

**The Causes of Religious Wars:**  
Holy Nations, Sacred Spaces, and Religious Revolutions

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**Abstract**

In the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>, policy analysts, journalists, and academics have tried to make sense of the rise of militant Islam, particularly its role as a motivating and legitimating force for violence against the US. The unwritten assumption is that there is something about Islam that makes it bloodier and more violence-prone than other religions. This dissertation seeks to investigate this assertion by considering incidents of Islamically motivated terrorism, violence, and war, and comparing them to examples of Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu bellicosity. In doing so, it aims to evaluate if religious violence is primarily the product of beliefs, doctrine and scripture, or if religious violence is the result of other factors such as cultural, political, social and economic circumstances.

This dissertation focuses on religious wars—wars, terrorism, and violent conflicts that have saliently religious goals, specifically battles to defend holy nations, sacred spaces and revolutions aimed at creating religious governments—and tests three variables for their ability to explain the conditions under which religious wars arise: threat perception, the intertwining of political and religious authority, and the amount of resources available to a given religious group. It argues that religious violence is the result of specific *interpretations* of a religion's beliefs and scriptures, not the religions *per se*, and that violent interpretations of a religion are the product of individuals—usually religious leaders—who are grounded in specific circumstances. Therefore, in order to understand the conditions under which these violent interpretations of a religion occur, one needs to identify, first, who is interpreting the religion and by what authority; second, the social, political and economic circumstances surrounding these violent interpretations; and third, the believability of these interpretations by members of religious communities.

Thesis Supervisor: Stephen Van Evera  
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## Introduction

In the days following the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in the New York and Washington, DC, the government, the media, and citizens in the US and around the world tried to make sense of an inconceivable act of brutality that took nearly everyone by surprise. Within hours of the attacks, pictures of Osama Bin Laden flashed across television broadcasts accompanied by descriptions of his *fatwas*—Muslim legal edicts—calling for Muslims to rise up and fight the US in the name of Islam. Within days, as journalists and law enforcement agencies began to piece together the details of the hijackers and their motives, it became evident that Islam played some role in the terrorist attacks. This point was reinforced with the recovery a hijacker's piece of luggage that did not make its connecting flight in Boston. In the bag, law enforcement agencies found a copy of the Qur'an in addition to written instructions for how the hijackers should behave on the day of the attacks and assurances that they would be divinely rewarded for the actions they were about to commit: "You will be entering Paradise. You will be entering the happiest life, everlasting life."<sup>1</sup>

These pieces of evidence surrounding Islam's role in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks prompted many journalists to declare that Islam was, somehow, the guilty culprit in the terrorists' acts. Middle East historian Ervand Abrahamian argues that, "the media framed the whole crisis within the context of Islam, of cultural conflicts, and of Western

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<sup>1</sup> Quote taken from: "“Oh God, Open All Doors for Me,”” *The Washington Post*, September 28, 2001; for details on the contents of hijacker Mohammad Atta's suitcase, see Peter Finn and Charles Lane, "Will Gives a Window Into Suspect's Mind; Czechs Say Atta Met With Iraqi Official," *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2001

civilization threatened by the Other.”<sup>2</sup> For example, an October *New York Times* article asserted:

From the assassination of Anwar Sadat to the fatwa against Salman Rushdie to the decade-long campaign of bin Laden to the destruction of ancient Buddhist statues and the hideous persecution of women and homosexuals by the Taliban to the World Trade Center massacre, there is a single line. That line is a fundamentalist, religious one. And it is an Islamic one.<sup>3</sup>

That same article further proclaimed that: “Most interpreters of the Koran [sic] find no arguments in it for murder of innocents. But it would be naïve to ignore in Islam a deep thread of intolerance towards unbelievers, especially if those unbelievers are believed to be a threat to the Islamic world.”<sup>4</sup>

In the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, policy analysts, journalists, and academics have aimed to comprehend the rise of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, including the role that Islam has played as a motivating and legitimating force for violence against the US. The emerging unwritten assumption within this literature is that there is something about Islam that makes it bloodier and more violence-prone than other religions. For example, much attention has been paid to Islam’s doctrine of *jihad*, or holy war, as the source of Islam’s bellicosity.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, scholars and journalists have pointed to Islam’s doctrine of martyrization as another source that promotes violence within the faith.<sup>6</sup> Still others have suggested that Islam is a repressive if not backwards religion that is incapable of adapting to modernity, evidenced by women dressed in veils and the degree of social, economic

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<sup>2</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, “The US Media, Huntington, and September 11,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 3, (2003), pp. 529-544

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Sullivan, “This is a Religious War,” *The New York Times*, October 7, 2001

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> For example, see: “Think Tank; Two Views: Can the Koran Condone Terror?” *The New York Times*, October 13, 2001

<sup>6</sup> For example, see: “After the Attacks: The Organization; Old War Escalates on a New Front: The Trail of Relentless Martyrs,” *The New York Times*, September 16, 2001; John F. Burns, “The World: Martyrdom;

and political chaos in countries that are predominantly Muslim; September 11<sup>th</sup>, therefore, was an act of frustration against the premier country of modernity, the US.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of the evidence cited, Islam has been on trial since September 11<sup>th</sup> with the charge that there is something uniquely violent about its beliefs, doctrines, and practices.

This dissertation seeks to investigate the assertion that Islam is an inherently and uniquely violent religion. In order to do this, it will consider not only violent incidents involving Islamically motivated terrorism and war, but also examples of Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu bellicosity. Furthermore, this dissertation will consider incidents of religious violence in contemporary times as well as historically. In doing so, it aims to investigate if religious violence is largely the product of beliefs, doctrine, and scripture, or if religious violence is the result of other factors such as political, social and economic circumstances.

Many historical and contemporary conflicts have been identified as religious wars. They include incidents such as the Christian Crusades, Muslim and Jewish violence in the Middle East, Hindu and Muslim riots in India, Catholic and Protestant unrest in Northern Ireland, and the Iranian Revolution and the rise of the Ayatallah Khomeini, to name a few. This list demonstrates, first, that incidents of religious violence can be named in religions other than Islam, such as Christianity, Judaism, and even Hinduism, a religion commonly associated with Gandhi and non-violence. Furthermore, this list

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The Promise of Paradise that Slays Peace,” April 1, 2001 (Specifically considering Islamic suicide bombers in Palestine.)

<sup>7</sup> For example, Bernard Lewis argues: “In the course of the twentieth century it became abundantly clear in the Middle East and indeed all over the lands of Islam that things had indeed gone badly wrong. Compared with its millennial rival, Christendom, the world of Islam had become poor, weak, and ignorant.” Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pg. 151. See also chapter 3: “Social and Cultural Barriers,” in which Lewis identifies three barriers to Islam’s modernization: women, science, and music, pp. 64-81; and chapter 4:

reveals that religious violence has occurred in episodes, which is to say that religious violence is visible at some points in time and in certain places but not at others. For example, western European Christians are no longer fighting Crusades. Likewise, the Iranian Revolution and the creation of the world's first modern Islamic republic occurred in Iran in 1979, not in Turkey or Indonesia. Similarly, Hindu and Muslim riots in India are not ongoing but occur at some point and in some cities. Therefore, this dissertation aims to provide insights into the following puzzle: Why are some religions violent at some points in time but not at others? What is causing this variation?

This dissertation argues that religious violence is the result of specific *interpretations* of a religion's beliefs and scriptures, not the religions *per se*, and that violent interpretations of a religion are the product of individuals—usually religious leaders—who are grounded in specific circumstances. Therefore, in order to understand the conditions under which these violent interpretations of a religion occur, one needs to identify, first, who is interpreting the religion and by what authority; second, the social, political and economic circumstances surrounding these violent interpretations; and third, the believability of these interpretations by members of religious communities.

In order to investigate the conditions under which violent interpretations of a religion are generated and believed, the terms religion and religious war need to be clearly defined. Chapter one, therefore, offers definitions of these terms. It argues that religion is more than beliefs and scriptures; rather, it includes six elements: beliefs, texts, leaders, practitioners, identity, and resources such as buildings and money. Furthermore, chapter one argues that the purpose of religion is not merely to propagate love and peace;

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“Modernity and Social Equality,” in which Lewis argues that Islam is a barrier to social equality to “the slave, the woman, and the unbeliever,” pp. 82-95.



rather, it is a system of beliefs organized around the concept of “earthly” and “eternal” salvation, or redeeming humanity and the earth from a fallen state, either in this world or the hereafter. Salvation, it argues, is important for understanding religious bellicosity, particularly through the notion that dying on the battlefield in defense of a religion will procure eternal salvation. This is true not only of Islam—which has a doctrine of martyrization—but also of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, which all have examples of holy warriors fighting in defense of their faith. Furthermore, earthly salvation has provided motivation for groups wishing to foment religious revolutions with the aim of overthrowing their governments, installing religious theocracies, and returning society to a state of pristine righteousness. This is particularly true of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. However it is also true of revolutionary movements within Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism.

Chapter one also makes a distinction between two types of religious bellicosity: “wars with religion,”—violent conflict in which religion serves as motivation and justification for the use of force in wars with “secular” or non-religious goals—and “religious wars,” wars in which the end goals of the violence are saliently religious. In particular, this dissertation names three end goals of religious wars: the defense of holy nations (land and people deemed essential to the preservation of the faith), battles over sacred space (specific sites believed to have a unique connection with the divine), and religious revolutions that aim to create religious governments. While these goals do not cover all objectives of religious wars, this dissertation argues that they include the bloodiest incidents of religious violence in historical and contemporary times.

Chapter two offers a causal argument for religious wars. It names three study variables as possible causes of religious wars—threat perception, the intertwining of religious and political leaders, and the amount of resources available to a belligerent group—and tests these variables in the case studies for their ability to explain the conditions under which religious violence and war occur.

The case studies are divided into three sections, which correspond to the end goals of religious wars identified above: defense of holy nations, battles over sacred spaces, and religious revolutions. In order to investigate the charge that there is something uniquely violent about Islam, each section considers one case involving Islam and compares that case with a similar example of religious violence in a different tradition. Furthermore, this approach—using qualitative methods, particularly process tracing—allows for the investigation of incidents of religious violence *within* a particular religion across time and then compares violence and war *across* religious traditions. This research design, therefore, aims to identify causes of specific incidents of religious wars in addition to finding common causes of religious wars across space, time and religious tradition.

Section one, the defense of holy nations, compares cases of Buddhist and Muslim violence aimed at defending land and people believed to be essential to the preservation of these faiths. Chapter three considers Buddhist battles to defend the *dhammadipa* in Sri Lanka, a land and people that, it is believed, the Buddha ordained to protect and propagate his teachings. It argues that religious battles have included the goal of making Sri Lanka purely Sinhalese Buddhist in order to realize its divine mandate. This goal, and

the governmental policies enacted to favor Sinhalese Buddhists over other religious and ethnic groups, sparked riots and eventually dragged the country into civil war.

Chapter four considers Muslim battles to defend the *dar al Islam*, the territory of Islam, comparing a wave of jihads in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the current rise of jihads, including Bin Laden's current call for jihad against the US. It argues that both waves of jihads have largely been in response to international threats—such as colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and cultural, political, and economic globalization today—in addition to domestic threats, specifically corrupt leaders that militant groups perceive as failing to uphold the tenets of Islam. The US, in particular, has become the target of Islamically motivated terrorism due to perceptions of its foreign policy intents—through its nearly unconditional support of Israel, military actions against several Muslim countries including Afghanistan and Iraq, and its support of unpopular regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia—in addition to its spread of culture and values abroad.

Section two considers battles over sacred spaces, comparing the cities of Ayodhya, in northern India, with Jerusalem in Israel and Palestine. Chapter five traces three major waves of violence over contested sacred spaces in Ayodhya, the celebrated birthplace of Ram in Hinduism and the site of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Muslim mosque, which was destroyed by an estimated 300,000 Hindu militants in 1992. It argues, first, that violence over the site has not been constant but, rather, has occurred in waves. Second, that the rise of Hindu militancy is largely the result of the call for Hindus to realize *Hindutva*, a Hindu nation in India that excludes foreign cultures, religions and political ideologies. Ayodhya has become the epicenter of the bid to make India into *Hindutva*, offering an example of perceived foreign threats—namely Islam—to Hindu culture and faith.

Chapter six outlines Christian, Muslim and Jewish battles for control of Jerusalem's holy sites, including Christian Crusades aimed at capturing the Tomb of Christ, Muslim jihads fought to regain control of Jerusalem, and Israel's seizure of Jerusalem in 1967 and the religious reactions it produced within Jewish and Muslim militant movements. It argues that these incidents of religious violence have occurred in reaction to threats imposed to sacred sites by the policies of the governing group. This includes the current "al-Aqsa Intifada," which has occurred within the context of threatening Israeli policies towards Jerusalem and the West Bank and Gaza Strip and was sparked by the controversial visit of right-wing politician Ariel Sharon (now Israel's prime minister) to the *Haram al-Sharif*/Temple Mount in Jerusalem on September 28, 2000.

Section three considers religious revolutions that aim to overthrow existing governments and create theocracies in their place. Chapter seven describes the revolution that perhaps comes to most people's minds when considering the creation of a religious government, the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It traces Iran's two revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the 1906 revolution for a constitution and democratically elected parliament and the 1979 revolution, which ultimately called for the overthrow of the Shah and the creation of a religious government. It argues that the 1979 revolution developed saliently religious goals through the participation of Islamic organizations, which mobilized the masses through its interpretations of Islam, and through the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini, who succeeded in uniting religious and secular movements to realize the goals of deposing the Shah and ending US influences in Iran.

Chapter eight investigates the rise of Marxism and its applications in the Russian, Chinese and Cuban Communist revolutions with the aim of considering, first, if Marxism functions like a religion and, second, if anything can be learned from US foreign policy effort to undermine Marxist ideology during the Cold War. It argues that Marxism contains elements that make it similar to religion, particularly its salvific goal of liberating the masses from the ills of capitalism. Marxism in practice did little to realize these goals, however, and ultimately failed to garner support from the masses. Therefore the failure of these regimes to deliver on their promises did more to undermine the popular legitimacy of Marxism than did US efforts to debunk the ideology.

