vote choice and migration showing that intergroup inequalities—in the form of majority-minority cleavages—explain differential responsiveness to ethnic appeals. Chhibber and Sekhon (2014), for example, demonstrates that appeals that emphasize the co-ethnicity of political candidates work for minority but not majority groups. In their study of acceptance of migrants in Mumbai, Gaikwad and Nellis (2016) find that co-ethnicity primes increase acceptance among members of the minority group but not the majority. This study contributes a logic involving victimization that complements approaches highlighting minority status.

Second, the study illuminates the conditions under which appeals by religious elites shape conflict-related behaviors. Much of the literature to date has instead focused on the role of religious identity and scriptural references in the formation of political preferences and political participation (Masoud, Jamal and Nugent 2016; McClendon and Riedl 2015; McCauley 2014).[2]

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[2]A recent exception is Condra, Isaqzadeh and Linardi (2017), who experimentally test the effect of clerical influence on charitable giving in Afghanistan.

This paper expands these investigations to the context of extremism. In doing so, I demonstrate a counterintuitive result: even some highly religious publics do not simply move in the direction of a leader's appeal. Religious leaders promoting peace, in other words, can be far less influential in their own groups than expected.[3] For scholars of Muslim societies, the finding that Shia subjects do not on average comply with a pro-peace order from a Shia cleric is particularly striking. Scholars frequently describe the Shia as particularly obedient to their clerics due to the special importance of clerical authority in Shia theology (Walbridge 2001). More generally, the findings caveat constructivist models suggesting that symbolic persuasion might work similarly for all ethnic groups (Jaffrelot 2009; Toft 2007; Atran 1990; Tambiah 1992). Instead, the results speak to the plausibility of an earlier proposition that members of 'backward groups' in conflict settings are more resistant to calls for conciliatory behavior by their own elites (Horowitz 1985, 175).

Third, the paper expands the literature on extremism to an important yet underexplored question: how to reduce religious extremism? Empirical research on of extremism mostly analyzes the correlates of extremist attitudes (Mitts 2016; Rink and Sharma 2016; Blair and Shapiro 2013; Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro 2012; Silke 2008; Krueger and Malečková 2003) or behavior (Sharma 2017c). This paper broadens this scope by showing the power and limitations of religious persuasion to reduce extremism in the short-run. Since the treatments are lighter versions of the types of clerical persuasion that commonly take place, the results offer important insights on which larger-scale interventions will be most effective in reducing extremism. In particular, the evidence highlights the efficacy of pro-peace persuasion by an in-group cleric rather than by an outgroup cleric or both. This finding casts doubt on qualitative accounts of conflict resolution recommending exposure to elites from both groups (Rouhana and Kelman 1994).

2. Case Study: Lucknow

2.1 Background

Violence between members of the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam is salient in countries across the Muslim world. In India, the highest levels of Sunni-Shia violence occurs in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state.[4] This feature erodes the democratic value of political tolerance in what is arguably India's most important political center after New Delhi.

The genesis of the Sunni-Shia rift can be traced back to the first Islamic caliphate under the

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[3]The use of relatively lengthy, detailed messages meets demand for a "thicker" study of religion (Philpott 2009).
[4]Interestingly in the Indian context, the city has never experienced a major act of Hindu-Muslim violence for at least the past century (Sinha 1978, 1841).

Prophet Muhammad. Upon the Prophet's death, one faction of his followers (Arabic: *as-sahaba*) argued that the Prophet had asked to be succeeded by members of his bloodline beginning with Ali, his cousin and son-in-law. This faction became known as the Shia. Another more powerful faction, who came to be known as the Sunni, succeeded in installing a different successor to the Prophet. The disagreement over the Prophet's successor, coupled with the later murder of Ali and his two sons, gave rise to different patterns of authority and jurisprudence among the Sunni and Shia. The politicization of such differences defines the spells of sectarian violence across the Islamic world.

Shiism is defined by the concepts of martyrdom and victimization that become publicized through seminal rituals in the Muslim holy month of Muharram, which lasts for 68 or 69 days in South Asia.[5] In Lucknow as elsewhere in the Islamic world, the Shia practice of *azadari* rituals, as they are known, draws the ire of conservative Sunni Muslims. For Sunni extremists, these rituals constitute apostasy due to their reverence for Ali and Hussein rather than God, and thus render Shia participants as punishable by death (Jones 2011).

The first Sunni-Shia riot in Lucknow broke out during Muharram in 1906. A radical Sunni cleric mobilized a crowd that stood infront of a Shia mosque and loudly praised the first three successors of Prophet Muhammad but not the fourth, Ali, who is venerated by the Shia. When the Shia replied with a chant to insult the first three caliphs, a major riot broke out. Ever since, sectarian violence in Lucknow has immediately followed the exchange of two contentious rituals, the *jaloos-e-madh-e-sahaba* by Sunni extremists[6], and *tabarra* by Shia extremists[7]. Such provocations typically take place during holy periods.[8] Nearly all of the Sunni and Shia processions, provocations, and violence take place in the Old City, Lucknow's most historic yet most impoverished district, and home to almost 1 million.

Present-day Lucknow is also affected by widespread extremist attitudes and behaviors. Radical clerics routinely propagate normative appeals to violence in Friday prayer services, religious gatherings, and private meetings. My field research revealed that extremist religious clerics often publicize their appeals to followers using a family member who disseminates rumors, slander, or threats to the outgroup. In an interview, one seasoned cleric explained that extremist clerics rely on formal and informal means to "keep the crowds on a constant boil so that they are full of hate when a *maulana* wants to cause violence." [9]

The task of attenuating extremist propaganda and religious violence is a priority for the U.P.

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[5]In recent decades, Muharram rituals in Lucknow have exclusively been practiced by the Shia, with major processions featuring mock-coffins, chest-beating with spiked chains (Urdu: *zanjir matam*), and powerful elegies (*marsiyah*).

[6]The *madh-e-sahaba* procession is a chief mechanism for Sunni extremists to contest Shiism itself (Hasan 1998).

[7]*Tabarra* means 'disassociation', but is colloquially understood as an anti-Sunni slander.

[8]Especially Muharram; the Prophet's birth and death anniversary (Urdu: *Barawafat*); and 18th—21st Ramadan.

[9]Interview with Maulana J.M., Old City, Lucknow, July 2014.

state government and Lucknow authorities.[10] As Lucknow's senior-most police officer explained to me [11], the city annually convenes a peace committee tasked with minimizing violence. The committee includes influential Sunni and Shia clerics, community elders, and police officers. It coordinates efforts to discourage violent clerical appeals and prepare procession routes. During Muharam, the state government temporarily increases the number of riot control officers in the Old City using across-state transfers. They are joined by Special Police Officers (Hindi: *Vishesh Police Adhikari*), or unarmed local Sunni, Shia, and Hindu residents who are screened and trained by the state to diffuse tensions, report incidents, and liaise with uniformed police.

Qualitative insights from field research suggest that the government has played a plausibly neutral role with respect to both sects. Different state administrations led by the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress Party, Samajwadi Party (SaPa), and Bahujan Samaaj Party (BSP) have facilitated intergroup negotiations.[12] Sunni and Shia community elders and journalists widely expressed the view that the police, while Hindu in majority, respond promptly to dispel riots and make arrests of violent extremists with scant signs of sectarian bias.[13]

2.2 Case Justification

I examine persuasion and extremism among the Sunni and Shia of Lucknow's Old City for three reasons. First, the Old City is a good laboratory to study religious persuasion. In Lucknow, as in other Indian cities, residential segregation along Hindu-Muslim lines implies that Muslims typically live amongst themselves, which facilitates extended interaction with religious clerics and higher religious observance. Appeals by clerics to discourage or encourage extremism are a salient feature of local life, particularly as the Old City houses nearly all of Lucknow's sectarian violence.

Second, the case offers a novel take on the study of ethnic minorities. Political scientists who study ethnic violence in India mostly analyze Hindu-Muslim violence as a type of majority-minority conflict. The present study goes further by acknowledging that the Muslim community is not monolithic. Whereas Indian Muslims constitute a minority relative to their Hindu counterparts, the Shia are minority within a minority, accounting for some 40 % of Lucknow's Muslim population. Since India is expected to have the world's largest Muslim population by 2030, it is important to examine intra-Islamic tensions within India. More broadly, the Lucknow case may be potentially relevant to understanding sectarian conflict beyond, from Pakistan to Lebanon. Extremist

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[10]According to data that I reviewed that was provided by the Lucknow police department, about one Sunni-Shia riot has taken place every three years since the year 2000.

[11]Interview with SSP Praveen Kumar, Lucknow Police Headquarters, Lucknow, August 2014.

[12]Interviews with deputy U.P. superintendent of police and the Superintendent of Police for Lucknow West, July 2014.

[13]Interviews with *Times of India* journalist A.R., Dainik Jagran Chowk, Lucknow, August 2014 and August 2015; and with community elders in Aishbagh, Wazirganj, and Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, August 2015 and January 2016.

clerics in these settings contest the same set of doctrinal differences as those in Lucknow. In doing so, the case expands an emerging line of empirical research on sectarian violence (Weidmann and Salehyan 2013; Corstange 2012*a,b*).

Finally, the Old City is a relatively safe and feasible environment in which to experimentally test elite persuasion. Lucknow is a stable city with a strong government, and Sunni-Shia violence is largely confined to the Muslim month of Muharram. Beyond that period, the expected risk of physical intimidation of experimental subjects or research staff is relatively low. This made it possible to conduct my research in safe and ethical ways.

3. Theoretical Framework

This section presents the motivation and explanations for the study's empirical investigation. It first shows why the process of elite persuasion is important to models of ethnic conflict and demonstrates the gap regarding evidence on that process. A logic is then presented as to why perceived victimization might inhibit the efficacy of pro-peace persuasion by an in-group elite. It then proceeds to make a case for the plausibility of the victimization logic and its applicability to the Shia of Lucknow based on my prior experimental research and insights from field research.

