

## **Abstract**

In this paper, I challenge the use of Muslim population size as a causal variable for religious intolerance. I propose we change that variable to the existence of a state-sponsored religion. I conduct a qualitative analysis of the scholarly literature, state constitutions and statutes, and news reports to examine the levels of religious persecution in Lebanon, Indonesia, and Iran. I find states will persecute religious minorities more when there is a state-sponsored religion. For that reason, we should use the existence of a state-sponsored religion as an independent variable in a model predicting religious persecution. I also propose that this variable be coded as either ordinal or scale so that we can account for varying levels of religio-political entanglement with the state religion.