This dissertation concludes by offering general findings from the case studies and their policy implications. The case studies demonstrate, first, that religions other than Islam have engaged in violence and war. Therefore, the charge that Islam is uniquely violent does not stand up to empirical observation. Second, the case studies reveal that threat perception towards holy nations is a salient cause of religious wars. However, the sources of these threats are not other religions. Rather, two threats tend to produce a religious reaction. First, drastic political and social changes—such as the transformations brought on by colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and cultural, economic, and political globalization today—have threatened the structure and order of traditional societies, often producing a religious backlash. Second, oppressive regimes have prompted religious leaders to mobilize their constituents with the goal of overthrowing these regimes and establishing more just systems—based on religious values—in their place.

The former threat, radical challenges to the order of society, impacts US foreign policy aims of spreading democracy around the globe, which often carries liberal values

that may be threatening to societies with their own values and norms. The US government, therefore, should seek to promote *structural democracy*—such as universal suffrage, checks and balances on authority, and transparency in the government—and to separate structural democracy from liberal values that may not be essential to healthy democratic governments. Second, the US government should consider its political, financial, and military support to governments that are deemed a threat to the masses within certain states, specifically Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which are neither democratic nor popular and have fueled the creation of militant Islamic movements bent on overthrowing these regimes. The US has become a terrorist target, in part, for their support of these governments.

Second, along these lines, the findings in this dissertation reveal that the presence of religion in government—through monarchies, religious political parties or governmental posts—does not, *ipso facto*, lead to religious wars. Therefore, the US government should not restrict the presence of religious political parties in emerging democracies around the world, particularly if it is the will of the people to have these parties run in elections. Furthermore, allowing religious movements to run in elections has several benefits: it brings them into the political system instead of alienating them from it; it provides these groups with a method of voicing their grievances through non-violent means; it holds these groups accountable for their rhetoric; it makes these groups compete for constituents; and, if elected, it forces these groups to work with other parties and compromise. Thus religious parties should not be considered anti-democratic, even though they clash with the US norm of separation of church and state.

Finally, the US government should identify the militant religious organizations most threatening to the US and its interests and work towards disbanding and delegitimizing these groups. Specifically, it should continue to deny these groups material resources, such as financing and technological resources, in addition to restricting communications and transportations technologies. It should also seek to disband these organizations by capturing its leaders and shutting down their bases of operation. However, the US government should consider non-violent means of attaining these goals because military force could reinforce the misperception that the US is trying to destroy the Muslim world, as argued by Bin Laden, and offer fuel for anti-US mobilization. Likewise, assassinating leaders could further radicalize those within the organization and provide propaganda for recruiting. Instead, the US government should capture these leaders and force them to live out ignoble and unglorious life-sentences in prison, thus denying these organizations recruitment propaganda.

The US government, therefore, has considerable options in dealing with the current threat it faces from Islamically motivated terrorism. Furthermore, valuable insights can be gained from looking at religious violence *across* religions and throughout time; specifically that, first, the current examples we see of Islamically motivated violence, war and terrorism against the US have not always existed; and, second, that other examples of religious violence have come and gone, suggesting that Islamically motivated terrorism may not always be the primary religious threat to the US.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>—in which 19 hijackers commandeered four planes, driving three into US buildings—is not even the first example of religiously motivated terrorism of this kind. In World War II,

Japanese *kamikaze* pilots, “the wind of God,” drove planes into nearly 200 US warships on religiously inspired military missions.<sup>8</sup> In these cases, the inspiration was belligerent interpretations of Shintoism and Buddhism, religions most commonly associated with peaceful and non-violent norms. *Kamikaze* manuals, not unlike the instructions penned by a September 11<sup>th</sup> hijacker, encouraged their pilots to “transcend life and death,” and promised that “after the crash they will become like gods (*kami*)—that they will meet their friends and joke with them in their god-like state.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the religious threat today comes from a belligerent interpretation of Islam, but it has not always been that way, nor will it likely always be so.

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Axel and Hideaki Kase, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods*, (London: Pearson Education: 2002), pg. 169

<sup>9</sup> Quotes taken from pg. 78 and pg. 77, respectively.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Religion and Religious Wars**

The end of the Cold War and September 11<sup>th</sup> have ushered in a new era in global politics. An important threat to the post-Cold War peace is religiously motivated violence, war and terrorism, particularly the current terrorist threat to the US, which involves Islam. International relations scholars need to rigorously address this topic in order to impose clarity and structure on academic and policy debates surrounding the current threat of religious bellicosity. In order to do this, however, scholars need to take religion seriously as a force of international politics. This requires knowledge of religious beliefs and practices; the role of religions in society, culture and politics; and the conditions that fuel religious violence and war.

This chapter aims to provide a foundation for understanding religiously motivated violence and war. It will, first, provide an argument for why religion must be taken seriously as a phenomenon of international relations in general, and studies on causes of war in particular. Second, it will present definitions of the key variables in this dissertation. Specifically it will propose a definition for religion that includes both its content and its purpose. It will also define two types of religious war. And lastly, this chapter will outline the religions to be studied and offer an argument for why these religions are important for the study of religiously motivated conflict and war.

## Religion and the Study of War and Violent Conflict

Religion—as a social, historical, and political phenomenon—has received scarce attention in international relations literature in general<sup>1</sup> and on religion's involvement in war and violent conflict in particular.<sup>2</sup> In the post-Cold War world and particularly in light of September 11<sup>th</sup>, scholars of international relations need to take religion seriously as a powerful force in modern-day politics, society, and individuals' lives.

Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, few international relations scholars had either the interest or the foundational knowledge necessary for studying religious violence and war. This is noted by international relations scholar Robert Jervis who argues that: "Terrorism grounded in religion poses special problems for modern social science, which has paid little attention to religion, perhaps because most social scientists find this subject

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<sup>1</sup> As noted by Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2001), pp. 53-74.

Examples of works on religion as a social and political force in international relations include *Religion and International Relations*, edited by K.R. Dark, (New York: St. Martins Press, 2000); *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Jeff Haynes, *Religion in Third World Politics*, particularly chapter five: "Links between Religion and Foreign Policy in the Third World," (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1993); *Religion and Global Order*, edited by John L. Esposito and Michael Watson, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000); Daniel Philpott, "Religious Roots of Modern International Relations," *World Politics*, Vol. 5, no. 2 (January 2000); and *Cuba at the Crossroads: The Visit of Pope John Paul II and Opportunities for US Policy*, (Washington, DC: Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee on International Relations, 1998).

Works on religion in international relations also focuses on the role of ethics in the global arena. Some examples include Roger Epp, *The Power of Moral Sanction: Towards a Modest Place for Religion In the Study of Foreign Policy*, (Center for International Relations Occasional Paper, no. 20, Queens University, 1987); Kenneth W. Thompson, *Words and Deeds in Foreign Policy*, (New York: Fifth Morgenthau Memorial Lecture on Morality and Foreign Policy, The Carnegie Endowment, 1986); and Paul Ramsey, *Just War: Force and Political Responsibility*, (Lanham MD: University of America Press, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> International relations scholarship on religion as a cause of war and violent conflict focuses primarily on religion's contribution to ethnic conflict. This includes political scientist Jonathan Fox's large-n research on religion's impact on ethnic conflict, including: "Is Islam More Conflict Prone than Other Religions? A Cross-Sectional Study of Ethnoreligious Conflict," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* Vol. 6, No. 2, (Summer 2000), pp-124; "Religious Causes of International Intervention in Ethnic Conflicts," *International Politics*, Vol. 38, (December, 2001), pp. 515-523; "Two Civilizations and Ethnic Conflict: Islam and the West," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 4, (2001), pp. 459-472; "Religious Causes of Discrimination against Ethno-Religious Minorities," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44, (2000), pp. 423-450. Works by other scholars include: Liz Fawcett, *Religion, Ethnicity and Social Change*, (New York: St. Martin's

uninteresting if not embarrassing.”<sup>3</sup> The notable exception to this trend is Samuel Huntington who, in his controversial book *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order*, predicted that the post Cold War world would be marked by violent conflicts between civilizations, which, at their roots, are defined by religion.<sup>4</sup> Huntington’s book is important, first and foremost, because it puts religion on the map as an important dimension of international relations and cause of war. However, his hypothesis—while appearing to come true in light of September 11<sup>th</sup>—does not specify the conditions under which religions, as civilizations, rise up and engage in violent conflict. Therefore, more scholarship is needed in order to understand the conditions under which religious violence and war arise.

The field of international relations, however, faces several problems when addressing religion’s impact on war and violent conflict. First, religious studies as an academic subject is largely absent in the US educational system. Religion—as a historic, political and social force—is rarely taught in American public schools.<sup>5</sup> Few academic institutions in the United States require or even offer courses on world religions as part of a liberal arts degree.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, religion as an academic discipline has been cordoned

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Press, 2000); Scott Thomas, “Religion and International Conflict,” in *Religion and International Relations*, edited by K.R. Dark, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 1-23.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Jervis, “An Interim Assessment of September 11: What Has Changed and What Has Not?” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 117, No. 1, (2002), pp. 37-54. Quote taken from pg. 37

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996)

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that the argument for teaching a course on world religions should be distinguished from the debate on allowing prayer and courses on spiritual development in public schools. The first category calls for teaching world religions as a historic, social and political phenomenon. The latter category argues for allowing spiritual practices and instruction of specific religion, usually Christianity, in public schools. The current interpretation of the law allows for the first type of instruction but prohibits the second type. See Benjamin B. Sendor, *A Legal Guide to Religion and Public Education*, (Kansas: National Organization on Legal Problems of Education, 1988); and Richard C. McMillian, *Religion in the Public Schools: An Introduction*, (New York: Mercer, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Religious scholar Ninian Smart notes that although religious studies or the study of world religions has its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has only become an academic discipline in the late 1960s, see “Methods in My

off into its own world, hindering interdisciplinary studies of its impact on other academic fields such as politics, history, and the natural sciences.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, this lack of knowledge on religion is heightened by the unspoken assumption that religion cannot be studied within the context of the rational sciences; the two subjects are incompatible.<sup>8</sup> All of these factors have contributed to the lack of rigorous work done in international relations on religiously motivated violence and war.

The field of international relations in general and scholars on causes of war in particular need to seriously address the role of religion in history, society, and inter-state relations because it appears that religion is reasserting itself in global politics. First, the post-Cold War world has seen a rise in religiously motivated conflict.<sup>9</sup> Religion has been identified as contributing cause to the conflicts in the Balkans, heightened tensions in the Middle East, the civil war in Sri Lanka, Hindu-Muslim violence in South Asia, increasing Islamic militancy throughout the world, and persisting troubles in Northern Ireland, to name a few cases. Furthermore, most scholars agree that Islam has played a critical role in the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the US and that Islam continues to be a factor in the

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Life,” *The Craft of Religious Studies*, edited by Jon R. Stone, (New York and London: St. Martins Press, 1998), pp. 18-20. Mark Juergensmeyer notes that survey courses in world religions are difficult to offer because they require a broad range of knowledge on history and numerous religious traditions but that, nevertheless, this is perhaps one of the most important courses to teach in a liberal arts education because it is information that students would not get elsewhere. Mark Juergensmeyer, “A Brief Argument in Favor of an Endangered Species: The World Religion Survey Course,” *Teaching the Introductory Course in Religious Studies: A Sourcebook*, edited by Mark Juergensmeyer, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 227-233.

<sup>7</sup> A brief survey on the creation of religion as a separate, academic discipline includes Terrence N. Tice, “Schleiermacher on the Scientific Study of Religion,” in *Friedrich Schleiermacher and the Founding of the University of Berlin: The Study of Religion as a Scientific Discipline*, edited by Herbert Richardson, (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991); D.G. Hart, *The University Gets Religion: Religious Studies in American Higher Education*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Ian G. Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990); and Gavin Flood, *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion*, (London and New York: Cassell, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> This observation is also noted by Jonathan Fox, “Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2001), pp. 53-74.

<sup>9</sup> Assaf Moghadam, “A Global Resurgence of Religion?” *Report Prepared for the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University*, November 16, 2002, unpublished manuscript.

current terrorist threat to the US. Few scholars agree, however, on the degree and ways in which Islam fuels the international terrorist threat to the US.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, if religion is in fact contributing to these and other contemporary conflicts, international relations scholars need to identify how and under what conditions it contributes to violence and what unique resources religion brings to war and unrest. In order to do this, however, scholars need to explain what religion is and how it functions in society, politics and individuals' lives.

### **Definitions: What is Religion?**

This section offers definitions of the key variables in this dissertation. First, the term religion needs to be clearly defined and operationalized. This task is complicated by the fact that there is no agreed upon definition of religion in academic circles; rather much debate exists within and across academic disciplines on the nature and purpose of religion in human history. This section presents a few commonly cited definitions of religion—specifically those offered by Emile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, and Max Weber—and from these scholars constructs the definition of religion to be used in this dissertation.

Sociologist Emile Durkheim offers a definition of religion that stresses its corporate nature in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.<sup>11</sup> Durkheim defines religion by dividing human phenomenon into two opposing realms, the sacred and profane.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, at a January 2002 conference in Florida aimed at educating journalists about Islam, scholars Samuel Huntington, Bruce Hoffman and Roy Mottahedeh defended arguments on Islam's role in the terrorist threat to the US. Huntington argued that Al Qaeda is first and foremost about Islam; Hoffman argued that Al Qaeda is primarily a political movement that uses religion to legitimate and mobilize terrorists, and Mottahedeh argued that Al Qaeda cannot be understood in religious terms. See David Brooks, "Understanding Islam," *The Daily Standard*, January 21, 2002, [www.weeklystandard.com](http://www.weeklystandard.com), downloaded on 1/22/02.

Religious beliefs and rituals are concerned with relating to and maintaining the sacred.

Durkheim duly notes that the realm of sacred is not fixed but rather “anything can be sacred,” and “the circle of sacred objects cannot be determined once and for all.”<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, for Durkheim religion is, at its core, a social phenomenon. He states:

The really religious beliefs are always common to a determined group...they are not merely received individually by all the members of this group; they are something belonging to this group, and they make its unity. The individuals which [sic] compose it feel themselves united to each other by the simple fact that they have a common faith.”<sup>13</sup>

Durkheim contends that commonly held beliefs towards the sacred create practices, expressed in the corporate form of a “church,” which he defines by stating:

Sometimes the church is strictly national, sometimes it passes the frontiers; sometimes it embraces an entire people...sometimes it is directed by a corps of priests, sometimes it is almost completely devoid of an official directing body. But wherever we observe the religious life, we find that it has a definite group at its foundation.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, Durkheim defines religion as “an eminently collective thing” formed by beliefs and practices relating to the realm of the sacred, which is ever-changing.