3.1 Motivation

In this subsection, I seek to demonstrate that many constructivist theories of ethnic conflict propose that normative appeals by elites drive extremism but do not directly test this proposition. I also show that most references to elite persuasion focus on the group responsible for most of the violence. Little, by contrast, is said about the persuasion process in the group that bears the brunt of the violence.

An appropriate starting point is Fearon and Laitin (2000, 853), who write that "virtually every self-identified constructivist who has written on ethnic violence....has tended to blame elite machinations and politicking." As the authors observe, such claims encompass a wide range of conflicts and geographic regions. [14] Closer inspection helps to illustrate this point.

In a seminal study of ethnic violence, Brass (1997*b*, 24) investigates a series of violent incidents involving Hindus and Muslims. The argument is that Hindu political elites strategically frame such issues as religious in order to stir anti-Muslim fears and win Hindu votes at the polls. In particular, such elites work to ensure that in-group members are "paid or persuaded to believe that their

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[14]See, for instance,Tambiah (1996) and Kapferer (1988) on Sinhalese-Tamil violence in Sri Lanka; Brass (1997*a*) on Hindu-Muslim riots in India; Woodward (1995) on civil war in the Balkans; and Prunier (1995) on Rwanda.

problems are due to the "the other" and will be solved by the other's humiliation, repression, or elimination" Brass (1997*b*, 25-6).[15] A similar account is described in a detailed study of Hindu processions by Jaffrelot (2009). Hindu elites, the argument goes, focus on "manipulating religious symbols that carried a strong emotional potential". The argument links symbolic manipulation to the ensuing riots by Hindus that ultimately led to the destruction of a historic mosque believed by the rioters to have been built atop a fabled Hindu temple. [16] Similar propositions appear in some of the more prominent empirical studies of conflict. In, Wilkinson (2006, 24), for instance, a key step in the production of riots is that Hindu elites use appeals to exploit "ethnic wedge issues" to incite violence and polarize the electorate.

Related arguments abound beyond the South Asian context. Writing on the former Yugoslavia, Kaufman (2001, 199-200) explains how Milosevic constructed extremist interpretations of Serbian identity to make Serbs feel "threatened" and demand "a degree of repression of the Albanians". In northern Nigeria, Hackett (2011, 130-131) describes the role of calls to arms by religious leaders in motivating violence amongst Christians and Muslims.

Scholars also make the related, and opposite proposition: that elite persuasion is effective in attenuating conflict. Arguing that ethnic conflicts stem from emotional and symbolic roots, Kaufman (2006*a*) argues that building peace between groups requires ethnic elites to engage in initiatives that re-interpret myths and symbols to moderate attitudes and bring about behavior change. Others reference the anecdotal success of initiatives by Christian and Muslim leaders in Nigeria that used religion to uproot extremism (Hackett 2011, 128).

In these and many other accounts, persuasion is referenced as an important step by which conflict takes place. Yet as the studies seek to explain other outcomes of interest, little attention is paid the process of persuasion itself. This invites an important research inquiry.

3.2 Why Victimization Might Matter

A common emphasis in studies of ethnic conflict is that one group is often targeted by extremist actions and rhetoric more than the other. One way to understand this feature is with reference to perceived victimization, which refers to a widely-shared belief by members of an ethnic group that they have collectively and chronically suffered losses, usually violent, inflicted by at least one outgroup. Victimized groups can be identified across a wide range of conflicts, ranging from

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[15]Normative appeals, such as those emphasizing an India based on a strictly Hindu identity (Brass 1997*b*, 283), are a favored method by provocateurs to bring about such belief and behavior change.

[16]The Babri Masjid was constructed by the Mughal Emperor Babar in the sixteenth century. According to Hindu nationalist narratives, the mosque was built on the grounds of a Hindu temple for Lord Rama that Babar's army destroyed.

Armenians in the late 1980s who feared extinction by Azerbaijanis (Kaufman 2001, 60-70) and Palestinians who consider themselves victimized by Israelis in the West Bank to south Sudanese tribes who perceive themselves as victims of historical slave trade and repression managed by north Sudanese Arabs.

Political scientists have argued that victimization leads to differential conflict behavior across groups. Lake and Rothchild (1998, Chapter 1) suggest that the attitudes and actions of victimized groups are characterized by perceived threats to their physical security that they expect to emanate from their victimizers. As Keller (1998, 277) argues, members of such groups that perceive "serious threat will at the very least prepare for violent conflict, and may even go so far as to engage in a preemptive strike" (Keller 1998, 277).

Research has shown suggestive evidence that victimization might matter for extremist behavior. Describing events in the Caucuses in the late Soviet period, the sociologist Georgi Derlugian in his 2005 book explains how ethnic minorities in the Caucuses were victimized by centralizing Soviet policies that favored titular majority groups in those republics. Derluguian (2005) explains how victimized groups turned to violence to protect their material and cultural freedoms as the Soviet Union collapsed. In the Chinese context, Gries (2004) traces the development of a narrative of victimization propagated by Chinese party elites that began in the 1990s and continues to this day. Their narrative seeks to highlight the suffering of the Chinese people at the hands of Western imperialists and the Japanese. To do so, party elites exaggerate Chinese casualty counts from events like the 1937 Nanjing Massacre by the Japanese or the First Opium War of 1837. Gries (2004) explains how the accidental U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999 [17] further triggered party elites to emphasize Chinese suffering in ways that explicitly called for extreme warnings and even retribution against China's adversaries.

Within these arguments, the basic concept is that members of victimized groups retain support for violence in order to protect their group against an external threat.

3.3 Theoretical Expectations

How might victimization shape the effectiveness of elite normative appeals discouraging extremism across members of the two groups? I develop expectations are for settings of dyadic ethnic conflict that meet two conditions: (1) one group perceives itself to be victimized by the other;

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[17] After the incident, Gries explains that one soon-to-become famous essay written by an ordinary Chinese used the word *xiuru* (to humiliate) thirteen times to emphasize that the American attack was motivated by a desire to humiliate the Chinese (Gries 2004, 20-22)

and (2) the local government plays a plausibly neutral role in the intergroup conflict.[18] In such settings, elites engage in normative messaging to influence—i.e., encourage or discourage—extremist behavior mostly by young adult men. Any particular individual j may not only be exposed to pro-peace messaging from an in-group elite but also to such messages by out-group elites instructing outgroup members to be peaceful toward j's in-group.

I begin with an *ex ante* expectation that pro-peace messaging from an in-group elite will be effective in reducing extremist behavior among non-victimized group members but not among victimized group members. I developed this argument based on an earlier experimental study that I conducted in Lucknow (Sharma 2017*b*). In the experiment, 480 Sunni and Shia subjects were randomly assigned to listen to audio messages in which (1) an in-group small businessman using economic arguments to discourage extremism or (2) in-group religious cleric used religious arguments to discourage extremism. The results show a surprising pattern: exposing Shia subjects to pro-peace religious persuasion from a Shia cleric increased their extremism relative to the control group; the opposite result obtained for Sunni subjects. Although these within-sect effects did not reach statistical significance, the pro-peace appeal work significantly more effectively in reducing extremism for Sunni rather than Shia subjects.[19]

My prior study used follow-up interviews with a subsample of experimental subjects and qualitative insights to supply a logic for this result. Victimized group members exposed to an anti-violence appeal by an in-group cleric will perceive that the cleric is substituting-out of the role of defending the in-group against anticipated threats. In expectation, their response will be to retain extremism to guard the in-group.

The victimization logic builds on research in social psychology arguing that severe mistrust and fears of betrayal by the adversary will serve as barriers to conflict resolution (Kydd 2005; Kramer and Carnevale 2001). It is also consistent with studies showing that reminding individuals of historical victimization reduces their level of guilty for violence by in-group members toward an adversary(Wohl and Branscombe 2008). [20]

Different expectations obtain for non-victimized group members. Since such individuals do not hold similar fears of long-term survival, a pro-peace message from an in-group elite is expected to reduce extremist behavior. It may do so via one or more of several mechanisms, including changing prescriptive norms about the permissibility of using violence toward the outgroup; changing beliefs

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[18]The term "neutral role" is used here to describe a situation in which official of the local government, including police and judicial authorities, do not directly or indirectly assist one group against the other, but instead seek to prosecute infractions of the law without bias to group membership.

[19]Statistical power limitations in the prior study provide a reasonable basis to study whether such effects obtain significance in a new study with a larger sample.

[20]Such reminders of victimzation, the Wohl and Branscombe (2008, 988) argue, deflects the ingroup's "responsibility for the harm done" and encourages "legitimization of the ingroup's harmful actions toward a new adversary".

about the behavior of out-group elites; or eliciting concerns of sanctioning by an in-group elite for noncompliance with the peace order.

The second component of the theoretical logic relates to the effect of exposure to a pro-peace message from an outgroup elite in a conflict setting. I developed this logic after the analysis of the experimental results in the present study by drawing on social psychology research regarding 'friendly enemies'. Some studies show that friendly gestures from players in competitive interactions can generate positive affect (Cialdini 2001) and greater social connections (Shapiro 1991).

Yet another stream of findings focuses on settings of conflict between groups, a scenario more relevant to the case examined here. This research argues that friendly gestures from the outgroup are not effective in scenarios featuring expectations of mistrust or enemyship between the two groups. Reactive devaluation, as introduced by researchers at the Stanford Center for International Conflict and Negotiation (Ross and Stillinger 1991), argues that individuals will reduce their perception of the worth of a conciliatory proposal simply because it is authored by a perceived enemy and thus not be affected by it. In experimental studies, scholars have shown that such messages fail because they elicit fears of exploitation or manipulation (Main, Dahl and Darke 2007; Skarlicki, Folger and Gee 2004), i.e., concerns that a proposal authored by a perceived enemy cannot possibly be in the interest of the ingroup. Devaluation of pro-peace proposals by outgroup members has also been uncovered conflict settings, including among Israelis and Palestinians (Maoz et al. 2002).[21]

The implication is that exposure to a pro-peace message from an out-group elite will not change extremist behavior. This feature may be heightened in victimized groups, but victimization is not a precondition. Individuals will devalue an out-group peace message regardless of whether it appears they are exposed to that message alone or in tandem with a similar message from an in-group elite. Table 1 summarizes the theoretical expectations.

