# Mass Religious Ritual and Intergroup Tolerance

The Muslim Pilgrims' Paradox

MIKHAIL A. ALEXSEEV SUFIAN N. ZHEMUKHOV



### Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics

"In this unusual book, two coauthors with different academic, cultural, and religious backgrounds set out to directly explore the Islamic Hajj pilgrimage, a major collective ritual practiced by humans. They go beyond the classical Durkheimian insight that rituals generate social solidarity and demonstrate, empirically as well as theoretically, that such solidarity could even transcend the boundaries of religion itself."

Georgi Derluguian, New York University, Abu Dhabi

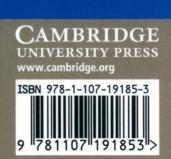
"The standard narrative about 'radicalization' draws a straight line between religious fervor and political action. But in this truly pathbreaking study, two prominent experts demonstrate the opposite: that the experience of going on a pilgrimage to Muslim holy sites can lead to more tolerant attitudes when pilgrims return home. I hope that every student of religion, sociology, and political science reads this book, and that journalists and global policymakers take note of these vital findings about how many Muslims actually practice their faith."

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"Combining political science's trademark rigor with the depth of insight characteristic of historical ethnography, the authors document how a ritual that exposes someone intensely to the diversity of their own large group can also generate pro-social attitudes toward members of other groups, even in sites of ongoing conflict. Filled with fascinating personal stories and insight about Russia's North Caucasus and Islam, the book gives cause for optimism regarding the human condition more generally."

Henry E. Hale, George Washington University, Washington DC

Cover image: Muslims gather atop Mount Arafat during the Day of Arafat as part of the rites of the Hajj Pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia near Mecca. Omar Chatriwala via Getty Images.



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San Diego State University

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#### Mass Religious Ritual and Intergroup Tolerance

Under what conditions does in-group pride facilitate out-group tolerance? And what are the causal linkages between intergroup tolerance and socialization in religious rituals? This book examines how Muslims from Russia's North Caucuses returned from the Haji pilgrimage to Mecca both more devout as Muslims and more tolerant of outgroups. Drawing on prominent theories of identity and social capital, the authors resolve seeming contradictions between the two literatures by showing the effects of religious rituals that highlight within-group diversity at the same time that they affirm the group's common identity. This theory is then applied to explain why social integration of Muslim immigrants has been more successful in the United States than in Europe and how the largest Hispanic association in the United States defied the clash of civilizations theory by promoting immigrants' integration into America's social mainstream. This book offers insights into Islam's role in society and politics and the interrelationships between religious faith, immigration and ethnic identity, and tolerance that will be relevant to both scholars and practitioners.

Mikhail A. Alexseev is a professor of political science at San Diego State University. He is the author of *Immigration Phobia and the Security Dilemma* (2006), Center-Periphery Conflict in Post-Soviet Russia (1999), and Threat Assessment, Intelligence, and Global Struggle (1997).

Sufian N. Zhemukhov is a senior research associate at George Washington University. He is the coauthor of *Putin's Olympics:* The Sochi Games and the Evolution of Twenty-First Century Russia (2017, with Robert Orttung).

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#### Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics

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The most enduring and illuminating bodies of late nineteenth-century social theory – by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and others – emphasized the integration of religion, polity, and economy through time and place. Once a staple of classic social theory, however, religion gradually lost the interest of many social scientists during the twentieth century. The recent emergence of phenomena such as Solidarity in Poland, the dissolution of the Soviet empire, various South American, southern African, and South Asian liberation movements, the Christian right in the United States, and Al Qaeda have reawakened scholarly interest in religiously based political conflict. At the same time, fundamental questions are once again being asked about the role of religion in stable political regimes, public policies, and constitutional orders. The series Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics will produce volumes that study religion and politics by drawing on classic social theory and more recent social scientific research traditions. Books in the series offer theoretically grounded, comparative, empirical studies that raise "big" questions about a timely subject that has long engaged the best minds in social science.

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For our parents, Anatoly & Lyudmila and Nasabi & Fatima

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