Durkheim’s definition of religion is important for understanding the causes of religious violence because he believes religions are, at their root, corporate. Religion, therefore, is not merely about beliefs and rituals, but *shared* beliefs and rituals that unite a group of people into a community. This dissertation will argue that the corporate nature of religion needs to be taken seriously in order to understand religious violence. In other words, religious violence is seldom the product of a lone individual and his or her beliefs;

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<sup>11</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Joseph Ward Swain, (London: Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1915)

<sup>12</sup> Durkheim, pg. 37

<sup>13</sup> Durkheim, pg. 43

<sup>14</sup> Durkheim, pg. 44

rather religious violence is the reflection of a group or community and the circumstances in which they live.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz' often-cited definition of religion argues that:

Religion is: 1) a system of symbols which acts to 2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men [sic] by 3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and 4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that 5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.<sup>15</sup>

Geertz' definition of religion is useful for understand religious violence because, first, his definition argues that religion creates a “general order of existence;” in other words, religion helps define human purpose on earth. Second, Geertz' definition acknowledges that a religion's “system of symbols” is a powerful motivator of human behavior. Geertz therefore recognizes that religion is an important and powerful force in human history. This dissertation will argue that these two points are also important for understanding religious violence and war; religion is a powerful force for mobilization in addition to its ability to establish existential order.

Both of these scholars, while offering unique definitions, fail to address a key component of religion, namely the role of human agency in shaping and maintaining religious beliefs and systems. Neither Durkheim nor Geertz considers who maintains these systems; their definitions suggest that religious beliefs and practices simply evolve of their own accord. Durkheim claims that “churches” are the core manifestation of religious beliefs, but he does not delve into the role of individuals—namely religious leaders—in maintaining beliefs and rituals surrounding the sacred. Geertz makes no mention at all of agency in his definition.

Sociologist Max Weber adds the critical component of agency to his definition of religion in *The Sociology of Religion*.<sup>16</sup> Weber acknowledges the importance of symbols, rituals and beliefs in his definition, stating that religion is “the relationship of men [sic] to supernatural forces which takes the forms of prayer, sacrifice and worship...”<sup>17</sup> In addition, Weber includes two interconnected elements to this definition. First, he observes that religions tend to change and develop in complexity over time. Second, as religions develop into more complex systems of beliefs and rituals, the role of religious leaders—what Weber calls priests—takes on increasing importance in maintaining the religion. Religious leaders, according to Weber, are defined by three elements: they make up an organized and permanent structure; they are connected with “some type of social organization” such as a congregation or a class; and they are trained both in specialized knowledge or “doctrine” and vocational skills.<sup>18</sup> Overall, therefore, priests are tasked with studying religious beliefs and practices with the purpose of maintaining the tradition and leading communities of practitioners.

The definitions proposed by Durkheim, Geertz, and Weber, therefore, are all united in their recognition of beliefs and rituals as central to religion. Durkheim stresses the corporate nature of religion in his definition. Geertz acknowledges the powerful motivating factor of religion and its role in creating a general order of existence for humans. And Weber adds agency to his definition, including the role of clergy in developing and maintaining religious beliefs and rituals.

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<sup>15</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” in William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt, *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, Fourth Edition, (New York: Harper Collins, 1979), pp. 79-80

<sup>16</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, translated by Ephraim Fischoff, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963)

<sup>17</sup> Weber, pg. 28

<sup>18</sup> Weber, pp. 28-29



All of these definitions lack, however, two additional elements: none of these definitions includes material assets that are common to most all religions,<sup>19</sup> and none of these definitions includes the role of religion in forming group identity. Material resources need to be included in a definition of religion for two key reasons. First, most religions contain material resources such as houses of worship and sacred sites, which one would expect to find in a religion. However, most religions also possess more mundane material resources such as buildings, schools, hospitals, printing presses and money, resources that are not commonly identified with religion.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, religions tend to have social resources, such as trained leaders, organizations, and networks that inform and connect their congregants. Therefore, religion's resources can be vast and numerous. With this wider inclusion of resources, religions have the power to educate, inform, mobilize and organize people. Assets, therefore, are a particularly important resource when considering the ability of religions to motivate bellicose behavior.

Second, religion often plays a key role in forming group identity. Identity is different from other aspects of religion because it is both endogenous and exogenous to a religion. Identity is endogenous when adherents to a tradition choose to define their identity, in part or whole, by their inclusion to a particular religion. Religious identity,

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<sup>19</sup> Religious scholar Ninian Smart in *The World's Religions: Old Traditions and Modern Transformations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), describes religion in terms of seven "dimensions," of which one is the material dimension. The other six dimensions include: the practical and ritual dimension; the experiential and emotional dimension; the narrative or mythic dimension; the doctrinal and philosophical dimension; the ethical and legal dimension; and the social and institutional dimension, pp. 9-26. This concept is expanded in *Dimensions of the Sacred: Anatomy of the Worlds Beliefs*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> See Christian Smith, "Correcting a Curious Neglect, or Bringing Religion Back In" for an insightful discussion on the resources that religion brings to mass mobilization. Smith notes legitimization for protest, moral imperatives for justice, powerful symbols, self-discipline, trained leaders, financial resources, solidarity, pre-existing communication channels, and identity as resources that religion gives to a social movement. See *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement and Activism*, edited by Christian Smith, (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 9-21

however, can also be exogenous, specifically when identity is assigned by others who associate individuals and groups with a given religion.

With all of the variables in mind, this book will use the following definition of religion:

an organization recognized as holy—relating to the divine or supernatural—consisting of a) beliefs, b) texts, c) leaders, d) a community, e) identity, and f) material resources.

Religion is defined this way because this dissertation will assert that religion is more than abstract ideology or a system of beliefs and symbols. Rather, a working definition of religion needs to capture non-material elements, such as beliefs, but also material resources such as schools, buildings, land, and money. Furthermore, most religions are composed of leaders that interpret scriptures, maintain religious traditions and lead a community of practitioners. Lastly, religion, as a corporate phenomenon, also serves as one form of identity to those who associate with or are associated with a religious group. This definition, therefore, captures the interplay of six broad elements of religion: resources, beliefs, texts, religious authority, practitioners, and the role of religion in informing group identity.

Religion's unique contribution to war and violent conflict is its combination of these six elements.<sup>21</sup> Independently, these elements are typical causes of war. For example, non-material motivators for war can be found outside of religion, most notably nationalism, which has fueled belligerent behavior since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the First and Second World Wars. Material resources are most commonly connected to a state's ability to cause war; they are a major calculus in balance of power theories aimed

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that religious resources could also be used for pacific ends. This dissertation will only consider religion as a cause of bellicosity.

at explaining bellicosity and peace among nations. Likewise, social resources such as leaders and members occur in a secular context, most notably the state. And identity can be informed by any number of traits such as race, ethnicity and regionalism, which can be a cause of war and violent conflict.

Religion, as a combination of all six of these elements, is uniquely situated for inspiring and mobilizing the masses, including for belligerent ends. States usually contains all of these elements but states, by definition, are confined to tangible borders. Religions, on the other hand, can cross borders. “Nations,” as a collection of people that perceive themselves as unified by a shared history,<sup>22</sup> can cross borders; but cross-border nations almost never come with a readymade organization of leaders, buildings and other resources essential for mobilization. Religion’s unique contribution to war and violent conflict, therefore, is that all of these elements are contained within this one entity.

Applying this definition to empirical examples of religion requires two further refinements. First, although religions—such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam—exist in theory, in practice these religions do not exist as monoliths; rather, there is much diversity within religions across time and space. In other words, there is no one Christianity or Judaism in historical context but, rather, many Christianities, Judaisms and so on. This is true of all religions.

Furthermore, religions in practice are not constant but, rather, change over time according to historical context. Religions in practice are the product of *interpretation*, usually generated by religious leaders, who are, in turn, grounded in specific

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<sup>22</sup> This is drawing on definitions of nations proposed by Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London and New York: Verso, 1983); and Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

circumstances. This dissertation argues that interpretations of religions and not the religions *per se* are essential for understanding religious violence; specifically, certain interpretations of religion that call for violence. This dissertation, therefore, aims to provide insights into the conditions under which violent interpretations of religions are generated. In theory, these conditions should fuel violent interpretations *across* various religious traditions, not just within a given religion. This will be discussed further in chapter two.

It is also important to state that this dissertation stresses a non-reductionist view of religion's role in violent conflict and war. First, while this dissertation does not purport that religions are "true" in the sense that religious beliefs can be scientifically proven correct or false, it does argue that religions are real; religions are real "in the minds and lives of those who participate in the religion in question," as religious scholar Ninian Smart states.<sup>23</sup> Religions, therefore, need to be understood and respected on these terms. Second, this dissertation argues that religiously motivated violence and wars ultimately have something to do with religion; it is not exclusively the result of other phenomenon and motivations such as economic, ethnic, or class grievances. Religion is a powerful force that is capable of motivating and mobilizing nations, societies, and individuals; religious violence, therefore, needs to be understood as one manifestation of this powerful force.

Lastly, this dissertation aims to demonstrate that, *ipso facto*, no religion is inherently more prone to violence than another.<sup>24</sup> To argue that one religion is inherently

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<sup>23</sup> Ninian Smart, "Methods in My Life," pp. 18-35

<sup>24</sup> The question has also been explored quantitatively by Jonathan Fox in "Is Islam More Conflict Prone than Other Religions? A Cross-Sectional Study of Ethnoreligious Conflict," *Nationalism and Ethnic*

more violent than another is to suggest that there is something *within* that religion, such as its scriptures or beliefs, that makes it prone to violence. However, as the case studies will show, most if not all religions have gone through periods of bellicosity and periods of peace. Therefore, none of the major religious traditions fit this description. This is true both of Islam—a religion stereotyped as inherently violent—and Buddhism, a religion most often associated with its norm of *ahimsa*, or non-violence. In contrast, this dissertation argues that it is not religious beliefs and scriptures that determine the bellicosity of a religion, but rather the interpretation of beliefs and scriptures. Interpretations are the product of individuals, usually religious leaders, who are responding to their political, economic, and social environments. It is these contextual factors, it will be argued, that contribute to religion’s episodic bellicosity. This point will be discussed further in chapter two and elucidated in the case studies.

### *The purpose of religion*

In addition to defining the content of religion, it is important to offer a definition of the purpose of religion, or what is the core concept of most religious beliefs. Similar to a definition of religion, there is much debate on the purpose of religion in human life. This dissertation proposes a unifying theme for what is at the core of most of the world’s religions, the concept of salvation, and offers arguments for why salvation matters to religious violence. Examples will be more fully developed in the case-study chapters.

One commonly held belief about religions is that, at their roots, religions are about love and peace. If this were true, then comprehending religiously motivated violence and war would be very difficult. But are love and peace the main goals of most

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*Politics* Vol. 6, No. 2, (Summer 2000), pp-124, in which he finds that, statistically, Islam is not more

religions? This dissertation argues that, while undoubtedly all religions contain scripture and practices that are committed to the principles of love and peace, these are not the core concepts around which religions are structured. Rather, most religions, at their core, have a set of beliefs and practices organized around the goal of salvation, of which there is more than one understanding.<sup>25</sup>

This is not to say that *all* religions have salvation as their goal. In the *Sociology of Religion*, Weber divides religions between those that are concerned with an ethic of salvation and those that are not.<sup>26</sup> Confucianism, Shintoism, and “naturist” centered religions are not organized around the concept of salvation.<sup>27</sup> However, most of the world’s major religious traditions are concerned with and organized around this objective.<sup>28</sup> For example the monotheistic traditions of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and the Baha’i faith all focus on a relationship with God through faith, obedience, prayer and praise.<sup>29</sup> God is understood as the proprietor of salvation; religion

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conflict prone than other religions.

<sup>25</sup> Salvation is a Christian term, deriving from the Latin root *Salvus*, to make safe. *Soteriology* is the theology of salvation. This term, therefore, is inherently Christian. However, it will be used for the sake of simplicity and clarity.

<sup>26</sup> Weber, Chapter IX, “Theodicy, Salvation, and Rebirth,” pp. 138-150

<sup>27</sup> Weber, Chapters IX-XII, pp. 138-206

<sup>28</sup> Examples of literature that explore comparative understandings of salvation across religions include Stephen Kaplan, *Different Paths, Different Summits: A Model for Religious Pluralism and Soteriological Diversity*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001); Ninian Smart, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995); John P. Reeder, *Source, Sanction, and Salvation: Religion and Morality in Judaic and Christian Traditions*, (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988); Klaus K. Klostermaier, *Liberation, Salvation, Self-Realization: A Comparative Study of Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian Ideas*, (Madras: University of Madras Press, 1973); *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation*, edited by SGF Brandon, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963); Harris Franklin Rall, *Religion as Salvation*, (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953); John William Parker, *The Idea of Salvation in the World’s Religions*, (London: Macmillan, 1935).

<sup>29</sup> For a basic outline of Christian beliefs, see Harvey Cox, “Christianity,” *Our Religions*, edited by Arvind Sharma, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993); for Islam, see “Islam,” pp. 427-491, *Religions of the World*, third edition, chief editor, Don Reisman, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1993); for Judaism, see Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, inc., 1947); for Sikhism, see “Sikhism,” *Religions of the World*, third edition, chief editor, Don Reisman, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1993), pp.

is the means through which to enter into a relationship with the divine aimed at salvation. Buddhism and Hinduism have the concept of reincarnation, the belief that the accumulation of past actions, *karma*, forms present states of being. The religious goal is release from the cycle of life, death and rebirth into *nirvana*, a perfect state of being.<sup>30</sup>

The term salvation is most commonly associated with the concept of “eternal salvation,” or with what comes after this life. Attaining eternal salvation usually involves some action on the part of individuals or groups in the here-and-now; it could be the act of believing, of enlightenment, of obedience, or of praise and devotion. Salvation, therefore, usually involves a process, a path, a transformation on earth that takes one into hereafter. In the monotheistic traditions, eternal salvation—often defined as paradise or heaven—is most typically attained through faith or belief in God, obedience to God’s laws and commandments, and worship or praise of God.<sup>31</sup> In Buddhism and Hinduism, eternal salvation is defined by the release from the cycle of life, death and rebirth into a state that transcends life and death, which is *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is attained through knowledge, enlightenment and praise. In Hinduism, liberation from the lifecycle is attained either through adherence to the Veda rituals and practices maintained by Hindu priests, through the practice of *yoga* as directed by a *guru*, or through praise and devotion

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156-161; for the Baha’i faith, see Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha’i Religions: From Messianic Shiism to a World Religion*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> Scholarship on Hindu and Buddhist notions of salvation include Edward Conze, “Buddhist Saviours,” *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation*, edited by SGF Brandon, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), pp. 67-82; and Ninian Smart, “The Work of the Buddha and the Work of Christ,” *The Saviour God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation*, edited by SGF Brandon, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), pp. 160-173; and Klaus K. Klostermaier, *Liberation, Salvation, Self-Realization: A Comparative Study of Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian Ideas*, (Madras: University of Madras Press, 1973).