Table 1: Summary of Expected Effects on Extremist Behavior

| | Non-Victimized Group | Victimized Group |
	(1)	(2)
(A) Message from Elite in Non-Victimized Group	**Reduce**	**No Effect**
(B) Message from Elite in Victimized Group	**No Effect**	**No Effect**
(C) Interaction	**No Effect**	**No Efect**

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[21]For a recent review of the research on social-psychological barriers to conflict resolution, see Bar-Tal (2011).

3.4 Shia Victimization: Qualitative Insights from Field Research

Extensive historical and qualitative field research support the view that the Shia of Lucknow perceive themselves as victimized by the Sunni. An appropriate departure point comes from Gries (2004), who builds on Kaviraj (2010)'s observation that nationalists seek to build extremist identities by emphasizing and quantifying the possessions of their group. Gries adds an important point: extremists equally obsess over what their group has *lost*.

This argument introduces the relevance of the Shia collective identity, which emphasizes a historical experience of violence perpetrated by the Sunni. In *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest*, whose title aptly hints at the dynamics of the Shia identity, Hamid Dabashi explains that the Shia identity is based on a sense of injustice committed by the Sunni, who denied Ali from succeeding his grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad, as the caliph. Shia belief holds that the Prophet Mohammad, while on his final *hajj* to Mecca, announced to his followers at a place called Ghaddir-e-Kulm that Ali would be his successor. According to the story, the Prophet's followers accepted his wish and congratulated Ali, each in turn shaking hands with the would-be next caliph. Yet Ali did not become the first caliph. When the Prophet died, his followers instead voted for Abu Bakr, a powerful tribal chief and father of the Prophet's wife, to become caliph. Ali ultimately assumed the position as the fourth caliph. In the Shia reading, the rejection of the Prophet's wish was an act of betrayal that brought in illegitimate rulers.

Ali was murdered while serving as caliph. In the Battle of Karbala (680 C.E.), Ali's son Hussain and his 72 companions, including women and children, were killed for contesting the rule of the reigning Sunni caliph Yazid. This event, believed to have taken place during the Muslim month of Muharram, has long been memorialized in Shiism as the worst incidence of victimization perpetrated by the Sunni. The Karbala episode is the basis for the worldwide Shia religious processions each year during Muharram, when participants often engage in self-flagellation to experience the suffering of their ancestors at Karbala. The Shia collective memory also emphasizes the murder of the Imams, or Ali's rightful successors by bloodline. According to mainstream Shia belief, the ten Imams who succeeded Ali were each murdered by the Sunni. To escape this fate, the twelfth imam is believed to have gone into occultation.

As a result, Dabashi argues that Shiism——unlike the Sunni faith and its various schools——is defined by the concepts of *shahadat* (martyrdom) and *mazlumiyyat*, which literally means innocence but in context refers to the "condition of being in that tyrannized state, having been subjected to it" (Dabashi 2011, 80). I quote Dabashi for clarity:

> A social psychology of defeat awaiting revenge is thus at the very heart of Shiism. Shiism, as a religion
> of protest, is founded on a perceived political injustice, a wrong that can never be righted, but it must —
> that Ali was not allowed to succeed Prophet Muhammad as the ruler of the nascent Muslim community,
> that Hossein failed to achieve what was right his and his father's. [...] In the increasingly complicated

Shii theology, the whole veracity of Islam as a faith depended on the nature and function of the Prophet's successor. (Dabashi 2011, 81)

Beyond distant historical memories, more recent history show a common experience of Shia victimization. Noting that Arab Shias lived under the Sunni Ottoman Empire for four of the past five centuries, the historian Juan Cole describes chronic, and often violent, victimization at the hands of Sunni rulers. (Cole 2002, 18) explains how Ottomans treated Arab Shia as heretics, at times forbidding their most sacred rituals in Ottoman-run Iraq. Many Shia were violently repressed by Ottoman officials who were suspicious that the Shia were foreign agents of their empire's top adversary, the Shia Safavid dynasty in Iran. Even in India, where a Shia dynasty ruled the kingdom of Awadh (with Lucknow as its capital) from 1722 to 1856, a similar pattern obtained. Sunni revivalist movements that arose in the late-nineteenth century rallied around the cause of debunking the legitimacy of the Shia as true Muslims. This pattern persists in present-day India, with a regular stream of anti-Shia propaganda (Jones 2011, 186-197).

My field research emphasizes that a strong perception of victimization characterizes the contemporary Shia of Lucknow. I summarize insights from field research explained in greater depth in separate work (Sharma 2017*a*). Maulana Syed Kalbe Jawwad, Lucknow's most influential Shia cleric, explained that the majority Sunni community exploits its vote bank power to prevent the government from authorizing permission for Shias to implement their full calendar of religious processions, rituals that are fundamental to Shia practice. The cleric's cousin and chief advisor, Mr. Shamil Shamsi, explained that he organized a still-active Shia youth group—the Hussaini Tigers—in the 1990s to defend, violently if necessary, the Shia community from Sunni extremists.

Such senses of victimization extend to local politics and daily interactions. Mr. A. H., a seasoned Shia politician from the Congress Party, devoted thirty minutes of a one-hour discussion to describe local Shia anxieties about Sunni extremism. A.H. referenced propaganda disseminated in Lucknow, New Delhi, and Kashmir believed to funded by clerics in Saudi Arabia. Such propaganda, which is widely known throughout Lucknow, paints the Shia faith as a Western conspiracy to divide the Muslim world. In Lucknow, he explained, an influential group of extremist Sunni clerics spread extremism through sermons and social media to declare the Shia as infidels. Such exhortations are exacerbated by negative myths that affect daily interactions. In the Old City, several Sunni and Shia youth interviewees explained that Sunni parents forbid their children to enter a Shia household due to fears that their child will be magically converted to Shiism. Other Sunni youth relayed the myth that one should not accept a cup of *chai* from a Shia, as he or she would certainly have spit in it beforehand.

Importantly, group victimization is affected by events affecting members of the group in foreign countries. Horowitz (2001, 175) arguess that international events become salient when one or both ethnic groups "has a dangerous foreign connection". While this argument was proposed

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in reference to linkages to a foreign government, a broader review would also acknowledge the relevance of links to external militant groups. In India and throughout the Islamic world, local Shia communities respond to perceived victimization of foreign Shia targeted by Sunni extremist groups.

Three examples from my field research demonstrate this point. The first comes from the my personal observation of religious persuasion at a *majlis*, or Shia religious gathering, convened by a prominent Shia cleric known for anti-Sunni positions.[22] Speaking to a group of some sixty Shia adults and children, the cleric moved the audience to tears with a familiar sermon describing the murder of Ali and his son Husain. The cleric explicitly linked these murders to anti-Shia attacks by the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Listeners were openly enraged by the narrative that blamed Sunnis for a historical cycle of violence. A second example comes from a publicly-reported episode in 2014. Sheikh Salman Nadwi, the head of theology at Lucknow's revered Nadwat-ul Ulema seminary, issued a *fatwa* calling for all Muslims to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State. In interviews I conducted, several Shia clerics condemned the *fatwa* and expressed shock about the silent response of local Sunni clerics. A third example comes from January 2016, when Saudi Arabia publicly executed Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, a dissident Shia cleric. In Lucknow, I witnessed mass protests organized by Shia clerics including Maulana Jawwad, who also held rallies outside the Saudi Embassy in New Delhi. Sheikh Nimr quickly became a martyr to many north Indian Shia.

4. Experimental Design and the Interventions

This section begins with a discussion of the sampling approach and survey structure. It then presents the experimental design, and concludes with a description of the intervention content.

4.1 Sampling and Random Assignment

I conducted a survey with an embedded experiment among a random sample of 2,100 young adult males (1,050 Sunni and 1,050 Shia) in Lucknow's Old City. Sunni and Shia subjects from a wide range of Old City neighborhoods (Urdu: *mohallah*) with varying levels of extremism, riots, and demographic balance.

I randomly assigned subjects to treatment prior to subject recruitment. Each enumerator received a separate list of subject ID numbers and corresponding experimental group assignment. Using their list, each enumerator then began the process of recruiting subjects who belonged to

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[22]Observation in July 2015, Shahnajaf Imambarah, Lucknow.

his sect.[23] Since all enumerators were residents of the Old City, they were able to use their local knowledge of sectarian demographics by sampling members of their sect throughout the Old City.[24] Starting from an arbitrary point in each neighborhood, each enumerator approached every third male adult that he encountered. Study recruitment took place on small side streets, roadside shops, or tea stalls.

4.2 Survey Structure and Embedded Experiment

Enumerators began the survey upon obtaining informed consent. To facilitate participation, respondents were told that they would receive a chocolate at the end of the survey.[25] To facilitate the second endline, the questionnaire began with a questions on the subject's first name and mobile number. The ensuing questions sought to capture covariates suggested by the literature to be predictive of extremism. These questions measured the subject's [1] employment status; [2] perceived level of economic marginalization; [3] number of outgroup friendships, by asking how many of his ten closest friends were outgroup members; [4] number of violent in-group peers, by asking how many of his friends had participated in outgroup violence; [5] public religious observance, with a question on the number of times per week he attended a prayer at a mosque; [6] total years of religious education; and [5] likelihood of participating in a contentious religious ritual.

Next, each subject was asked to listen to the randomy-assigned audio messages(s). Messages were pre-loaded on each enumerator's cell phone, and the subject was provided with a set of headphones. The use of headphones permitted a private exposure to clerical persuasion while keeping the subject in real-life settings. After receiving the treatment, the enumerator administered the first outcome measure. Each subject was offered to purchase and wear a 5-rupee (less than 10 U.S. cents) rubber wristband that stated "Sunni-Shia Unity" in Urdu. The enumerator recorded the first behavioral measure, *Bought Wristband*, indicating whether or not the subject had purchased and wore the band. The subject was then that the survey was complete.