<sup>31</sup> For a basic outline of Christian beliefs towards salvation, see Harvey Cox; for Judaism, see Milton Steinberg; for Sikhism, see “Sikhism,” pp. 156-16, *Religions of the World*; for the Baha’i faith, see Peter Smith.

to a deity, which is *bhakti*.<sup>32</sup> In Buddhism, salvation is attained by following the *dharma*, or the way to enlightenment revealed by the Buddha.<sup>33</sup>

The path to eternal salvation is important for understanding religiously motivated violence and war because all major traditions have historic or contemporary examples of the belief that dying on the battlefield in the name of a religion will procure eternal salvation. For example, it is well known that current-day militant Islamic groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Lebanese Hizbollah and Al Qaeda promise eternal paradise to those who die in the line of *Jihad*, or holy war to defend the faith.<sup>34</sup> However, it is also important to point out that very similar doctrines exist in other traditions as well. Buddhist inspired *Bushido* warrior ethics promise that, through death on the battlefield, “the soldier could, like the gods themselves, attain *seishi no choetsu*, a state transcending both life and death.”<sup>35</sup> Christian Crusader Knights were granted remission of all their sins, securing their eternal salvation.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Judaism, Sikhism, and Hinduism have similar examples of “holy warriors.” Therefore, it is important to identify the conditions under which eternal salvation is understood to be fulfilled on the battlefield and when these religious doctrines are applied to historical circumstances as a means of motivation for war.

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<sup>32</sup> Madeleine Biardeau, *Hinduism: The Anthropology of a Civilization*, translated from the French by Richard Nice, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 17-30

<sup>33</sup> This is elucidated in Conze, pp. 73-74. See also “Chapter 11: Buddhism as a World Religion,” in *Religions of the Third World*.

<sup>34</sup> Examples of works on these groups includes: Meir Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement*, (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 2002); Magnus Ranstorp, *The Hizb’allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997); and Hisham H. Ahmad, *Hamas: From Religious Salvation to Political Transformation: The Rise of Hamas in Palestinian Society*, (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1994).

<sup>35</sup> James A. Aho, *Religious Mythology and the Art of War: Comparative Religious Symbolisms of Military Violence*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981) pg. 130

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1991), pg. 36



There is, however, another type of salvation that is perhaps less commonly associated with the term yet is as important for understanding religiously motivated conflict and war; it is a salvation concerned with saving the world in the here-and-now. This type of salvation, which will be called “earthly salvation,” contends that the earth—particularly individuals, societies, and nations but also animals and the environment—is in a state of decline and needs to be restored to a particular order. The mandate to restore the world to its intended state of harmony and justice is true of religious movements vying for the creation of religiously run states, which includes groups within Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. This is also true of other movements not usually associated with religions, such as Marxism and extreme environmentalist movements.

Earthly salvation is important for understanding religiously motivated conflict and war because violence could be a means for achieving these saving ends.<sup>37</sup> For example, participants in the Iranian Revolution used violence to overthrow a corrupt, secular regime and put in its place a religious government, one that was believed to create a more just and pious society.<sup>38</sup> The same could be said for various Marxist movements around the globe. Communism, as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto* promised to end a corrupt economic system in which the majority of the population was forced to sell its labor as a commodity to the benefit of the wealthy few. In its place it offered social

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<sup>37</sup> In addition, it is important to note that concern for the current state of the world is also an impetus that drives religious-based charities, which see themselves in service and aid towards fellow humanity. However, this latter motivation for earthly change is seldom involved with the destruction of current governments and ways of life as a means for achieving desired ends.

<sup>38</sup> John L. Esposito and Michael Watson state in regard to modern political Muslim movements: “The key issue is what Islam could do for Muslims in the modern world—rescue them from decline, purify society, combat external forces of corruption. For radicals (or fundamentalists) the triumphant moment was the Iranian Revolution, unifying political and religious authority to enforce the *sharia* law as the law of the

equality, better treatment of women, free education for children, and the right to the fruits of one's own labor.<sup>39</sup> The path to this communist utopia, however, was by revolution; in practice, these revolutions were almost always bloody.

It is important to note that these two salvations are not mutually exclusive; in some cases they work together. For example, militant Muslim groups such as the Palestinian Hamas and the Lebanese Hezbollah have social and political wings, in addition to a wing devoted to violent operations.<sup>40</sup> These organizations aim to save both in the here-and-now in addition to promoting salvation through death in the struggle against earthly foes. Likewise, Christian and Jewish extremists agitating for the destruction of the Dome of the Rock and the construction of the Third Temple in Jerusalem believe that changing the here-and-now will hasten the second coming of the Messiah, which will usher in a new world.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, while some movements are either focused primarily on one form of salvation or another, there are religious movements that simultaneously combine both forms in their paths towards salvation.

Overall, by arguing that salvation is the core purpose of most religions and by arguing that violence may become a means of attaining salvation in certain conditions, this dissertation asserts that religious violence is neither illogical nor irrational. In other words religious violence is not incompatible with the main aims of religion and, under certain conditions, violence may be the fulfillment of salvation. Furthermore, as will be

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land, to pursue social justice and roll back Western economic and cultural influence." *Religion and Global Order*, edited by John L. Esposito and Michael Watson, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000) pg. 9

<sup>39</sup> "The Communist Manifesto," *Karl Marx: Selective Writings*, edited by David McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 221-247

<sup>40</sup> For Hamas, see Hisham A. Ahmad. For the Hezbollah, see Ranstorp, pp.37-47

<sup>41</sup> See Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, Chapter Three, "Gush Emunim: A Fundamentalism of the Land," pp. 89-128, *The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992)

demonstrated, religious violence is most often in reaction to real life threats to a religion's practitioners or resources and thus it is rational.

*What is religious war?*

The term religious war also requires definition.<sup>42</sup> Religion is present to some extent in perhaps all wars and violent conflicts, however, the ways in which religion operates in violent unrest varies greatly. To gain some perspective on the different ways in which religion motivates bellicose behavior, this section will present two definitions for religiously motivated war and violent conflict—"wars with religion" and "religious wars"—which are distinguished by their end goals.<sup>43</sup>

The first type of wars and violent conflicts, "wars with religion," are ones in which religion contributes to violent campaigns that have "secular" or non-religious goals. In such cases, religion enters into the causal chain of violent conflicts but does not define the end goals. For example, the war between Serbia and Croatia and the civil war in Bosnia had religious content, but specific religious goals have not played a primary role in these conflicts or their resolutions. In these cases, ethnicity—informed in part by religion—distinguishes one group from another<sup>44</sup> and has fueled secessionist movements; religion is not the *causis belli* for the establishment of a state with religious law or the preservation of sacred land.<sup>45</sup> Another example of religion's contribution to

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<sup>42</sup> In this dissertation, religious war and "holy war," should be understood as synonymous. Wars are differentiated from "violent conflicts" using the standard 1,000 battle-deaths-per-year definition.

<sup>43</sup> It is important to note that this dissertation will focus on *violent* religious conflict and war; religious conflict and tension in general—unless it develops into violence against property and people—will not be addressed.

<sup>44</sup> See Petra Ramet's work on religion and ethnicity in the Balkans as one example: *Balkan Babel: Politics, Culture and Religion in Yugoslavia*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992)

<sup>45</sup> Some assertions have been made that Kosovo is a region of religious importance to the Serbs; that it is the "Jerusalem of the Serb people," and that military action should be taken to defend the land from non-

war is through the use of religious rhetoric as a legitimating and mobilizing force for wars with non-religious goals. One of many examples of this form of war includes the Bush (I) administration's use of Christian *Just War Doctrine* language to legitimate the use of force against Iraq in 1991 and mobilize the US population for war.<sup>46</sup> This type of rhetoric has also been used in the current Global War on Terror against Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda.<sup>47</sup>

The second type, "religious wars," is defined as violent conflicts and wars with saliently religious end goals. As previously argued, religions have assets that are understood to be holy to the religion, including land, buildings, sacred sites, and practitioners. This dissertation will demonstrate that the defense of assets believed to be essential to the function of a religion, can—under certain conditions—lead to religious wars. In particular, this dissertation will consider three goals of religious wars: the defense of "holy nations," religious communities and territory believed to be essential to the preservation of a religion; the defense of sacred sites, specific areas of land believed to have a unique relationship with the divine; and the creation of religious governments through the means of revolution.

In order to understand the distinction between wars with religion and religious wars, dynamics between religion and the government and religion and society need to be explored. First, the relationship between religion and government is important for understanding religiously motivated violence and war. As argued in the beginning of this

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Serb occupation. See "How it all started: No place for both of them" in *The Economist*, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999, pg. 18

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, President George Bush's speech to the National Broadcasting Convention, January 28, 1991 at the Sheraton Washington Hotel, Washington DC, *The Whitehouse Office of the Press Secretary*, pp. 1-3. Bush stated: "America has always been a religious nation—perhaps never more than now...But with the support and prayers of so many, there can be no question in the minds of our soldiers or in the minds of our enemy about what Americans think. We know that this is a just war," pg. 3.

chapter, the norm in academia is to relegate religion to the fringes of politics, society and history. This tendency is further heightened by the current-day institutional separation between religious organizations and the government in most western countries. The result is that religion is most often understood as a phenomenon that is completely separate from and relatively uninfluential to political thought and action. This understanding, however, fails to capture the different ways in which religion operates in political life, both historically and in contemporary times.

It is therefore important to acknowledge that, while there may be institutional separation between religion and the government in the West, religion still operates in the political lives of these countries, particularly in the US. For example, debates over legalized abortion and federally funded stem-cell research in the US are two political issues that involve religion. In these cases religion enters into the debate in the form of religiously-based ethics and morals concerning the sanctity of life.<sup>48</sup> Religious influence is also present in policies for war and violent conflict. A current-day example is the religious rhetoric used by the US government in the Global War on Terror, as previously mentioned. Immediately following the September 11<sup>th</sup> bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, George W. Bush described the war against Osama Bin-Laden and his followers as a “Crusade,” a term harkening back to the Christian offensive against

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<sup>47</sup> William Safire, “On Language; Words at War,” *The New York Times*, September 30, 2001

<sup>48</sup>For an example on the religious influences on abortion in the US see Faye Ginsburg, “Saving America’s Souls: Operation Rescue’s Crusade against Abortion,” in *Fundamentalisms and the State*, edited by Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) pp. 557-582. For an example of the religious influences on federally funded stem-cell research in the US see: Michael Lind, “The Right Still Has Religion,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 2001; Katharine Q. Seelye with Frank Bruni, “The President’s Decision: The President; A long Process that Led Bush to His Decision,” *The New York Times*, August 11, 2001; “The Stem Cell Debate; The Embryonic Journey and its Milestones,” *The New York Times*, December 18, 2001.

the Muslim world in the Middle Ages.<sup>49</sup> Separation of church and state, therefore, does not mean that religion no longer plays a role in the policies of the state. Rather, in most cases, it means that political and religious leaders are structurally separate.

It is also important to note that the West has not always had an institutional separation between religion and the government. Prior to the sixteenth century, religion and the government were intertwined. This is visible in the form of religiously based monarchies such as the Hapsburgs and Tudors, the relationship between the Papacy and heads of state in Medieval Europe, and the norm of kings and queens as the heads of Protestant Churches as was the case in Prussia and the Scandinavian countries.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the current-day institutional separation between religion and government in the West is not representative of the whole world. Religious monarchies still exist in North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, religious political parties are present in Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria, Israel, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Malaysia. Therefore, religion still plays a role in modern-day political life, to varying degrees. In order to understand how religion operates in the political life of a state, therefore, it is useful to think of religion and the government as a spectrum, not as distinct binary categories. This dissertation aims to explore the particular kinds of relationships between governments and religion that may produce religious violence.

Second, the role that religion plays in societies is important for understanding religiously motivated violence and war. One common research approach for

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<sup>49</sup> The Whitehouse promptly apologized after Bush was criticized for his choice of language, see William Safire, "On Language; Words at War," *The New York Times*, September 30, 2001.

<sup>50</sup> The King or Queen of England is still recognized as the head of the Church of England today.

<sup>51</sup> Examples of current-day religious monarchies include Morocco in North Africa; Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in the Middle East; Nepal in South Asia; and Brunei and Malaysia in East Asia, to name a few.

understanding the role of religion in society is to measure religiosity, the degree to which members in a society practice a religion. This approach, however, presents problems to understanding the ways in which religions function in society. First, it is difficult to consistently measure religiosity across religious traditions. For example, Christians, Jews, and Muslims attend worship services as part of their practice of religion. One could estimate a society's religiosity, therefore, by what percentage of Christians, Muslims, and Jews attend worship services on a regular basis. However, other traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism are not organized around regular worship services. Measuring the religiosity of Buddhists and Hindus, therefore, cannot be assessed by the same methods. Furthermore attempts at measuring current religiosity in societies and religiosity across time require thorough and reliable data, which often is not available.<sup>52</sup> Statistically attempting to measure religious adherence, therefore, is difficult and favors traditions organized around regular worship services.

Second, religiosity only measures one form of religion's impact on society and, therefore, does not tell the whole story of how religions can function in groups, societies and nations. Societies can still respond to religious rhetoric and imagery regardless of how often individuals attend religious services. In this case, religion operates more subtly as one dimension of a group's history and culture; it is part of the worldview of a given group or society.<sup>53</sup> For example, in the West, days of rest and public holidays are still centered around the Christian day of worship and its liturgical year, regardless of whether these days are spent in worship or not. In Israel, public holidays are determined by Jewish

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<sup>52</sup> See for example, Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Looking Backward: Long-Run Religious Trends Across Thirty Nations," unpublished manuscript, 2001

<sup>53</sup> Religious scholar Ninian Smart advocates for this understanding of religion's influence on society, see "Methods in My Life."

holidays, and in most Muslim nations their holidays come from Islam. Religion, therefore, has affected the organization of these societies. Furthermore, religious rhetoric can also resonate with the non-religious. Bush's use of the term Crusade and his reference to Bin Laden as evil are examples of religious rhetoric that have resonated throughout the United States. Religion, therefore, still informs much about a society's worldview—its organization, history, and culture—regardless of the religiosity of its members.

Third, another form of religion's impact on society is how it informs identity.

This is one component of Huntington's argument in *The Clash of Civilizations*.

Huntington contends that:

A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and the subjective self-identification of people.<sup>54</sup>

This dissertation argues, in accord with Huntington, that religion plays an important role in forming group identity. However, unlike Huntington, this book will demonstrate that the role of religion in forming group identity is not objective but largely subjective; it is the product of interpretation and changes over time. Moreover it will argue, as noted before, that religious identity is both endogenous and exogenous to a religious group. Thus, while individuals and groups have a choice as to whether or not to identify themselves with a religion, groups often do not have a choice as to how others identify them.

Therefore, religion's impact on society should be understood as more than religiosity to include how society organizes and identifies itself. This dissertation aims to

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<sup>54</sup> Huntington, pg. 43



explore the ways in which religion's relationship with society can lead to religiously motivated conflicts and wars.

### **Which Religions and Why**

Finally, it is necessary to outline the religions that will be studied in this dissertation and to offer a defense for their selection. Five religions will be considered: Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. These religions have been chosen for two reasons: either these religions are demographically salient, and/or they have played an important role in regional and global politics. For example, Christianity and Islam are recognized as the world's two biggest religions, with an estimated 2 billion and 1 billion adherents, respectively.<sup>55</sup> These religions, therefore, are demographically salient. Judaism, on the other hand, is believed to have roughly between 14,000,000 to 15,050,000 members worldwide, making up less than 1% of the world's population.<sup>56</sup> Despite its small numbers, Judaism has had a considerable impact on history and current politics in the Middle East. Therefore a study on religion and violent conflict would not be complete without considering both demographically significant religions and those that are politically salient.

In addition, this dissertation will include a chapter on Marxism—its beliefs, interpretations, and manifestations in Russia, China, and Latin America—in order to consider if the rise and fall of Marxism as a political ideology bears any resemblance to the current Islamically motivated threat to the US. In doing so, this dissertation aims to

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<sup>55</sup> There is much debate over how to measure religious demographics, both within states, as noted earlier, and globally. *Adherents.com*, offers an array of sources that attempt to measure religious demographics, or what it calls “sociological/statistical” numbers. They calculate the global number of Christians to be 2 billion and Muslims to be 1.3 billion, see [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com). Ninian Smart estimates the number of Christians to be 1,965,993,000 and Muslims to be 1,179,326,000, see *Atlas of the World's Religions*, edited by Ninian Smart, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pg. 13

provide insights into the accusation that Islam has provided the foundation for a “new Cold War” and a “clash of civilizations.”

### *Conclusion*

This chapter presented three critical points to the study of religiously motivated violence and war. First, as a social, political and historical phenomenon, religion needs to be taken seriously as a force that impacts the field of international relations in general and causes of war in particular. This is especially true given the increasing number of conflicts that appear to be motivated by religion and the current terrorist threat to the US, which involves Islam. The aim of this dissertation, therefore, is to present theories on the conditions under which religions become involved in violence and the particular resources that they bring to social and political unrest and war.

Second, in order to construct theories on how and when religions become belligerent, this chapter proposed definitions of two variables, religion and religious war. It defined religion as the combination of six variables: beliefs, texts, resources, religious leaders, religious communities, and religious identity. This chapter also proposed a unifying theme on the purpose of religion—the goal of salvation—identifying two types, eternal and earthly salvation. From these definitions of religion’s elements and purpose, this chapter presented two ways in which religion affects wars and violent conflicts: “wars with religion;” religion as a contributing factor to wars with secular ends; and “religious wars,” wars with saliently religious goals. Lastly, this chapter named the five religions to be considered in this book—Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, and

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<sup>56</sup> Adherents.com and *Atlas of the World’s Religions*, respectively

Islam, in addition to Marxism—arguing that these religions are important to the study of religious bellicosity either for their demographic salience and/or their impact on politics.



## Chapter 2 The Causes of Religious War

Religion has been correlated to a wide variety of wars and violent conflicts including the Christian Crusades, the Iranian Revolution, the current Balkans crises, terrorist organizations in the Middle East, Hindu-Muslim riots in India, and the civil war in Sri Lanka, to name a few. However, although there are many examples that correlate religion to war, causation has not been adequately assigned; scholars have offered few theories that explain how and under what conditions religious conflicts arise. In particular, the field of international relations needs to construct more systematic theories aimed at explaining the conditions under which religious violence arises in order to better understand this phenomenon.

This chapter aims to fill this gap by offering causal arguments for religiously motivated wars and violent conflicts. As argued in chapter one, religion in practice—the application of religious beliefs and scriptures to individual, social and political life—is the result of interpretation; these interpretations are the product of individuals, usually religious leaders, who are grounded in specific contexts. Furthermore, chapter one argued that bellicose interpretations of a religion, not the religion *per se*, causes religious violence, but that bellicose interpretations occur at some points in time but not at others. Therefore, the main puzzle this chapter will explore is: Why do violent interpretations of a religion occur at some points in time and in some places but not at others? What explains this variation of war and peace in the world's religions?

This chapter argues that violent interpretations of a religion are the result of political, social and economic circumstances surrounding those who interpret the faith; in

particular, it will consider three variables as causes of bellicose interpretations of a religion: the nature of actual or perceived threat; the relationship between religious and political leaders; and the amount of material, social and technological resources available to a given religious community. These three variables will be tested against six case studies to determine if they explain the conditions under which violent interpretations of the faith and religious wars occur.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section offers a brief survey of existing literature on religion and war in addition to outlining three existing theories on the causes of religious wars, considering their strengths and limits. The second section presents two causal arguments for religious violence and war: “wars with religion,” religion’s involvement in wars with secular goals; and “religious wars,” wars with saliently religious goals. The third section outlines the cases to be studied and methods that will be employed. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks.

### **Literature on Religion as a Cause of War**

Academia has produced a rich body of literature on religion and war that spans across a number of themes and fields of study. This section divides existing literature on religion and war into two broad camps that correspond to the two types of wars involving religion—works that identify religion’s correlation to secular wars, and works that address wars with saliently religious goals. In addition, this section will outline three existing theories on religion and war and discuss their strengths and limits.

#### *Religion and secular wars*

Literature on religion and secular war can be divided into two categories: the role of religious-based ethics in declaring and fighting wars; and the connection between

religion, ethnicity and nationalism in wars and violent conflicts. First, much attention has been paid to religious-based ethics in justification for the use of force and conduct in war. Most notably, there is a wide body of literature on the Christian “Just War Doctrine,” developed by Augustine of Hippo in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE and later codified by Aquinas, Grotious, Gratian, Anselm, and St. Bernard.<sup>1</sup> There are also works that consider the role of religion in justifying the use of force and battle-ethics in Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> These works are important for understanding religion’s role in legitimating the use of force and the use of religious rhetoric for mobilization. However, these works do not answer two important questions. First, they do not explain the conditions under which specific religious systems, their resources, and their practitioners become engaged in violence and war. And, second, these works tend not to explain the variation between war and peace in the world’s major religions.

Second, there is also literature that links religion to nationalism and ethnicity as a cause of war. Two notable examples of such works are sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer’s, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular*

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<sup>1</sup> Works that consider the use of the Just War Doctrine include Fredrick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975); Paul Ramsey *Just War: Force and Political Responsibility*, (New York: Scribner, 1968); James Turner Johnson, *Can Modern War Be Just?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), to name a few

<sup>2</sup> Several works compare Christian Just War ethics with Islam’s ethics in jihad. These works include: John Kelsay, *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics*, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993); and *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theological Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*, edited by John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991). A work that considers Ancient Israel’s ethics in war is: Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). A study that considers Hinduism’s concept of a Just War as expressed in the *Mahabharata* is M.A. Mehndale’s *Reflections on the Mahabharata War*, (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995). A recent work that considers the role of Buddhism in shaping Japanese *Bushido* ethics is Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers and Warriors in Pre-Modern Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000). In addition James A. Aho’s *Religious Mythology and the Art of War: Comparative Religious Symbolisms of Military Violence*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981) offers a study of Buddhist ethics in warfare in Chapter 7, “Mysticism and the Martial Arts: The Meaning of Bushido in Tokugawa Japan,” pp. 127-142.

*State*, which considers the rise of religious nationalism in the post-Colonial era,<sup>3</sup> and anthropologist Petra Ramet's, *Balkan Babble: Politics, Culture and Religion in Yugoslavia*, which delineates the role of religion in distinguishing identity and politics in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>4</sup> These works are useful for a discussion on religiously motivated wars and conflicts because, first, they demonstrate that religion plays an important role in the formation of group identity, as argued in chapter one, and therefore are valuable for a theory on religion's contribution to ethnic and nationalist conflicts. Second, this literature demonstrates that religion is not the only salient cause of such wars; rather in such cases religion is one of several key elements that fuels bellicose behavior. In other words, if religion were removed from the causal chain, there would still be war and violent conflict, although it might perhaps look different. Therefore, the goals in such conflicts are not uniquely religious; they usually involve control of an existing state or the creation of a new one but not the preservation of a religious tradition or its resources.

### *Religion and religious wars*

In addition to the abovementioned literature, there are other studies on religiously motivated violence and war, works that describe conflicts with saliently religious goals.

This literature focuses on two phenomena in particular: religious "fundamentalism," and

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Other examples of works on religion and nationalism in violent conflict and war include: Peter F. Sugar, *East European Nationalism, Politics and Religion* (Brookfield, VT: Aldershot, 1999), and *Nationalism and Religion in the Balkans since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Working Paper no. 8, Seattle: The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, 1996); and Peter van der Veer, "The Politics of Devotion to Rama," in *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community, Identity, and Political Action*, edited by David N. Lorenzen, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup>Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babble: Politics, Culture and Religion in Yugoslavia*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992). Other works on religion and ethnicity in conflict include: the large-n works on religion in ethnic conflict by Jonathan Fox noted in chapter one, *Religion, Ethnicity and Self-identity: Nations in Turmoil* edited by Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby, (Hanover: University Press of New England: 1997); and Yusuf Bangura, *The Search for Identity: Ethnicity, Religion, and Political Violence*, (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1994).



religious terrorism. First, in the post-Cold War era much attention has been paid to the phenomenon called fundamentalism, especially Islamic fundamentalism, including works by John L. Esposito, Olivier Roy and Bassam Tibi.<sup>5</sup> In addition, scholars have produced comparative works on fundamentalism, particularly Martin Marty's and Scott Appleby's five-volume *Fundamentalists Project*, which provides a comprehensive look at fundamentalist movements across religions, cultures and contexts.<sup>6</sup> They define fundamentalism by arguing that:

Religious fundamentalism has appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a tendency, a habit of mind, found within religious communities and paradigmatically embodied in certain representative individuals and movements, which manifests itself as a strategy, or set of strategies, by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identity as a people or group.<sup>7</sup>

Fundamentalism, therefore, is defined by its goal, which is to protect a religious group that perceives itself to be under threat.

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<sup>5</sup> There is a large and rapidly expanding body of literature on Islamic fundamentalism. A few examples include: Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the World Disorder*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); *Religious Fundamentalism and Ethnicity in the Crisis of the Nation-State in the Middle East*, (Conference Paper, Berkeley: University of California, 1992); Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2000); John L. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983)

Works on specific fundamentalist groups and countries include: Magnus Ranstorp, *The Hizbo'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); John L. Esposito, *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989)

Works on comparative fundamentalist movements include: *The Fundamentalism Project*, edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991-1995); Martin E. Marty, *The Glory and the Power: The fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World*, (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1992); Scott R. Appleby, *Religious Fundamentalisms and Global Politics*, (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1994); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000)

The US Congress Committee on International Relations has also compiled reports from congressional hearings on Islamic Fundamentalism and its threat to US interests including: *Islamic Fundamentalism in Africa and Implications for US Policy*, (1992); *The Threat of Islamic Extremism in Africa*, (1995); *Algeria's Turmoil*, (1998); and *Extremist Movements and their Threat to the United States*, (2000).

<sup>6</sup> The five volume series includes: *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); *Fundamentalisms and Society*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); *Fundamentalisms and the State*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and the final volume of theories and common themes between different movements, *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). All volumes are edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby.

<sup>7</sup> *Fundamentalisms and the State*, pg. 3

Fundamentalism—while often employing force to achieve these ends, including terrorism—does not always use violence to preserve religious identity. One example of a fundamentalist group that has not used violence is the *Haredi*, the Ultra Orthodox Jews in Europe and Israel. This group reacted to the Enlightenment and Jewish integration in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe by closing off their communities to assimilation and zealously keeping Jewish laws, beliefs and customs; these means of preservation are non-violent.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, there are Jewish fundamentalist groups that have resorted to violence as a means of defending their faith against perceived threats. For example, the Jewish Defense League and its offshoot *Kach* along with the settler movement *Gush Emunim* have resorted to bombings, assassinations, and other forms of terrorist activities in order to defend *Eretz Yisrael*, “greater Israel,” which, as is discussed in chapter six, includes the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and other areas around the current day state of Israel. Therefore, fundamentalism can have non-violent and violent manifestations.

Fundamentalism is also distinct from religiously defined ethnic and national identity in that it is saliently religious; the preservation of a group’s interpretation of a religion is the goal. Religious identity can cross borders, as with the Haredi in European countries and Israel; it can also cross races, as with the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. Thus the uniting element of these different groups is not their race or nationality but, rather, their particular interpretation of religious beliefs and practices.<sup>9</sup> This trend is

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel C. Heilman, “Who Are the Haredim?” in *Defenders of the Faith: Inside the Ultra-Orthodox Jewry*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1992); and Samuel C. Heilman, “The Orthodox, the Ultra Orthodox, and the Election of the Twelfth Knesset,” pp. 135-154, *Elections in Israel—1988*, edited by Asher Arian and Michael Shamir, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990)

<sup>9</sup> An example of a Sephardic Ultra Orthodox movement is *Shas* in Israel, which aims to spread its particular interpretation of Judaism throughout Israel and the Diaspora via social programs and by holding offices in the Israeli government.

visible not only in Judaism but also Islam, Christianity, and even Hinduism and Buddhism, as the case studies will demonstrate.