About eight hours later on average, a different in-group enumerator contacted the subject by phone to schedule a second in-person interview. In this round, the enumerator recontacted subjects up to five times in an eight hour period. Upon meetnig the subject, the enumerator recorded if the subject was wearing the previously-offered wristband. This unobtrusive measure, *Wearing Wrist-*

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[23]My field research suggested that the use of co-sectarian enumerators would make subjects feel more comfortable in expressing attitudes and behaviors on a sensitive topic.

[24]This included neighborhoods where residents mostly belonged to one sect, as well as parts of mixed neighborhoods known to contain members of the enumerator's sect.

[25]Respondents were not financially compensated for their time on the advice of local community members and NGO officers. The concern was that even small financial payments might fuel local suspicions regarding the motives of the survey team, including suspicion of connections to external actors like Iran or Saudi Arabia.

band, was obtained without asking a question. This constituted the second behavioral measure of extremism: a refusal to wear the wristband was interpreted as a choice to abstain from public expression of tolerance. The first question in the second endline invited an open-ended response to a scenario described as hypothetical. In the scenario, each subject was reminded of the sectarian violence of the recently-concluded Muharram period and told to imagine that an out-group cleric insulted the subject's sect. The subject was then asked to speak briefly about his willingness to join an in-group member to use violence against the outgroup. The enumerator then scored the response, labeled as *Extremist Speech*, on a 5-point scale to signify its level of extremism. [26]

The survey concluded with a series of questions aimed at understanding the mechanisms responsible for behavior change. To assess whether the interventions operated by strategic mechanisms, subjects were asked about their beliefs that the out-group would punish an extremist in their own group as well as about their personal willingness to punish an extremist in the outgroup. Other questions focused on prescriptive religious norms regarding the permissibility of outgroup violence; level of concern of being punished for disobeying an in-group cleric's order to be peaceful; and warmth toward the outgroup as a whole.

4.3 Experimental Design

Table 2 shows the basic experimental setup for the pooled sample of 2,100 Sunni and Shia young adult men. The sample is balanced by sectarian identity, with 1,050 Sunni and 1,050 Shia subjects. The first experimental group is the pure control condition: a total of 420 subjects heard no message. In the second experimental group (herein *Ingroup*), subjects were randomly assigned to listen to a 5-minute message containing an anti-violence religious argument recorded by an in-group cleric. In the third group (herein *Outgroup*), subjects were randomly assigned to listen to a 5-minute message in which an out-group cleric issues an anti-violence religious appeal to out-group members. In the fourth experimental group, subjects were randomly assigned to listen to the message of the in-group cleric and the out-group cleric (10 minutes total). I randomized the order of the messages to account for "recency" and "primacy" effects: 420 subjects thus heard the ingroup cleric's message first and 420 subjects heard the outgroup cleric's message first. As a result, a total of 840 subjects were assigned to the fourth experimental group. Overall, the experiment takes the form of a (2 x 2) * 2 factorial design.

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[26]The scale is as follows: 1 (Strongly opposed to using violence against the outgroup); 2 (Opposed to using violence against the outgroup; 3 (Neutral toward using violence toward the outgroup); 4 (Supports using violence against the outgroup); 5 (Strongly supports using violence toward the outgroup).

Table 2: Basic Experimental Setup: Pooled Sample

	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric
	(1)	(2)
(A) No Outgroup Cleric	420	420
(B) Outgroup Cleric	420	840

N = 2,100

4.4 The Treatments

The experiment involved two original audio messages: one from a Sunni cleric and one from a Shia cleric. In order to create detailed messages that solely focused on religious normative arguments discouraging extremism, I collaborated with the local clerics in order to design the content of each message. Clerics recorded the messages in the Hindi language, the predominant language in Lucknow. Full English transcripts of message content are available in the Appendix. Three points merit attention.

First, both messages were constructed to emphasize similar religious normative arguments discouraging extremism. In particular, both the Sunni and the Shia message emphasized the shared importance of the Quran to both sects and its invocation for Muslim unity; lessons from the Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali that advocated for peace and restraint even in the face of provocation and insult; and the importance of resolving disputes by seeking the guidance of religious clerics rather than engaging in violence. In order to preserve the realistic differences between the sects, the messages differ in minor ways with respect to particular examples or lessons cited.

Second, the audio messages were recorded by real, local clerics who are of similar stature in Lucknow. The Sunni cleric, Maulana Sufiyan Nizami, and the Shia cleric, Maulana Raza Husain, both exercise a moderate level of influence in Lucknow. Their selection facilitates a focus on the normative content of the appeals in that neither holds unequal economic or political clout relative to the other. Both clerics consented to the dissemination of their messages within the local population. To help buttress the credibility of the audio recordings, each speaker began his messages by stating his clerical status; real name; and presence in Lucknow.

Third, the experiment was implemented to mimic in reverse the process by which radicalizers in Lucknow and elsewhere operate. Detailed, relatively lengthy audio messages rather than a single sentence or religious prime were used in order to better mimic and study clerical persuasion as it exists in the Old City. Audio messages were deployed in Old City side streets rather than in a lab

environment in order to more closely approximate realistic settings. Measurement of behavioral outcomes in side streets rather than lab settings was undertaken to obtain an understanding of behavioral decisions in a real-world environment.

5. Results

This section reports the experimental results. Table 3 focuses on the pooled sample (Sunni and Shia subjects), and Tables 4 and 5, respectively, focus on the Sunni and Shia samples. In section 5.3, I examine the difference in average treatment effects between the Sunni and Shia samples (Table 6). The rest of the section includes analysis of the mechanisms by which the treatments may have operated (Tables 7 and 8).

5.1 Results for Pooled Sample

Table 3 presents the results for the pooled sample. Each of the three outcome measures are coded such that lower values indicate a more extremist position. The first outcome measure is *Purchased Band at T_1*, a binary variable scored as 1 if the subject purchased and wore the pro-peace wristband at the first endline. The second measure is *Wearing Band 8 Hours Later at T_2*, also a binary variable scored as 1 if the subject was still wearing the wristband at the second endline. The third measure is *Pro-Peace Speech at T_2*, a standardized transformation of the original variable from a 5-point, Likert-type scale.

Regarding the first outcome, the results show that neither the in-group cleric message, out-group cleric message, nor the interaction significantly increases purchases of the peace band (cells C4, D3, and D4 respectively). Regarding the second outcome, the in-group cleric message significantly increases the chance that subjects wear the peace band about eight hours later by an average of 3.2 % ($p < 0.10$) (see cell G4). This effect increases to 5.4 % ($p < 0.10$) conditional on not hearing the out-group cleric message. By contrast, neither the out-group message nor the interaction of both messages significantly affects the chance of wearing the peace band at the second endline (cells H3 and H4, respectively).

Table 3: **Pooled Sample**: Group Means, Conditional Average Treatment Effects, and Average Treatment Effects

	Purchased Peace Band at T_1 (N = 2,086)			
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(A) No Outgroup Cleric	0.306	0.354	0.330	0.047
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.032)
(B) Outgroup Cleric	0.335	0.336	0.335	0.002
	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.028)
(C) All	0.320	0.342	0.334	0.021
	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.021)
(D) Change	0.028	−0.017	0.002	−0.047
	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.043)

	Wearing Peace Band 8 Hours Later at T_2 (N = 2,071)			
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(E) No Outgroup Cleric	0.235	0.289	0.262	0.054*
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.015)	(0.030)
(F) Outgroup Cleric	0.238	0.255	0.250	0.017
	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.026)
(G) All	0.237	0.266	0.254	0.032*
	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.019)
(H) Change	0.003	−0.033	−0.017	−0.036
	(0.029)	(0.026)	(0.019)	(0.040)

	Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later at T_2 (N = 2,074)			
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(I) No Outgroup Cleric	−0.058	−0.002	−0.030	0.055
	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.032)	(0.065)
(J) Outgroup Cleric	−0.035	0.048	0.020	0.084
	(0.049)	(0.036)	(0.029)	(0.062)
(K) All	−0.047	0.031	0.000	0.072
	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.045)
(L) Change	0.022	0.051	0.038	0.028
	(0.066)	(0.062)	(0.045)	(0.091)

1. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
2. Standard errors in parentheses.
3. *Extremist Speech* ranges from -3.090 to 6.143

Third, neither the in-group message, out-group message, nor the interaction significantly increase pro-peace speech on average (cells K4, L3, and L4 respectively).

5.2 Results by Subgroup

The next two tables present analyses that test the the different theoretical expectations for the Sunni and Shia samples. Each table presents the average and conditional group means for each experimental group as well as average and marginal treatment effects.

Beginning with the Sunni sample in Table 4, a striking pattern emerges. The in-group cleric message significantly increases pro-peace behavior on all three outcome measures (cells C4, G4, and K4). The in-group cleric message increases the chance of purchasing the peaceband by 7.1% ($p < 0.05$) and of wearing the peace band eight hours later by 7.8% ($p < 0.05$). It also increases pro-peace speech by 0.239 standard deviations ($p < 0.01$). By contrast, neither the out-group cleric message (cells D3, H3, or L3) nor the interaction (cells D4, H4, and L4) significantly increases pro-peace behavior on any of the three outcome measures.

The table also shows that *Ingroup* leads to larger average effects on pro-peace behavior when the subject is not exposed to the outgroup cleric's message. When *Outgroup* is absent, the in-group cleric message increases the chance of purchasing the peace band by 12.6% and wearing the band 8 hours later by 12.0%, as well as increasing expressions of pro-peace speech by 0.281 standard deviations (cells A4, E4, I4). When Sunni subjects are also exposed to *Outgroup*, *Ingroup* continues to significantly increase pro-peace speech (cell J4) but does not affect the first two outcomes (B4 and F4).

Together, the results support the expectation that the in-group cleric message—and not the outgroup cleric message or the interaction—reduces extremism for members of the non-victimized group, i.e., the Sunni sample.