Literature on fundamentalism is useful for a discussion on causes of religious wars in that it provides a valuable body of comparative case studies on movements across religions and contexts. However these works tend to consider only movements in the modern era; they do not address religious violence prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore potentially valuable comparisons with historical examples are not made. And second, this literature does not offer answers on why some groups choose violence as a means of defense and others do not.

Second, also in the post-Cold War era and especially in light of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, there is a growing body of literature on religious terrorism, particularly studies on groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Lebanese Hezbollah, Al Qaeda and, to a lesser extent, Aum Shinrikyo.<sup>10</sup> This literature is of particular importance to current questions regarding religious violence towards the US and possible counter-terrorism measures in US foreign policy. However, these works tend not to compare contemporary religious terrorism with examples of religious terrorism in the past, missing an opportunity to analyze causes and solutions of historic cases. Furthermore, this literature has yet to make rigorous comparisons between religious groups and other groups—such as Marxists or anarchists—that use terrorism in

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<sup>10</sup> Some examples of scholarship on religious terrorism include historic works such as Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1980); Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.*, translated by David Smith, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989). Works on specific movements include Magnus Ranstorp, *The Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), Robert Jay Lifton, *Destroying the World to Save It: Aum Shinrikyo, Apocalyptic Violence, and the New Global Terrorism*, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1999); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), to name a few.

order to understand the unique contributions that religious ideology brings to terrorist movements.

There are an additional two categories of literature on religion and war that are important for this study. First, much scholarship has been generated on historical cases of a particular religion's involvement in specific wars. This includes works on the English Civil War, the American Revolution and Civil War, Wars in Burma, China, Japan, and the Sikh Wars against the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to name a few.<sup>11</sup> Such scholarship provides invaluable empirical data that is useful for testing theories of religious bellicosity. This dissertation, therefore, will draw on this body of secondary literature to test the strength of the causal arguments proposed.

Second, much literature exists on the role of religion as a cause of peace and religion's obligation to promote peace in times of violent conflict. This includes works within Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.<sup>12</sup> It also includes the works of

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<sup>11</sup> Works considering the presence of religion in specific conflicts is enormous and covers a wide range of topics. A brief list of examples of Christianity in certain wars includes: Craig Rose, *England in the 1690's: Revolution, Religion and War*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1999); *Religion and the American Civil War*, edited by Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout and Charles Reagan Wilson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Keith L. Griffin, *Revolution and Religion: American Revolutionary War and Reformed Clergy*, (New York: Paragon House, 1994); William Gribbin, *The Churches' Militant: The War of 1812 and American Religion*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); George Hodges, *Religion in a World at War [World War I]*, (New York: MacMillan, 1917), to name a few.

Buddhism's involvement in specific conflicts includes: Trevor Ling, *Buddhism, Imperialism and War in Burma and Thailand in Modern History*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979); Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics and Violence in Sri Lanka*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992); David Little, *Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity*, (Washington, D.C.: The US Institute for Peace, 1994)

Judaism's involvement in specific conflicts include the state of Israel's justification for land and force in, "1967: Zionism Becomes a Holy War," Chapter 7 of Karen Armstrong's *Holy War*, (London: MacMillian Publishers, 1988); and Robert Goldenberg, *The Nations that Know Thee Not*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998)

Sikh involvement in war includes works on the First and Second Sikh Wars such as Arjan Dass Malik, *An Indian Guerilla War: The Sikh Peoples' War: 1699-1768*, (New Delhi: Wiley Eastern, 1975); Hugh C.B. Cook, *The Sikh Wars: The British Army in the Punjab: 1845-1849*, (London: L. Cooper, 1975); and D.H. Butani, *The Third Sikh War?: Towards or away from Kalistan?* (New Delhi: Promilla, 1986)

<sup>12</sup> A small sample of works that consider religion's obligation to non-violence include: Stan Windass, *Christianity Versus Violence: a Social and Historical Study of War and Christianity*, (London: Sheed and

various think tanks and non-governmental organizations religion's peace-making capacity, such as the US Institute for Peace's Religion and Peacemaking Initiative.<sup>13</sup> While important, this dissertation argues that these works cannot be fully understood without also considering the flipside of religion—its ability to cause war and violent conflict.

### *Existing theories on religion and war*

In addition to empirical work on the role of religion in war and violent conflict, there are a few theories that attempt to explain the causes of religious violence. First, in *Violence and the Sacred*, Rene Girard develops a theory that correlates sacrifice—which he claims is the central component of religion—to human violence.<sup>14</sup> Girard posits, in accord with Freud, that sacrifice is a means of venting human aggression.<sup>15</sup> Religious sacrifice, therefore, offers a channel through which humans can release violent desires, diverting those hostile desires from one another. Girard claims that human violence occurs when symbolic sacrifices are no longer believable or satisfying to a given society. This is what he calls a “sacrificial crisis,” which, in turn, leads to human violence.

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Ward, 1979); and John Howard Yoder, *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just War Thinking*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1996). An example of Islam's obligation to peace includes: M.R. Bawa Muhaiyadeen, *Islam and World Peace: Explanations of a Sufi*, (Philadelphia: Fellowship Press, 1987). Hinduism and its obligation to peace is largely the product of two 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars, Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Works by Gandhi include: *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, (Ahmedbad: Navajivan Publishers, 1948); and *Satyagraha (Non-Violent Resistance)*, (Ahmedbad: Navajivan Publishers, 1951). An example of Radhakrishnan's work is *Religion and Society*, (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1947). Works on Buddhism's contribution to peace are many in number. Key works include Thich Nhat Hanh's *Being Peace*, (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987); *Celebrating Peace*, edited by Leroy S. Runner, (Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1990); and the Dalai Lama, *Disarmament, Peace and Compassion*, (Westfield: Open Media Press, 1995) and *Heart of Compassion: The Dalai Lama Reader*, (Delhi: Full Circle Press, 1997), to name a few.

<sup>13</sup> For more information, visit their website at <http://www.usip.org>

<sup>14</sup> Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, translated by Patrick Gregory, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977)

<sup>15</sup> Although Freud and Girard disagree on the source of this hostility. Freud believes it is the result of the Oedipal Complex, see *Totem and Taboo*, translated by James Strachey, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989)

Girard's theory presents three problems for explaining religious violence and war. First, sacrifice is not a central component to all religions. Most notably, Buddhism does not have sacrifice as one of its tenets; therefore Girard's theory does not explain violence and war generated by Buddhism. Second, Girard's theory explains *sub-conscious* human desire and the actions that these thoughts produce. His theory, although tested by several scholars of religious studies for its explanatory power,<sup>16</sup> does not consider *conscious* decision-making of religious elites and their communities to engage in violence and wars. And third, Girard's theory does not adequately explain the conditions under which ritual sacrifice fails and a sacrificial crisis emerges.

In response to Girard's theory, Mark Juergensmeyer offers his own theory for religious violence. In "Sacrifice and Cosmic War," Juergensmeyer argues that religion's primary purpose is to establish "ultimate order" and that this process involves conquering the "ultimate disorder," which is death.<sup>17</sup> Sacrifice and divine battles between gods—present in most religious scriptures or beliefs—are symbolic representations of a religious system battling with and attempting to conquer Evil, which is death and disorder.<sup>18</sup> In times of "threat and calamity"—such as war, occupation, corruption, lawlessness, and famine—cosmic and earthly violence become conflated; the celestial war between Good and Evil is understood to be occurring in the here-and-now. When conflated, earthly battles become holy battles. Juergensmeyer's theory posits that holy battles for the

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while Girard believes it is the result of competition with "the other." This is what he calls "mimetic desire." See Girard, chapter 6, "From Mimetic Desire to Monstrous Double," pp. 143-168.

<sup>16</sup> See *Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World*, edited by Mark Juergensmeyer, (London: Frank Cass, 1992), for the compilation of essays testing Girard's theory.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, "Sacrifice and Cosmic War," pp. 108-109, *Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World*. This theory is further developed in chapter two of Mark Juergensmeyer's, *The New Cold War?: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)

<sup>18</sup> Juergensmeyer, "Sacrifice and Cosmic War," pp. 106-111

conquest of Good over Evil know no specific enemy or definitive goal; rather the battle is against amorphous Disorder.

Juergensmeyer's theory is useful in that, first, it touches on a very important component of religion—the struggle of Good over Evil. As argued in chapter one, most religions are concerned with the path towards earthly and/or eternal salvation. Salvation is the struggle of Good over Evil, both in the here-and-now and the hereafter. Therefore Juergensmeyer's theory corresponds with the argument that salvation is a core concept of religion. Second, Juergensmeyer notes that earthly circumstances, especially threat and calamity, bring the struggle for salvation to the here-and-now. This theory, therefore, provides an explanation for why religious groups may become involved in violence and war at some times while not at others. However, this dissertation will challenge Juergensmeyer's assertion that religious violence knows no goals; rather, it will demonstrate specific goals that religious wars have.

The third theory on religious war is inferred from literature on fundamentalism; it is not proposed by any one source but rather is implicit in the writings of many scholars on this topic. The theory posits that religious fundamentalism is largely reactionary; it is in response to perceived or actual threat. For example, in *The New Cold War?*, Juergensmeyer argues that fundamentalism is a reaction to secular nationalism, which threatens religious worldviews and ways of life.<sup>19</sup> David Little asserts that religious fundamentalism is in reaction to colonialism.<sup>20</sup> Karen Armstrong and Bruce Lawrence posit that religious fundamentalism is in reaction to the forces of modernity, such as

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<sup>19</sup> Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War*

<sup>20</sup> David Little, *Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity*, (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 1994)

cultural, economic and political globalism.<sup>21</sup> These various threats to religious groups spark a reaction, either violent or non-violent, with the goal of preserving the religious group's identity and way of life.

These observations suggest two causes of religious fundamentalism that are useful for identifying the underlying causes of religious violence. First, they suggest that fundamentalism is largely reactionary, not preemptive; it is a response to perceived or actual threat. Second, these observations suggest that the social, political and economic circumstances of a given group explain why some groups turn towards fundamentalism and others do not. This is in contrast to those who argue that there is something within a religion that makes it prone towards fundamentalism and violence. However, this theory does not explain why some fundamentalist groups choose violence as a means of defense and others do not.

These three theories, particularly Juergensmeyer's theory for cosmic war and the implicit argument in the fundamentalism literature, form the foundation for this dissertation's causal argument, which is outlined in the following section.

### **Causal Arguments for Religion, War, and Violent Conflict**

As previously argued, if the source of religious violence exists within a religion, either through its scripture or beliefs, then it stands to logic that its practitioners would be in a perpetual state of war. However, none of the five religions studied in this dissertation fits this description; all of these religions have historical examples of violence and examples of peace, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters. This variation

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<sup>21</sup> Karen Armstrong, *The Battle For God*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2000); and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989)



between religious peace and violence suggests that there are factors other than scriptures and belief that cause war and violence. The previous chapter posited that religious violence is the result of interpretations of the faith, which is the product of individuals grounded in specific circumstances. Therefore, in order to understand the conditions under which violent interpretations of a religion are generated, it is necessary to identify the variables that fuel these interpretations.

There are several theories in international relations literature that are useful for explaining how and under what conditions religious violence arises. Political scientist Michael E. Brown confronts similar questions to the abovementioned puzzles when attempting to explain the causes of ethnically motivated violence and war. Brown notes that if “ancient hatred theory” were true—the idea that two ethnic groups have been at war for centuries and are thus inherently prone towards reciprocal violence—then one should expect to see perpetual war between such groups. In other words, ancient hatred theory does not explain the variation of war and peace between ethnic groups.<sup>22</sup> In order to explain this variation, Brown looks for a “catalyst” to ethnic conflict, something that sparks violence at certain times and not at others. He identifies “political elites” as such a catalyst and argues that they are the ones who whip up ethnic hatred at some points in time but not at others.<sup>23</sup>

Another useful theory for explaining variation between religious war and the peace is Thomas Christensen’s theory for elite-driven mobilization. Christensen argues that international threats can present domestic elites with difficult challenges to providing security for their state. This, in turn, can lead elites to adopt “a more hostile or more

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<sup>22</sup> Michael E. Brown, “Introduction,” in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, (Cambridge: MIT Press in association with Harvard’s CSIA Studies in International Security, 1996), pp. 1-31

ideological foreign policy than they otherwise would prefer” with the aim of generating domestic mobilization to meet the state’s security needs.<sup>24</sup> Christensen’s theory, as with Brown’s, focuses on the role of elites—in this case foreign policy elites—and their role in identifying threats, defining actions to meet these threats, and explaining threats and actions to mobilize citizens and other domestic resources for foreign policy ends.

Christensen acknowledges that elites’ use of ideology is critical for mobilizing domestic support to meet exogenous threats.

Lastly, this dissertation will use the insights of international relations scholar Robert Jervis—particularly his articulation of the security dilemma—to explain threat perception as a motivator for elite-driven religious war. Jervis argues that the offense/defense balance between states—factors such as geography, military equipment, technology and intentions—is often difficult to distinguish, which makes states feel insecure. It is this uncertainty that breeds the “security dilemma”—defensive measures taken by one state which, in turn, are interpreted as hostile acts by another state, thus prompting that state to take defensive actions, which spirals both states into a diminishing sense of security.<sup>25</sup> Threat perception and the security dilemma, it will be argued, are critical for explaining variation between religious war and peace throughout time and space. This is not to say that all religious violence is in reaction to threat; undoubtedly there is some religious violence that comes from preemptive opportunity. However, this dissertation will argue that most religiously motivated war is in response to a perceived or actual threat; it is thus reactive instead of proactive.

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<sup>23</sup> Brown, pg. 23

<sup>24</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pg. 4

This dissertation will concentrate on violent interpretations of the faith and the wars and conflicts they produce. It will consider, in particular, three variables as causes of religiously motivated war and violent conflict: the relationship between political and religious leaders as a cause of religious wars; the role of threat perception in shaping leaders' actions; and the amount of material, social and technological resources in determining actions of groups.

### *Religious and governmental authorities*

Following on Brown's and Christensen's arguments, this dissertation will focus on the role of elites—what it will call leaders—in precipitating violence and war. It therefore assumes that leaders are the ones who call for war and violence and who also determine the goals of violent campaigns. Both religious and political leaders are important for understanding religion's involvement in war. Religious leaders are the ones charged with interpreting scripture and maintaining religious traditions; these religious resources can be valuable tools for justifying the use of force and mobilizing populations for war. Political leaders also manage resources—particularly the military—that could be used for defense in times of threat.

In particular, the relationship *between* religious and political leaders will be explored for its impact on religiously motivated war and violence. The conventional wisdom concerning religion and government, particularly for those in the West, is that religion and state authority should be separate. Ideally, this separation should preserve the integrity of both bodies of authority by removing religion from politics and society and by allowing for religious liberties, free of governmental interference. However, the

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. XXX, No. 2, January,

separation of religious and governmental authorities does not always produce religious peace. On the contrary, this dissertation will demonstrate that secular governments, under certain conditions, are a cause of religious violence; they help produce violent interpretations of a religion aimed at challenging the authority of the state. Therefore, separation of religion and state is not necessarily the path to religious peace.

This dissertation posits that, under certain conditions, the relationships between religious and state leaders can produce religious wars. First, if political and religious leaders' authorities are intertwined, then both groups of leaders can use each other's resources for their own ends. This relationship, therefore, could produce wars with either religious or secular goals. Religious and state authority can be intertwined through religious monarchies, religious political parties, religious law, and government posts for religious leaders. It is important to note that the intermixing of religious and political leaders can have positive consequences; both bodies can check and restrain each other, preventing neither side from becoming too powerful.

However, the dynamic between religious and government authorities can also lead to collusion; one form of authority calling on the other to legitimate its agendas, including plans for war and violent conflict. This relationship can further religious leaders' goals. Likewise, in this dynamic, state leaders can call on religious leaders to legitimate wars with secular goals. For example, the intertwining of religious and political leaders in Iran and Saudi Arabia has allowed religious leaders to use government funding to promote radical Islamic groups outside their borders, which is discussed in the chapter four. Likewise, the rise of Hindu nationalist parties in Indian government has

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1978, pp. 167-214

arguably created a more permissive environment in which these groups can assert their religious goals, which is discussed in the chapter five.

Second, this dissertation argues that if religious authority is subordinate to state authority, then a government's wars will have secular goals. However, as the case studies will reveal, this dynamic can also produce another result—religious leaders who violently challenge the authority of the government, with the goal of affecting a revolution and seizing control of the state. This dynamic is particularly evident in the current wave of radical Islamic groups calling for jihad against their own governments, such as in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia, which are discussed in chapter four. However, this is visible not only in Islam, but also within revolutionary movements in Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity. Even in the US, Christian terrorist groups, inspired by Reconstructionist Theology, have emerged with the aim of overthrowing the US government and installing Christian theocracy in its place.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, as the case studies will show, neither of these relationships between governmental and religious authorities has consistently produced violent ends. There are numerous examples of intertwined religious and government authorities that have created peace. For example, the Dalai Lama is both the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people; he has called for peaceful resistance against Chinese occupation. Historically, however, the Tibetans have engaged in violence and war under the office of the Dalai Lama.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, the subordination of religion to the state has produced both peaceful and violent results. The US and most of the West enjoys peaceful dynamics between religious and governmental authorities. As previously mentioned, however, this

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<sup>26</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, chapter two: "Soldiers for Christ," pp. 19-43

relationship has produced religious violence in Egypt, Palestine, Israel, India, and Indonesia. Therefore, dynamics between state and religious authorities are not the sole cause of religious war and violence.

### *Threat perception*

Because the relationship between religious and state authority does not produce clear results for religious bellicosity, other variables must be important for determining the conditions under which religious wars occur. This dissertation, therefore, considers the role of real or perceived threat in determining religious violence and war. The case studies will demonstrate that the majority of religious wars are called by leaders in reactions to perceived or actual threat, not as opportunity to gain resources or adherents to the faith. It is important to note, however, that not *all* religious wars are threat driven. There are historical examples of religious wars called to expand territory, most notably the jihads to expand the *dar al Islam*, the territory of Islam, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, which is discussed in chapter four. However, the majority of religious wars are fought for defensive ends.

This dissertation posits that religious leaders will react to threats against sites, territory, and communities believed to be essential to the preservation of a religion. Religious mobilization to protect sacred sites is particularly evident in the battles over Jerusalem and Ayodhya, both discussed in the following chapters. Religious mobilization can also occur over territory and populations deemed essential to a faith tradition. Examples include Sinhalese Buddhist claims to Sri Lanka, Hindu nationalists' bid to make India distinctly Hindu, Jewish extremists' call to seize land they believe to be theirs

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<sup>27</sup> The Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People: The Autobiography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet*,

by divine right, and Muslim actions to defend the *dar al Islam*. All of these events will be discussed in the following case studies.

However, this dissertation will also reveal that threats aimed at radically altering the order of society tend to produce a religious reaction. Radical social transformation comes from several different sources including wars, occupation, new ideologies, and new political systems. For example, 19<sup>th</sup> century European colonial powers radically transformed the social fabric of the regions they occupied. They introduced land reform, new educational systems, new political structures, new religions and worldviews, and new ways of thinking about identity. These transformations produced reactions in Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, as described in several of the following chapters. Likewise, in the post-Colonial period, the efforts of several governments to implement secular-nationalist agendas—complete with social, economic and political reforms—produced religiously motivated backlashes. This is true in India, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia, as will be discussed in the cases studies. In addition, the current rise of globalization has also threatened religious groups and nations around the world, producing backlashes that are often violent. Therefore, the threat of radical social and political transformation often provokes a religious reaction, which can be violent.

#### *Material, social and technological resources*

Finally, this dissertation posits that resources are important for explaining the conditions under which religious violence occurs. Specifically, it will consider three sets of resources: material resources, which include money, property, buildings (including schools and clinics), and military equipment; social resources, which include charismatic

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(New York: Warner Books, 1997), pp. 40-43, 55, 76-77,105

leaders, educated leaders, networks, and organizations; and technological resources, which include transportation and communications technology. This dissertation posits that the greater the resources available to religious leaders and groups, the more likely these groups will choose violence as a means of achieving their goals. And conversely, the fewer resources these groups have, the less likely they will choose violence and the more likely they will use other means, such as hiding from the threat or isolation, to defend their faith.

The case studies will reveal that, of these three types of resources, social resources—particularly educated leaders and well-structured organizations—are important for explaining the ability of religious groups to assert their demands, including through the use of force.

### *Religious wars and wars with religion*

As previously argued, this dissertation asserts that religion's involvement in war can be divided into two distinct causal paths: "religious war," wars and violent conflicts with salient religious goals; and "wars with religion," those with "secular" or non-religious goals. Furthermore, this dissertation aims to demonstrate that religious wars are fought specific goals in mind. In particular, it aims to explain the causes of three saliently religious end-goals in religious wars. First, it argues that religious groups fight to defend "holy nations," territory and people deemed critical to the survival of the faith. Second, it argues that religious group fight to defend sacred sites, pieces of land recognized as important for the practice of the faith. And third, it argues that religious groups fight for control of the government, via religious revolutions, which will allow these groups to implement their interpretation of the faith. These goals, while not covering every aim for



which religious groups become involved in war and violent conflicts, covers the most prominent religious wars in history and in modern times.

This dissertation argues that religious wars to defend holy nations, sacred space and create religious governments arise from particular threats, especially threats to the order of society and to religious land and constituents. Furthermore, certain relationships between religious and political leaders will help produce religious wars, specifically if the religious and political leaders' authority are mixed or if religious leaders are separate from political leaders and threatened by the state. Finally, religious groups will choose violence depending on the amount of resources available to the group.

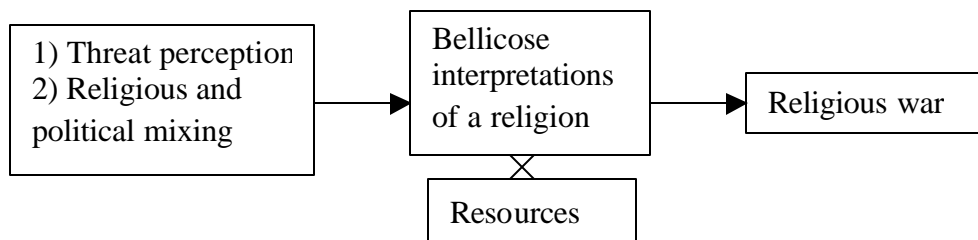
However, not all wars have religious goals, although it is quite possible that all wars involve religion in some capacity. In wars with secular goals, religion is one of many potential ideologies—along with and not exclusive to nationalism, Marxism, liberalism, and even secularism—that leaders can use for mobilization. This dissertation argues that if the threats facing the state do not directly impact religious leaders, their land, and their constituents, then the goals will not be religious; rather, they will be secular including objectives such as state expansion and defense; the capture or defense of resources; the maintenance of trade and transportation routes; and regime preservation or removal. Wars with religion arise either from the mixing of political and religious leaders' authority, which will allow political leaders to draw on religious authority to legitimate and mobilize for war, or through the separation of religious and political leaders, which will produce secular wars from the government.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Although this relationship can also produce wars where religious leaders challenge the authority of the state, as described in the section on religious wars.

As the case studies will reveal, the primary difference between causes of religious wars and wars with religion is the nature of threat. Threats to the order of society, sacred sites, or religious constituents will compel religious groups to react. Threats to territory, governments, or resources will compel states or groups to react in order to defend these resources, possibly using religion as a means of mobilization or justification. These arguments are summarized in Table 2.1.

## 2.1 Causal Argument and Hypotheses



### Summary of general hypotheses:

1. Threat perception  
The greater the actual or perceived threats to co-religionists and resources, the more likely religious leaders will generate bellicose interpretations of a religion.
2. Fusion of religious and political leaders:  
If religious and political leaders authorities are intertwined, then the greater the chances that they will use each other's resources to call for, justify, and execute war, including both religious wars and wars with religion.
3. Material, social and technological resources:  
The greater the resources, the more likely the religious group is to use force to attain their goals.

## Cases and Methods

This dissertation will focus only on “religious wars,” wars and violent conflicts with saliently religious goals: defense of holy nations, defense of sacred space, and religious revolutions aimed at installing a religious government. It will consider six cases divided

into three categories. First, it will consider religious violence and war to defend “holy nations,” land and people central to the preservation of specific religions. This section will trace Buddhist battles aimed at defending the *dhammadipa* in Sri Lanka, the land of the Buddha’s teachings. It will also address the jihads of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and compare them to jihad movements today including Osama Bin Laden’s declaration of war against the US. Second, the case studies will look at religious violence to defend specific sacred sites, namely battles over Ayodhya and the rise of Hindu nationalism in India; and Christian, Jewish, and Muslim battles over Jerusalem. Third, this dissertation will trace the rise of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It will then compare this religious revolution to Marxist revolutions in Russia, China and Latin America, considering the similarities and differences between Islam and Marxism as revolutionary ideologies.

These cases were chosen because the end goals of these battles are saliently religious. Jihad movements have called on religious doctrines and scriptures to defend the *dar al Islam* and its Muslim inhabitants. Similarly, the bid to make Sri Lanka saliently Sinhalese stems from the belief that the island is divinely Buddhist. Likewise, Jerusalem and Ayodhya are battles over contested sacred spaces that have involved Jews, Muslims and Christians, and Muslims and Hindus, respectively. These cases were also chosen because they tend to be the incidents that spring to mind when thinking of religious war: the Crusades, Hindu-Muslim riots, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iranian Revolution, and the current declaration of jihad against the United States. Therefore, these cases in particular have been chosen for their association with religious violence and war. Lastly, these cases cover five religious traditions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and

Christianity, in addition to Marxism—demonstrating the spread of religious violence and war *across* traditions in addition to *within* religious traditions across time and space.

The following cases will not be considered in this dissertation: the Holocaust, the conflict in Northern Ireland, the recent Balkan wars, the Genocide in Rwanda, and Catholic uprisings in Latin America in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Holocaust is often considered a war involving Christian persecution of Jews. While it is true that Jews were the primary target of Hitler and he used Christian symbols and history to mobilize the masses, Jews were singled-out not for their religion, but for their supposed “race,” which the Reich argued was inferior to the “Aryan” race of the Germans. This is evident in the fact that other “inferiors” were targeted along with the Jews including Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, the infirm, and the mentally deficient. Therefore, Hitler’s inspired genocide was racially motivated, not religiously salient.

The Northern Ireland conflict is not considered because the goals of the fighting sides are not saliently religious. The groups are distinguished by their religious identities: the Catholic “Republicans” and the Protestant “Unionists.” However, despite the fact that religion defines identity, and despite the fact that religion is used as a means of mobilization for the conflict, the goals of both sides are not saliently religious. The Republicans, who are primarily Catholic, are fighting for an end to British occupation and reunification with the Republic of Ireland. The Unionists, who are primarily Protestant, want to maintain political, economic, social, and military ties with the United Kingdom. Thus these goals, therefore, are not saliently religious.

Similarly, fighting groups in the Balkans are distinguished by religious affiliation: the Serbs are Christian Orthodox, the Bosnjaks and Albanians are Muslim, and the Croats

are Catholic Christians. However, despite these religious distinctions and the use of religious resources to differentiate and mobilize the masses for war, the goals of these fighting parties, for the most part, are not to preserve religious order or create states with religious governments, but rather to create independent, viable states that can be defended from attack.<sup>29</sup>

The Rwandan Genocide involved the participation of members of Christian clerisy, including Catholic priests and nuns, Episcopal priests, and several pastors of other Protestant churches.<sup>30</sup> However, groups in the conflict were distinguished not by religion but ethnicity, Hutus and Tutsies. This led to massacres *within* religious groups, not *between* them; for example, Catholics Hutus killed Catholic Tutsies. The goal of this conflict, therefore, was the eradication of one ethnic group by another, not the eradication or preservation of one religious group over another.

Finally, Latin America experienced several uprisings involving Catholicism in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and today in Chiapas, southern Mexico. Latin America was the birthplace of Liberation Theology, an interpretation of the Gospels that called for resistance to social injustice—often at the hands of governmental and military oppression—including the use of force. The Catholic clerisy actively participated in resistance movements by mobilizing constituents, organizing and leading groups, and

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<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that a few groups in the Balkans have named saliently religious goals as a *causis belli*. For example, some Serbs believe that Kosovo is the “Jerusalem of the Serbs;” it is the site where the Serb nation was born and has struggled against advancing Muslim forces since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. See “How it all started: No place for both of them” in *The Economist*, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999, pg. 18. There are also a few radical Islamic groups in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia, who have declared the conflict in the former Yugoslavia to be a  *jihad*, however, these groups are few and have been unsuccessful in rallying the masses behind their cause. See Stephen Schwartz, “The Arab Betrayal of Balkan Islam,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (March, 2002), pp. 1-12

<sup>30</sup> James C. McKinley, Jr., “Church and State: Seeking Complicity in a Genocide,” *The New York Times*, June 10, 2001

even dying for these causes.<sup>31</sup> However, the goals for which these groups were fighting were not religious; in many cases they sought to install new governments based on Marxist principles, not a Christian theocracy. Therefore, these violent conflicts did not have saliently religious end goals.