Table 5 presents results for the Shia sample. The main result is that neither the in-group message, out-group message, nor the interaction increase pro-peace behavior on any of the three outcome measures. In fact, the table shows that the in-group cleric message led to a backfiring effect among Shia subjects who were not exposed to the outgroup cleric message: *Ingroup* reduces pro-peace speech by 0.172 standard deviations. This effect, while fragile ($p < 0.10$), is consistent with the expectation that victimized group members will retain extremism when ordered not to do so by an in-group cleric. It is notable, too, that the backfiring effect disappears when Shia subjects are also exposed to the out-group cleric's messages. This suggests that the effect of victimization may be somewhat attenuated when learning that a Sunni cleric has instructed Sunnis to be peaceful toward the Shia.

Table 4: **Sunni Sample**: Group Means, Conditional Average Treatment Effects, and Average Treatment Effects

	Purchase Peace Band at T_1 (N=1,048)			
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(A) No Outgroup Cleric	0.416	0.542	0.479	0.126***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.048)
(B) Outgroup Cleric	0.471	0.501	0.491	0.029
	(0.034)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.042)
(C) All	0.443	0.515	0.486	0.071**
	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.031)
(D) Change	0.055	−0.041	0.000	−0.096
	(0.048)	(0.042)	(0.031)	(0.064)

	Wearing Peace Band 8 Hours Later at T_2 (N=1,042)			
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(E) No Outgroup Cleric	0.338	0.458	0.398	0.120**
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.023)	(0.047)
(F) Outgroup Cleric	0.371	0.418	0.403	0.046
	(0.033)	(0.024)	(0.019)	(0.041)
(G) All	0.354	0.432	0.401	0.078**
	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.031)
(H) Change	0.033	−0.040	−0.008	−0.074
	(0.046)	(0.042)	(0.031)	(0.063)

	Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later at T_2 (N=1,043)			
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(I) No Outgroup Cleric	−0.080	0.200	0.059	0.281***
	(0.052)	(0.060)	(0.040)	(0.080)
(J) Outgroup Cleric	0.006	0.214	0.145	0.207***
	(0.062)	(0.046)	(0.037)	(0.079)
(K) All	−0.036	0.210	0.111	0.239***
	(0.041)	(0.036)	(0.027)	(0.057)
(L) Change	0.087	0.013	0.045	−0.073
	(0.082)	(0.078)	(0.057)	(0.115)

1. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
2. Standard errors in parentheses.
3. *Pro-Peace Speech* for this sample ranges from -1.122 to 2.269

Table 5: **Shia Sample**: Group Means, Conditional Average Treatment Effects, and Average Treatment Effects

| | Purchased Peace Band at T_1 (N=1,038) | | | |
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(A) No Outgroup Cleric	0.196	0.160	0.178	−0.035
	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.018)	(0.037)
(B) Outgroup Cleric	0.197	0.170	0.179	−0.026
	(0.027)	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.032)
(C) All	0.196	0.167	0.179	−0.030
	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.024)
(D) Change	0.001	0.009	0.005	0.008
	(0.039)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.049)

| | Wearing Band 8 Hours Later at T_2 (N=1,029) | | | |
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(E) No Outgroup Cleric	0.131	0.117	0.124	−0.013
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.016)	(0.032)
(F) Outgroup Cleric	0.105	0.090	0.095	−0.015
	(0.021)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.025)
(G) All	0.118	0.099	0.106	−0.014
	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.019)
(H) Change	−0.025	−0.027	−0.026	−0.002
	(0.031)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.040)

| | Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later at T_2 (N=1,031) | | | |
	No Ingroup Cleric	Ingroup Cleric	All	Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(I) No Outgroup Cleric	−0.035	−0.208	−0.121	−0.172*
	(0.071)	(0.070)	(0.051)	(0.101)
(J) Outgroup Cleric	−0.078	−0.120	−0.106	−0.041
	(0.075)	(0.054)	(0.044)	(0.093)
(K) All	−0.057	−0.149	−0.112	−0.097
	(0.052)	(0.043)	(0.033)	(0.069)
(L) Change	−0.043	0.088	0.031	0.131
	(0.105)	(0.092)	(0.069)	(0.139)

1. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
2. Standard errors in parentheses.
3. *Pro-Peace Speech* ranges from -1.122 to 2.269

5.3 Difference in Effects Between Sects

To probe the different patterns by sect, the Table 6 presents the results of two regressions that to estimate the difference in effects between sects of *Ingroup*, *Outgroup*, and *Ingroup*Outgroup* on extremism. The point estimates in rows *A* and *B* are retrieved by running the following regression:

$$Y_i = \tau_1 * Ingroup_i * SHIA_i + \tau_2 * OutCleric_i * SHIA_i + SHIA_i + \epsilon_i \qquad (1)$$

where τ_1 refers to the differ average treatment effect of *Ingroup* among the Shia; τ_2 refers to the conditional average treatment effect of *Outgroup* among the Shia; $SHIA_i$ is a fixed effect denoting if the *i*-th subject is Shia or Sunni; and ϵ_i is a disturbance term. The point estimates in row *C* are generated by the model:

$$Y_i = InCleric_i * SHIA_i + OutCleric_i * SHIA_i + \tau_3 * InCleric_i * OutCleric_i * SHIA_i + SHIA_i + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

where τ_3 refers to the difference in the average effect of *InCleric*OutCleric* between sects; and ϵ_i is a disturbance term.

Table 6: **Difference of Average Treatment Effects Between Sects**

	Purchased Band at T_1	Wearing Band at T_2	Pro-Peace Speech at T_2
	(1)	(2)	(3)
(A) Ingroup Cleric*_SHIA_	−0.101**	−0.093**	−0.336***
	(0.040)	(0.037)	(0.090)
(B) Outgroup Cleric*_SHIA_	0.006	−0.018	−0.013
	(0.040)	(0.037)	(0.090)
(C) Ingroup*Outgroup*_SHIA_	0.105	0.071	0.205
	(0.081)	(0.075)	(0.182)

1. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
2. Standard errors in parentheses.
3. *Extremist Speech* ranges from -3.090 to 6.143

The results show that exposure to an anti-violence appeal by an in-group cleric works significantly less effectively in reducing extremism for Shia rather than Sunni subjects. This pattern is consistent across all three three dependent variables ($p < 0.05$ for *Purchased Peace Band at T_1* and *Wearing Band 8 Hours Later at T_2*; $p < 0.01$ for *Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later at T_2*). Consistent with study expectations, the results also highlight that the pattern is unique to the in-group cleric's message: *Outgroup* and *Ingroup*Outgroup* are not significantly more effective for either

sect. Additional robustness checks show that these patterns remain when including enumerator fixed effects and adjusting for covariates (Appendix A2).

5.4 Mechanisms of Behavior Change

By which mechanisms did the persuasive appeals affect behavior? I examine the evidence for four pre-specified mechanisms using survey questions that were administered after the main outcome measures. The first mechanism assesses whether treatments affected behavior via strategic considerations. The in-group or out-group cleric message could increase confidence among the recipient that the outgroup will punish extremists in their own group.[27] If this is the case, one would expect that subjects (a) reduce their personal willingness to punish an outgroup extremismt and (b) increase their confidence that an outgroup elite will punish an outgroup extremist. Two questions—labeled *Out. Will Punish* and *I Will Punish*–use 5-point, Likert-type scales to measure these attitude changes. For the first variable, a higher value indicates higher conidence in out-group policing and for the second variable, a higher value indicates higher willingness to personally punish an outgroup extremist.[28]

The second mechanism is that elite persuasion might make subjects less likely to perceive outgroup violence as a desired behavior for in-group members. This mechanism can be understood as referring to a change in an individual's prescriptive religious norms.[29] To measure norm change, subjects were read a hypothetical vignette in which an in-group member attacks an out-group member who had insulted his sect. Subjects then indicated the extent to which Islamic norms would justify the attack. Higher values of the ensuing variable, *Relig. Norms Prohibit Extrem.*, indicate a stronger belief that the violence is not a desirable behavior under Islam.

The third mechanism I consider is that the treatments affected behavior by making subjects more fearful of being sanctioned by an in-group cleric for disobeying his anti-violence appeal. To examine this possibility, subjects were asked how concerned they would be if they were to disobey a personal order from an in-group cleric to refrain attacking an outgroup member even if the subject had been insulted by the latter. *Sancton* is coded so that higher values indicate greater concern of being punished by the cleric for disobeying him.

Lastly, the treatments might change behaviors by reducing prejudice toward the outgroup as

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[27]The logic for the outgroup message is more straightforward. The ingroup message could lead to a similar effect: upon learning that an in-group clerics is attempting to police the in-group, the subejct might think that it is more likely that the out-group is behaving similarly.

[28]In both cases, the subject was told that the hypothetical outgroup member has attacked an in-group member, thus clarifying the latter's label as an extremist.

[29]A prescriptive social norm is defined as attitudes or behavior that are perceived as desirable for in-group members (Paluck et al. 2010).

a whole. The message of the in-group cleric or out-group cleric might have increased tolerance without necessarily changing prescriptive religious norms, beliefs about outgroup behavior, or sanctioning concerns. To examine this possibility, enumerators asked subjects to rate how warm they felt toward the outgroup on a 100-point scale (*Warmth*).

The following two tables (7 and 8) illustrate the analysis of mechanisms for the Sunni and Shia samples in turn. Rows A and B show the average treatment effects of *Ingroup* and *Outgroup*, both of which come from a single regression. Row C shows the average treatment effect of *In*Out*, which comes from a separate single regression. To facilitate a consistent interpretation of point estimates across the mechanisms, each mechanism variable is standardized. Effect sizes estimates are thus interpreted as standard deviations. in the outcome variable.

For the Sunni sample, the evidence suggests that *Ingroup* reduces extremist behaviors through all four mechanisms. Regarding strategic considerations, the message significantly increases confidence that the outgroup will punish outgroup extremists ($\hat{\beta} = 0.277$, $p < 0.01$) and reduces personal willingness to punish such individuals ($\hat{\beta} = $ -0.236, $p < 0.01$). These two results are logically consistent and suggest that in-group clerical persuasion worked through a strategic logic. Second, the message strengthened the belief that outgroup violence is not a desirable behavior according to Islam ($hat\beta$=0.184, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that persuasion worked by changing prescriptive religious norms. Third, the message increased concerns being sanctioned by an in-group cleric for disobeying his pro-peace order ($\hat{\beta} = 0.174$, $p < 0.01$). Lastly, the message warmed attitudes toward the outgroup as a whole ($\hat{\beta} = 0.205$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 7 also shows that *Outgroup* and *In*Out* did not operate via these mechanisms in a similar manner. The outgroup message leads to a strong, significant effect on warmth toward the outgroup. It slightly increased confidence that the outgroup will punish outgroup extremists, yet the effect is fragile ($p < 0.10$). The evidence shows that the message did not significantly affect personal willingness to punish outgroup extremists, prescriptive religious norms, or sanctioning concerns. Regarding the interaction of both treatments, *In*Out* significantly reduces fears of being sanctioned by an in-group cleric. The interaction also leads to statistically fragile effects ($p < 0.10$) on *Out. Will Punish* and *Warmth*, but in unanticipated directions.

Turning to the Shia sample, Table 8 shows that there is no evidence that *Ingroup* affected any of the pre-specified mechanisms. A largely similar pattern results characterizes *Outgroup* and *In*Out*. Among the Shia sample, exposure to the outgroup cleric's message significantly increases warmth toward the Sunni ($\hat{\beta} = 0.154$, $p < 0.05$) yet does not affect other mechanisms. Lastly, the interaction of the treatments increases confidence that the outgroup will punish an outgroup extremist ($\hat{\beta} = 0.260$, $p < 0.05$) but does not affect other mechanisms.

Table 7: **Analysis of Mechanisms: Sunni Sample**

	Out. Will Punish	I Will Punish	Relig. Norms Prohibit Extrem.	Sanction	Warmth
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(A) *Ingroup*	0.277***	−0.236***	0.184***	0.174***	0.205***
	(0.061)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.047)
(B) *Outgroup*	0.121*	−0.052	0.070	0.083	0.122***
	(0.061)	(0.054)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.047)
(C) *In*Out*	−0.219*	0.124	−0.047	−0.235**	−0.179*
	(0.124)	(0.110)	(0.112)	(0.111)	(0.095)

1. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
2. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 8: **Analysis of Mechanisms: Shia Sample**

	Out. Will Punish	I Will Punish	Relig. Norms Prohibit Extrem.	Sanction	Warmth
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(A) *Ingroup*	0.003	0.027	0.049	0.004	−0.007
	(0.061)	(0.066)	(0.048)	(0.072)	(0.064)
(B) *Outgroup*	−0.038	−0.012	−0.013	−0.014	0.154**
	(0.061)	(0.066)	(0.048)	(0.072)	(0.064)
(C) *In*Out*	0.260**	−0.154	0.072	0.016	0.111
	(0.124)	(0.135)	(0.097)	(0.146)	(0.131)

1. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
2. Standard errors in parentheses.

6. Unpacking the Effect of Religious Identity

This section presents additional statistical analyses to analyze the plausibility of the victimization logic relative to other competing explanations. The the victimization logic is linked to religious (here, sectarian) identity. Yet one potential problem is that sectarian identity is not randomly assigned, meaning that other individual-level characteristics might be confounding. It could be the case, for instance, that there may be non-religious components to the differential treatment effect of the in-group cleric message.

To begin, I generated a general index of extremism by taking a simple average of the standardized transformations of the *Purchased Peace Band* and *Wearing Peace Band 8 Hours Later* variables combined with the *Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later* variable, which was already standardized. This index was then re-standardized, generating the *Extremism Index*. As with the earlier outcome variables, *Extremist Index* is coded so that a higher value indicates a more pro-peace behavior.

Table 9 presents the results for three models in which the extremism index is regressed on treatment dummies interacted with *SHIA*, indicating if a subject is Shia or not. Model 1 presents the results in the absence of enumerator fixed effects or covariate adjustment. Model 2 includes enumerator fixed effects, and Model 3 includes covariates.[30]

Model 1 shows that *Ingroup*SHIA* is negative and statistically significant on the standardized index ($\hat{\beta}$ = -0.164, $p < 0.01$). The same result obtains with the inclusion of enumerator fixed effects ($\hat{\beta}$ = -0.163, $p < 0.01$). Model 3 shows that the difference in effects between sects of *Ingroup* remains negative and statistically significant at the 1 % level, with a slightly lower point estimate ($\hat{\beta}$ = -0.137). These results show that the in-group cleric's message has a differential effect by sect that is robust to the inclusion of enumerator fixed effects and covariate adjustment.

Table 10 presents additional analysis to unpack the differential effect across sect. It reports the results of interacting the treatment dummies not only with *SHIA*, but also with each of the seven covariates, labeled *Characteristics*. Columns specify the *Characteristic* that was interacted with each treatment dummy. The table permits a deeper analysis of which aspects of identity—aside from religious identity—explain part of the differential effects of the in-group cleric message. Since each of the seven characteristics are reasonably part of what it means to be Shia or Sunni, the additional analysis should be understood as unpacking which aspects of identity matter for the differential effect of the in-group cleric message.

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[30]All models use demeaned treatment dummies so that the point estimates on terms interacted with the treatment denote the effect of a particular treatment averaged over all other treatments.

Table 9: Robustness: Difference in Effects Between Sects on Extremism Index

	Dep. Var.: Standardized Index of Extremism		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
*Ingroup*SHIA*	−0.164***	−0.163***	−0.137***
	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.039)
*Outgroup*SHIA*	−0.009	−0.011	−0.020
	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.039)
Unemployed			−0.022
			(0.054)
Econ. Marg.			0.147***
			(0.025)
Numb. Outgroup Friends			0.042***
			(0.010)
Numb. Violent Peers			0.072***
			(0.010)
Prayet Attendance			−0.010***
			(0.002)
Extremist Ritual Part.			−0.141***
			(0.017)
Yrs. Quran Lessons			0.018*
			(0.011)
Enum FE?	N	Y	Y
Constant	−0.002	0.279***	0.337***
	(0.021)	(0.044)	(0.106)
Observations	2,067	2,067	2,060
Adj.-R^2	0.115	0.211	0.286
F Stat.	54.535***	43.398***	42.183***
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Results show that *Ingroup*SHIA* remains statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ for six of the covariates and at $p < 0.05$ for one covariate: unemployment. Furthermore, there is also a differential effect of the in-group cleric for unemployment (cell C1) as well as willingness to engage in extremist religious rituals (cell C6). The latter of these two characteristics is more explicitly linked to religious identity, and is consistent with the main theoretical argument that identity matters for understanding pro-peace persuasion. The statistically significant difference in effects of *Ingroup* across employed and unemployed subjects, however, shows that there is an economic component to the differential effect of the in-group cleric's message. Even still, the result from the same model shows that *Ingroup*SHIA* remains significant ($p < 0.05$) and emphasizes that there is an important, residual religious component that explains the differential effect of exposure to the in-group cleric message.

Table 10: Interactions of Treatments with Covariates

	Dep. Var: Characteristic						
	Unemp.	Econ Marg.	Outgroup Friends	Viol. Peers	Prayers	Ext. Rit.	Yrs. Qur. Lessons
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(A) *Ingroup*SHIA*	−0.104**	−0.151***	−0.160***	−0.222***	−0.159***	−0.160***	−0.161***
	(0.052)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.056)	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.049)
(B) *Outgroup*SHIA*	−0.051	0.002	−0.027	−0.036	−0.011	−0.022	−0.022
	(0.053)	(0.049)	(0.052)	(0.057)	(0.044)	(0.042)	(0.049)
(C) *Ingroup*Characteristic*	−0.218**	−0.020	−0.001	0.021	−0.003	−0.073**	−0.002
	(0.107)	(0.048)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.032)	(0.013)
(D) *Outgroup*Characteristic*	0.153	−0.020	0.006	0.008	0.000	−0.022	0.012
	(0.108)	(0.048)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.032)	(0.013)
Constant	−0.004	−0.002	−0.003	−0.001	−0.002	−0.004	−0.001
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Obs	2,067	2,061	2,066	2,067	2,067	2,067	2,067
Adj.-R^2	0.116	0.113	0.134	0.119	0.115	0.155	0.145
F Stat.	34.802***	33.873***	40.776***	35.875***	34.674***	48.445***	44.893***

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

7. Discussion

This study investigated the conditions under which extremist behaviors can be attenuated by exposure to anti-violence religious arguments by an in-group or out-group cleric. The core finding is that exposure to such an argument from an in-group cleric reduces extremism among members of the non-victimized group (here: the Sunni) but not members of the victimized group (here: the Shia). In particular, the message increased the chance of purchasing and wearing a pro-peace wristband by 7.1 % ($p < 0.05$) immediately after treatment, and eight hours later, increasing the chance of still wearing the band by 7.8 % ($p < 0.05$) and reducing expressions of violent speech by 0.226 standard deviations ($p < 0.01$). Additional statistical analyses and qualitative evidence emphasize the plausibility of the victimization logic.

A second main finding is that neither the out-group cleric message nor the interaction of both significantly reduces extremist behaviors for either sectarian sample. The study explains this result by applying the reactive devaluation hypothesis in the psychology literature, which holds that individuals devalue the worth of a friendly message from a perceived enemy due to suspicions about his or her motives (Maoz et al. 2002; Ross and Stillinger 1991).

The third main finding concerns the mechanisms by which persuasion by an in-group cleric changed behavior for the Sunni sample. The analysis of pre-specified mechanisms shows that in addition to the more anticipated mechanism of sanctioning, persuasion operated by changing prescriptive relgious norms regarding the permissibility of violence, reducing personal willingness to punish outgroup extremists, and increasing confidence that out-group elites will punish extremists in their own group.

The remainder of this section discusses broader implications for political science and policy.

7.1 Elite Persuasion and Conflict

The first lesson relates to the capacity for elite persuasion to motivate extremism, a prominent claim in several accounts of ethnic conflict (Jaffrelot 2009; Wilkinson 2006; Kaufman 2001; Brass 1997*a*). Due to ethical considerations and safety concerns, this study focused on persuasion away from extremism. In showing that one type of such persuasion—exposure to an in-group cleric using religious norms to discourage extremism—-was effective for Sunni but not Shia subjects, the study implies that a more nuanced relationship than previously known governs elite manipulation of extremism. The theoretical argument emphasizes that members of a victimized group will retain extremism even after being ordered not to do so in order to defend against anticipated threats from the non-victimized group.

While the main results do not directly test the victimization explanation, the results in this

study mirror those of my earlier experiment in Lucknow with a smaller sample. Qualitative evidence for the explanation comes from field research, follow-up interviews with subjects in the first study. Coupled with the additional statistical analyses in the present study (Table **??**) and survey evidence on perceptions of message attributes (Appendix A4), the collective evidence points to the victimization logic as the most plausible explanation. In these ways, the present study taps into an emerging set of findings that show that the efficacy of co-ethnic appeals works differently across ethnic groups, particularly along majority-minority lines. Whereas extant studies have focused on how minority identity conditions in-group appeals on issues limited to vote choice and migrant acceptance (Gaikwad and Nellis 2016; Huber and Suryanarayan 2016; Chhibber and Sekhon 2014), this research contributes a novel argument related to victimization and focusing on extremist behavior.

Even still, caution is warranted. In particular, Table 10 shows that the differential effect of the in-group cleric message also has a material component, unemployment. The analysis shows that the difference in effects of the ingroup message across sects remains significant even after accounting for the interaction with unemployment. The implication is that the religion-related logic of victimization is a plausible explanation for the differential effects, yet not the only one.

Another possible source of caution relates to the treatments themselves. The present research cannot rule out the possibility that different results obtained between sects due to differences in the treatments. To probe this possibility, I implemented a separate survey of 60 Sunni and Shia young adult men in the Old City. The subject sample was distinct from the sample of experimental subjects. Each subject was randomly assigned to listen to the in-group cleric message used in the experiment described in this paper. An ensuing questions gauged the perceived real-world influence of the speaker. Results are presented as bar graphs in Appendix A4. On a 3-point scale [31], Sunni subjects perceived real-world influence of the Sunni cleric to be slightly though not substantially higher as compared to how Shia subjects perceived the Shia cleric did Shia subjects scored the Shia cleric ($\mu_{Sunni} = 2.2$, $\mu_{Shia} = 1.7$). As explained earlier, several steps were taken to ensure that the audio messages were recorded by clerics of relatively equal status and emphasized highly similar scriptural arguments. Future research can play an important role in testing whether different patterns obtain when randomly assigning subjects to different in-group clerics.

What might the victimization logic imply about the plausibility of models centered around elite persuasion promoting violence? One possibility rests on the assumption that pro-violence persuasion works the same way as pro-peace persuasion. If so, the implication is that members of non-victimized groups might also be more susceptible to pro-extremism messages by an in-

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[31]The scale is: 1: "no influence"; 2: "influence, but very little"; 3: "a lot".

group elite. Such a pattern appears to match the existing claims on elite persuasion, which have often suggested that members of the non-victimized or majority group are most prone to extremist persuasion as opposed to the victimized or minority group. Another possibility is that the salience of victimization and concerns of future threats may lead members of victimized groups to be highly responsive to pro-violence appeals. These contrasting possibilities motivate a fruitful line of inquirty for future research.

7.2 Religion and Conflict

A second set of lessons relates to the role of religion in conflict. Political scientists have, in recent years, increased calls for greater investigation of the precise ways in which religious actors and, in particular, the doctrinal content they deploy, matters for individual political behavior (Philpott 2007; Grzymala-Busse 2012). The present research helps meet this demand by showing that religious actors and the ideas they deploy do matter: even a five-minute audio recording can increase the likelihood of individuals engaging in pro-peace behaviors that are relatively costly in the local setting. The finding that the ingroup cleric's message reduced extremism among the Sunni sample by changing prescriptive norms around violence suggests that doctrinal content can change behavior even in the absence of a change in subjects' material conditions. More broadly, this result challenges models that emphasize factors unrelated to religion, such as local public goods provision (Berman 2011; Iannaccone and Berman 2006) and employment (Esteban and Ray 2011), as the main determinants of extremism.

A separate insight comes from the out-group clerical messages and the interaction of both messages. The lack of behavior change for the Sunni and Shia samples after exposure to the out-group cleric message or both messages reveals important limitations on clerical influence. At a minimum, these results question the effectiveness of conflict management approaches that incorporate elites from the different groups in conflict (Sisk 2011; Toft, Philpott and Shah 2011). Future research can play an important role in advancing this inquiry. Scholars could examine if exposure to out-group elite messages is more effective if delivered by multiple clerics or when containing admissions of responsibility for prior wrongdoing. In order to explain potential non-effects, such studies could probe the reactive devaluation hypothesis with survey items to examine if outgroup messages elicit higher suspicion of the speaker's motives.

7.3 Generalizability and Policy

Although the empirical evidence is drawn from intra-Muslim conflict in India, there are several reasons why the results may be applicable to other conflict settings. First, the intervention used here resembles the approach and content of many counter-extremism programs across the Islamic

world. The treatments are akin to smaller-scale versions of messaging efforts by clerics in Asia and Africa. Examples include pro-peace radio programs in Afghanistan and educational interventions in West and East Africa. Parallels could also be drawn to the content of the Friday prayer services across the Islamic world. Moreover, the normative content of the treatments in this study involved references to scripture and teachings that are standard in the Sunni and Shia faiths and not particular to Lucknow or South Asia. For policymakers, the findings in the present research offer relevant guidance as to the types of persuasion interventions expected to be promising if scaled-up.

Second, the study's theoretical argument regarding victimization is also generalizeable to other conflict settings. Although this study focuses on the context of victimization related to a religious group, the proposed logic by which victimization inhibits in-group pro-peace messaging is not specific to religion. Furthermore, many groups across the world perceive themselves to be victimized by another group or entity, and often turn to violence to defend themselves against perceived aggressors (Derluguian 2005; Keller 1998; Horowitz 1985). Replication and extensions of the present study can help to establish whether the theoretical logic and empirical patterns in Lucknow travel are also present in other settings.

One feature of the Lucknow case that may serve as a scope condition concerns the plausibly neutral role of the state in local conflict. In Lucknow, my field research emphasized that members of the Sunni and Shia communities believe the mostly-Hindu government and police forces largely address sectarian conflict with little overt bias toward either group. In other conflicts, members of one or both ethnic groups perceive the government to be significantly biased. What would the victimization logic imply in these cases? If extrapolated, one reasonable expectation might be that (i) as the government's assistance to the non-victimized group, $G_n v$ increases, (ii) security concerns members of the victimized group G_v increase, thereby (iii) reducing the effectivness of pro-peace elite messaging within G_v. Another set of expectations might be that (i) as the government's assistance to members of G_v increases, (ii) security concerns among the members of that group decrease, thereby (iii) increasing the effectivness of pro-peace messaging within the victimized group. Future experimentation in cases with varying levels of state bias will help to assess the generalizability of the victimization logic.

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Appendix

A1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 11: Full Sample: Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Unemployed	2,090	0.379	0.485	0	1
Yrs. Quran Lessons	2,089	4.604	3.631	0	21
Outgroup Friends	2,088	1.964	2.756	0	10
Violent Peers	2,089	3.508	4.080	0	10
Weekly Prayer Attendance	2,089	11.685	10.341	0	35
Extr. Ritual Part.	2,089	3.493	1.332	0	5
Econ Marg	2,084	2.907	1.041	1	4
Prioritize Sect	2,100	0.601	0.490	0	1

Table 12: Sunni Sample: Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Unempoyed	1,050	0.102	0.303	0	1
Yrs. Quran Lessons	1,050	2.822	1.046	0	5
Outgroup Friends	1,050	0.379	0.860	0	5
Violent Peers	1,050	0.877	1.318	0	6
Weekly Prayer Part.	1,050	9.248	7.874	0	35
Extr. Ritual Part.	1,050	3.449	1.109	0	5
Econ. Marg.	1,050	2.398	0.931	1	4
Prioritize Sect	1,050	0.582	0.493	0	1

Table 13: Shia Sample: Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Unemployed	1,040	0.659	0.474	0	1
Yrs. Quran Lessons	1,039	6.405	4.353	0	21
Outgroup Friends	1,038	3.567	3.069	0	10
Violent Peers	1,039	6.167	4.203	0	10
Weekly Prayer Part.	1,039	14.149	11.849	0	35
Extr. Ritual Part.	1,039	3.538	1.524	1	5
Econ Marg.	1,034	3.425	0.880	1	4
Prioritize Sect	1,050	0.620	0.486	0	1

A2. Robustness: Difference in Effects Between Sects

The following tables use regression via OLS to estimate the difference in the average treatment effects of an in-group cleric, out-group cleric, and their interaction between sects on the three dependent variables. In these tables, note that the treatment dummy variables, *InCler* and *OutCler*, as well as the Shia dummy, *SHIA*, are demeaned.

In the first table, the fully saturated model in column 4 is as follows:

$$Y_i = \tau_1 * IN * SHIA + \tau_2 * OUT * SHIA + B_i * X_i + IN * X_i + OUT * X_i + Enum_j + SHIA_i + \epsilon_i \quad (3)$$

where τ_1 refers to the difference in average effects of *IN* between sects; τ_2 refers to the difference in average effects of *OUT* between sects; X_i refer to the *i* covariates, $Enum_j$ are the fixed effects for the *j* enumerators, and ϵ_i is a disturbance term. Models in columns 1-3 are respectively modified as described in the bottom part of the table. Lastly, for each model, the observations, adjusted-R^2, and F-statistics are provided below the outcome variable.

In the second table, the fully saturated model in column 4 is as follows:

$$Y_i = IN*SHIA + OUT*SHIA + \tau_3*IN*OUT*SHIA + B_i*X_i + IN*OUT*X_i + Enum_j + SHIA_i + \epsilon_i \quad (4)$$

where τ_3 refers to the difference in the average effect of *IN*OUT*; X_i refer to the *i* covariates, $Enum_j$ are the fixed effects for the *j* enumerators, and ϵ_i is a disturbance term. Models in columns 1-3 are respectively modified as described in the bottom part of the table. Lastly, for each model, the observations, adjusted-R^2, and F-statistics are provided below the outcome variable.

Table 14: Robustness: Difference in ATE of *Ingroup* and *Outgroup* Between Sects

	Purchase Peace Band at T_1(Binary)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
*Incleric*SHIA*	−0.051**	−0.050***	−0.037**	−0.030
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.032)
*Outcleric*SHIA*	0.003	0.002	−0.001	−0.010
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.032)
Observations	2,086	2,086	2,079	2,079
Adjusted R^2	0.107	0.189	0.251	0.252
F Stat.	51.160***	38.485***	35.909***	21.552***

	Wearing Peace Band 8 Hours Later at T_2 (Binary)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
*Incleric*SHIA*	−0.047**	0.047**	−0.036**	−0.054*
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.030)
*Outcleric*SHIA*	−0.009	−0.009	−0.012	−0.018
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.030)
Observations	2,071	2,071	2,064	2,064
Adjusted R^2	0.116	0.150	0.203	0.205
F Stat.	55.486***	29.062***	27.294***	16.602***

	Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later at T_2 (Standardized)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
*Incleric*SHIA*	−0.168***	−0.165***	−0.154***	−0.050
	(0.045)	(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.070)
*Outcleric*SHIA*	−0.008	−0.008	−0.012	−0.123*
	(0.045)	(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.070)
Observations	2,074	2,074	2,067	2,067
Adjusted R^2	0.019	0.114	0.186	0.204
F Stat.	8.97***	26.042***	24.634***	16.596***
SHIA FE?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Enum FE?	N	Y	Y	Y
Cov?	N	N	Y	Y
Cov*Incleric?	N	N	N	Y
Cov*Outcleric?	N	N	N	Y

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 15: Robustness: Difference in ATE of *Incleric*Outcleric* Between Sects

	Purchase Band at T_1			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
In*Out*SHIA	0.052	0.051	0.017	0.123*
	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.064)
Constant	0.334***	0.487***	0.584***	0.580***
	(0.010)	(0.021)	(0.051)	(0.052)
Observations	2,086	2,086	2,079	2,079
Adj. R^2	0.108	0.190	0.251	0.255
F Stat.	36.965***	33.580***	32.715***	17.500***
	Wearing Peace Band 8 Hours Later at T_2			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
In*Out*SHIA	0.036	0.035	0.004	0.034
	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.062)
Constant	0.255***	0.356***	0.250***	0.266***
	(0.009)	(0.020)	(0.049)	(0.050)
Observations	2,071	2,071	2,064	2,064
Adj.-R^2	0.116	0.150	0.203	0.204
F Stat.	39.910***	25.323***	24.846***	13.305***
	Pro-Peace Speech 8 Hours Later at T_2			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
In*Out*SHIA	0.102	0.100	0.055	−0.012
	(0.091)	(0.087)	(0.083)	(0.142)
Constant	−0.001	0.107**	0.943***	0.964***
	(0.022)	(0.047)	(0.113)	(0.115)
Observations	2,074	2,074	2,067	2,067
Adj.-R^2	0.017	0.109	0.186	0.194
F Stat.	6.050***	17.908***	22.437***	12.536***
SHIA FE?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Enum FE?	N	Y	Y	Y
Cov?	N	N	Y	Y
Cov**In*Outcleric*?	N	N	N	Y

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

A3. Audio Recording Transcripts in English

A3.1: Sunni Cleric Message (Audio Duration: 5 min)

In the name of Allah, the most beneficent and the most merciful. All praises for Allah and prayers for the Prophet Muhammad and his progeny. I, Maulana Muhammad Sufyan Nizami, from Luckhnow am speaking to you.

These days, around the world, we have been facing such conditions where followers of one religion are having doubts about the belief systems and other things related to the other religions. In such a situation, it is a very commendable effort through which we can try to understand each others' religion and the similarities that Sunnis and Shias share amongst themselves, so that we can take them up in order to move forward in our lives. These efforts will also help remove the disagreements between different religion which are often manifested in the form of violence across the world.

All the Muslims, regardless of whatever sect they belong to, believe in the holy book of Islam called the Quran. Every Muslim believes that this holy book was revealed on the last prophet of God, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The purpose of this revelation was to eliminate the prejudices and differences that people had regarding each others' religions and beliefs. Instead it encouraged the spirit of humanity in the society.

It is said that the Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Ali (May God be pleased with him) was once in a war where he over powered an infidel/disbeliever of Islam. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) wanted to kill him and the conditions were very favorable whereby he could easily put the disbeliever to death. Meanwhile, the disbeliever spat on the face of Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Ali's ego dictated him to let that disbeliever go free. People inquired him about this incident curiously as to why he did that. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) replied that if he did anything to the disbeliever after he spat on him, it would have been a personal revenge and Islam does not allow for such kinds of personal revenge. In Islam, only the battles/wars fought in the name of Allah and His Prophet are appreciated. If anyone starts taking revenge for his own being, belongings and ego and starts using the name of the religion Islam politically, such situations generate violence of whose greatest example is in front of the world these days.

For the same reason, the brotherhood that the Prophet Muhammad preached to his companions has been quoted by several followers and companions. At one instance, during a war, an injured companion of the Prophet was asking for water in his feeble voice, someone brought him water and before he could drink it, another injured companion also asked for water and the cup, untouched by the first companion, was instead forwarded to the second companion. Before the second companion could drink it, a third injured companion asked for water and the second companion passed the water onto the third one without drinking. Eventually, all the three injured companions embraced

martyrdom. We have gotten a lesson of such amazing brotherhood, sacrifice and humanity from the companions and followers of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

Even the life of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is replete with such instances of humanity. One day, when the lady that used to throw trash on the Prophet everyday while he passed through her street was not there and he heard that she was ill, he went to inquire for her health. In another instance, when the Prophet of the God was circumnavigating the Kaaba in Mecca, Allah sent him a revelation that a man named Fuzala was carrying a spear under his arm to harm him. The Prophet went on to him and confronted. He admitted his crime and the Prophet forgave him. Such instances from the religion of Islam presents a lesson to all of us that we should never take revenges for the sake of ourselves. These examples teach us that it is our responsibility to take up all the similarities that the different sects of Islam represent with each other, follow those, be sympathetic to each other and create an environment of brotherhood in the society. If we happen to come across specific deeds pertaining to any particular sect of religion that we think might create tensions between two or more sects of Islam, we must take it up with our elders and scholars and seek their guidance on this matter. Whatever they suggest, should be followed instead of taking any step by ourselves individually.

A3.2: Shia Cleric Message (Audio Recording Duration: 5 min)

In the name of Allah, the most beneficent and the most merciful. All praise for God Almighty who is the creator of all the universes. My name is Maulana Syed Raza Hussain and I am from Lucknow. It is commendable that an important topic regarding unity is being highlighted today. First of all, I would like to say that Quran has stressed its importance as well in the following words: ... "And hold fast by the rope of Allah (divine injunctions) all together and be not disunited." This is one of the basic teachings of the Quran and an instruction from God that all of us, as Muslims, should follow whole heartedly. We should focus on the fact that this is what Quran is teaching us. If there is no unity within a nation, it is seen as a divided (weak) one. Therefore, Quran in its teachings and the other actions like congregation during prayers teach us to stay united. We do not have any differences between Shias and our Sunni brothers on this point i.e. offering prayers. It is obligatory for all the Muslims to offer prayers and this in itself is a lesson of unity especially when offered in congregation.

The very basis of the Shia sect of religion is against any violence – in fact, it is rather entirely opposite to violence. Violence is considered forbidden in our sect. Shias are usually those people who after the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) consider Hazrat Ali (May God be pleased with him) a Caliph of his, Khalifa bil fazal, and his true successor. The sayings of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) can be seen in the compilation of Nahj-ul-Balaagha. It can also be observed that he always

condemned violence during his life and remained a preacher of love and cooperation to the humanity. It can also be observed that a lot of sects stood against him when he was in power but he never used any form of violence. Instead he tried to tell them with love in order to bring them towards unity. For example, you can see that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) himself, the successor of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), was targeted, terrorized and hurt. After the injury, he was brought home. You can hardly find any instance around the world where any international leader was a victim of violence and he/she did not take any revenge. However, Hazrat Ali (R.A) set a contrary example in his lifetime in this regard. Even when Ibne Muljim al Muradi, the accused, was brought to him, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) ordered to untie the ropes around his hands and asked his companions to offer him some milk to drink. Hence, through Hazrat Ali's life we can learn that violence does not have to be reciprocated by violence and instead we should practice patience in such circumstances as has been taught by Maula Ali (R.A.).

Another instance of violence was observed at the funeral of Hazrat Ali's son, Hazrat Imam Hassan, when Bani Hashim wanted to bury his body inside the premises of the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Arrow shootings were used as a form of violence and it could have potentially led to a fight between the two groups. However, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Imam Hussain from Bani Hashim did not retaliate with violence. Hazrat Imam Hassan, in fact, once said that if he was not allowed to be buried near his grand father, the Prophet of Islam, he should be taken to Jannat ul Bakee and buried near his mother instead. Therefore, it can be seen that no violence was triggered, no one was hurt, injured or killed by Bani Hashim in such a situation and Hazrat Imam Hassan was taken to be buried in Jannat ul Bakee.

You can see that Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.) used to ask until his last moments of life that why the enemies were planning on killing him and whether if, at any point, he misinterpreted the things which were allowed or not allowed in Islam. Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.) sacrificed his own life and preached the entire world that violence is never a preferred way of conduct and in order to avoid violence, it is okay to sacrifice one's own life to achieve the greater aims as a society. The important aim and mission that Hazrat Imam Hussain was following in his life was to tell the people that terrorism is wrong and has to be discouraged and humanity has to flourish forever.

Blessings be unto you.

A4. Perceptions of Speaker and Content Attributes By Sect

Figure 1: Perceived Influence of In-Group Cleric