### *Methods and research design*

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, the puzzle this dissertation seeks to answer is: Why do violent interpretations of a religion occur at some points in time and in some places but not at others? What explains this variation? In order to answer this puzzle, this dissertation will employ a two-fold method of comparison. First, it will analyze religious groups in one place throughout history, considering cases where religious groups that were once pacific have become violent and vice versa. In doing so, this dissertation will test the proposed hypotheses for variables that cause religious groups to choose violence—the relationship between political and religious elites, the perception of threat, and the resources available to that religious group—to determine if they explain the conditions under which religious groups become violent as a means of attaining their goals. Second, these different case studies will be compared according to their subcategory—holy nations, sacred space, and religious revolutions—further testing the explanatory power of variables exogenous to religion and thus common across different traditions.

This dissertation employs qualitative methods, primarily process tracing, to test the hypotheses against case studies. The case studies trace developments over time within

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<sup>31</sup> For an introduction to Liberation Theology, see *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, edited by Trevor A. Hart, (Grand Rapids: Patler Noster Press, 2000) pp. 318-320; and *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, edited by Adrian Hastings et al, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 387-390

one group, in addition to comparing cases across religion, time and context, making use of small and medium-n approaches. The hope in employing these methods is to identify patterns of variables that cause religious violence and war across space, time and religious tradition. This method may also illuminate characteristics that are unique to different religions and how these differences affect religious bellicosity. For case studies, this dissertation relies primarily on the rich body of secondary literature in order to test the theories.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that existing literature on religion and war, while descriptively rich, offers few theories that explain religious war and violent conflict across religious groups, space and time. In response, therefore, this chapter presented causal arguments for religion's involvement in wars and violent conflicts, building on the two definitions of "religious wars" and "wars with religion" outlined in chapter one. This chapter argued that three variables are important for understanding when certain religious groups engage in violence and war: the relationship between religious and governmental authorities, the role of threat perception, and the amount of resources available to the religious community. Furthermore, this chapter argued that religious wars—wars with saliently religious end-goals—are largely defensive and include three broad pursuits: the defense religious nations, the defense of sacred sites, and the instillation of a religious government through revolution. These arguments will be tested for their explanatory power in the following case studies using qualitative methods.





**I.**  
**Holy Nations**

## Overview of Religious Wars to Defend Holy Nations

The role of ethnicity and nationalism as causes of violence and war is a timely academic topic, particularly in the post-Cold War era. There are many competing definitions of ethnicity and nationalism and the various ways in which they fuel bellicose behavior. For example, Donald Horowitz argues that ethnicity includes numerous visible and invisible traits—such as skin color, physique, place of birth, tribal or clan affiliation, language, cultural practices, history, and religious affiliation—which are believed to be ascriptive, or given at birth, and which unite groups and distinguish them from one another.<sup>1</sup> Anthony Smith adds the importance of territory or a “homeland” to his definition of ethnicity and omits religion as an ethnic trait.<sup>2</sup> Walker Connor’s definition of nationalism stresses “national consciousness,” the importance of a group’s political aspirations of a group, most notably self-rule or the creation of a state.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, nationalism could involve ethnic traits or other unifying elements, such as a set of beliefs and ideology, and the desire to make those particular traits politically salient.

This section considers a specific subset of nationalism, *holy nations*, which are religious communities and the land they inhabit. As argued in chapter one, religions are inherently corporate phenomena; they involve groups of people that identify and are identified by a specific set of beliefs, scriptures, and practices. In other words, religion is—or becomes under certain circumstances—the salient definition of the group and the land they inhabit. Unlike sacred sites—which are parcels of land believed to have a

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<sup>1</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 41-54

<sup>2</sup> He names six traits in his definition of ethnicity—a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with specific territory, and a sense of solidarity. See Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 21-32

unique connection with the divine—holy nations involve much greater areas, even entire regions that have been deemed the “homeland” of the religion. These areas, together with the practitioners that inhabit them, are believed to share in a holy mission aimed at the preservation and promotion of the faith. If threatened, therefore, not only is the survival of the group at stake, but so is the very existence of the religion.

This section examines two examples of holy nations that have, at times, engaged in religious wars to defend land and people believed to be necessary for the preservation of a faith tradition. The first case considers the rise of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka and Sinhala-Tamil violence beginning in the 1950s. It analyzes three waves of violence: the riots in 1956 and 1958; the 1977 riots; and riots in 1981 and 1983 followed by the outbreak of civil war. It argues that the rise of Sinhala nationalism stems from the belief that the Sinhala are a Buddhist nation—a land and people chosen by the Buddha himself to protect and promote his teachings throughout the world—and, therefore, that the island should be primarily if not wholly Buddhist. The creation of governmental policies preferential to the Sinhala—particularly in areas of language, land cultivation, and university quotas—sparked a reaction from the island’s other ethnic and religious groups. Unlike the Sinhala, Tamil national aspirations have been based on language, ethnicity, and a historic presence on the Island; Hinduism has neither been a salient motivator nor goal for which the Tamils are fighting.

The second case analyzes two major waves of jihad aimed at defending the *dar al Islam*, the land and people that preserve the Muslim faith. It considers, first, the outbreak of dozens of jihads throughout the Muslim world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, second, the current rise of jihads that began in the 1970s, including the emergence of Osama Bin

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<sup>3</sup> Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), especially pp. 91-92

Laden and Al Qaeda. It argues that both of these waves of jihad have been largely in response to international and domestic threats. The most notable international threat in the first wave was colonialism and the radical changes it brought to Muslim societies. Current international threats facing the Muslim world include the rise of globalization and the political, social, economic and cultural elements that have accompanied this worldwide trend. In addition, certain US foreign policies have been perceived as threatening to the *dar al Islam*, particularly its tight alliance with Israel, the presence of US troops on Saudi soil, and military action in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, the US has become a target of Islamic militants wishing to drive America out of Muslim land. Domestic threats to the *dar al Islam* include, most notably, corrupt leadership that has failed to uphold the tenets of Islam. In the modern era, this has come to include secular, non-democratic governments, such as in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, both of which have been targets of Islamic militants.

These cases were chosen because they offer an insightful comparison between two religions seldom seen as having much in common. Islam is the religion perhaps most popularly perceived as inherently violent, particularly given its doctrine of jihad or “holy war.” Conversely, Buddhism is typically understood to be a peaceful religion, one that stresses compassion and has non-violence as one of its tenets. However, as these two cases demonstrate, religious violence geared towards defending the Buddhist *dhammadipa* looks very similar to violence aimed at defending the *dar al Islam*.

Both Sinhala Buddhists and Muslims across the *ummah*, the worldwide Muslim community, have taken up arms in the face of international threats. Likewise, militant groups within both religions have attacked their own governments for failing to defend

the faith. Both groups have been particularly brutal and employed terrorist tactics on civilians and government targets in attempts to change the status quo. Furthermore, Buddhist and Muslim religious wars have proven costly in lives and resources. Thus the two cases demonstrate that bloodshed and brutality to achieve saliently religious goals is not a uniquely Muslim phenomenon.

Comparing the two cases also reveals important differences. Most notably, Buddhist violence to defend the *dhammadipa* has largely been contained to Sri Lanka, which is smaller in demographics and territory than Muslim religious wars to defend the *dar al Islam*. It is also worth noting that militant Buddhist nationalism has not spread to other Buddhist countries, or even other Theravadan Buddhist countries—the particular branch of Buddhism practiced in Sri Lanka—such as Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, or Laos. The *dar al Islam*, on the other hand, is much larger in demographics and territory; it spans across nearly every continent and has over one billion adherents. Moreover, historic and current jihads to defend the *dar al Islam* have occurred in several countries simultaneously; with recent jihads, these movements may be linked through organizations like Al Qaeda. This difference makes jihad larger and more of a global concern than Buddhist violence to defend the *dhammadipa*.

Furthermore, violence in Sri Lanka is of regional concern to South Asia but it is not of primary importance to US foreign policy. Sri Lanka does not possess assets that are critical to the US, such as natural resources or basing privileges. Specific countries within the *dar al Islam*, on the other hand, are of both regional and US foreign policy concern. The Middle East—particularly the Persian Gulf states—contain the world's primary oil reserves, which are of critical importance to the US. Moreover, the United

State's commitment to Israel, fueled in part by domestic demands, remains a foreign policy priority. These two foreign policy concerns have kept the US in the Middle East both politically and militarily. Thus the threat posed by militant Muslims aimed at defending the *dar al Islam* is, first, more of a foreign policy concern given the Middle East's resources and the defense of Israel, and, second, is a bigger problem to the US given its political and military presence in the region.

Finally, it is important to note that religious wars to defend holy nations are not confined to Buddhism and Islam. Hindu nationalism in India has been on the rise, particularly since the 1980s. There are those who claim that India should be purely Hindu and its government should protect and foster *Hindutva*, the Hindu nation. Hindu nationalism is addressed in chapter five on Ayodhya and the battle for sacred space. Likewise, Jewish militants in Israel claim that *Eretz Yisrael*, the territory outlined in the Jewish Bible, is Jewish by divine right. Proponents of this interpretation argue that Jews should seize as much land as possible within *Eretz Yisrael*—by force if necessary—and make it wholly Jewish. This case is considered in chapter six in battles over Jerusalem. Finally, although not considered in this dissertation, it is important to note that Christianity has also been interpreted with the aim of creating a holy nation. In particular, “Reconstruction Theology,” which has inspired movements like the Christian Patriots, argues that the US should be a Christian Theocracy in which there is no separation between church and state and all citizens are brought to the faith. This interpretation has

fueled violent groups such as the Covenant the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, and abortion bombers and assassins.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For more on militant Christianity in the US, see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), especially Chapter 2: "Soldiers for Christ," pp. 19-43





**Chapter 3**  
**Buddhist Violence in Sri Lanka:**  
**The Call to Defend the *Dhammadipa***

The civil war in Sri Lanka has been one of the bloodiest and most protracted conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Somewhat surprising to most, the warring factions—the Sinhalese and Tamils—practice Buddhism and Hinduism respectively, two religions commonly associated with peace and nonviolence. Furthermore, Sinhalese violence has, at times, involved members of the Buddhist monastic order including a monk's assassination of the country's prime minister in 1959. How could the peaceful teachings of the Buddha and the same religion that produced the non-violent example of Gandhi also be involved in bloody battles in Sri Lanka?

This chapter seeks to provide insights into the causes of Sinhalese-Tamil riots and the twenty-year civil war in Sri Lanka. Drawing from the causal argument presented in chapter two, it will focus on three variables as possible explanations for religious violence in Sri Lanka: the relationship between religious and political leaders, the role of threat perception in influencing the actions of religious and political leaders, and the amount of resources available to groups initiating the violence. It will test three empirical predictions from these study variables. First, if threatened, religious leaders will call for violence to defend their status within society. Second, religious violence will increase if political and religious leaders' authorities are intertwined and, conversely, violence will decrease if their authority is separated. And third, the group initiating the violence has greater resources relative to the group they are challenging.

This chapter argues that Sinhalese motivations and goals in the violence have been fueled by the belief that Sri Lanka is a Buddhist nation, a special land and people

designated by the Buddha himself to keep his teachings and promote them throughout the world. Sinhalese violence, therefore, is motivated by saliently religious goals. Tamil violence, on the other hand, has aimed to create an independent state in Tamil-majority regions on the island. Their motivations have not been driven by religious goals but rather by the preservation of territory they deem to be Tamil by historic right.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief introduction to Buddhism and Hinduism, outlining these religions' histories in Sri Lanka. The second section offers an overview of historic and contemporary incidents of violence on the island. The third sections describes three major waves of Sinhalese and Tamil violence in Sri Lanka—the 1956 and 1958 riots; the 1977 riots; and the 1981 and 1983 riots and outbreak of civil war—positing general and specific causes for these violent incidents. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks.

### **Overview of Buddhism and Hinduism**

It is commonly assumed that Buddhism and Hinduism are pacific religion and—unlike the monotheistic faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam—their practitioners are strict proponents of *ahimsa*, or non-violence towards all living things. However, the historical record of Buddhism and Hinduism is far from non-violent. In order to understand the involvement of Sri Lankan Buddhists in violent conflict, it is necessary to outline the basic beliefs and structure of Buddhism in general and Sri Lankan Buddhism in particular. This section, therefore, provides an introduction to Buddhism and describes the way in which it has operated in society and politics in Sri Lanka. Likewise, this section offers a brief overview of Hindu beliefs and practices of the Tamils.

## *Buddhism*

Buddhism<sup>1</sup> emerged around a human named Siddhartha Gautama, a sixth century BCE prince in present day India.<sup>2</sup> As a member of royalty, Siddhartha was raised in an environment sheltered from the pain of the world. One day, however, his confrontation with an old, dying man and the shock of his suffering led Siddhartha to renounce his wealth and leave his wife and child in search of the end to human pain and suffering.<sup>3</sup> After several years of studies and meditation as a Hindu ascetic, he discovered that the path to enlightenment lay neither in extravagance nor self-depravation but in the place of balance and equilibrium between the two extremes. This knowledge allowed him to conquer his desires and temptations, to attain salvation from *samsarna*—which is the cycle of life, death and rebirth—and to emerge as “the awakened one,” or the Buddha.<sup>4</sup>

The path to salvation in Buddhism, therefore, involves finding a perfect state of harmony with all living things, which will cause *karma*—the accumulative effects of one’s actions—to cease and will release one from the cycle of *samsarna* to a state that transcends life and death, which is *nirvana*. The Buddha’s path to liberation is outline in the “Four Noble Truths:” that life is impertinent and suffering, *dukkha*; that suffering arises from attachments to and cravings for the impertinent, *samudaya*; that suffering ceases when these desires end, *nirodha*; and that ending these desires is possible by practicing the “Eightfold Path.” The Eightfold Path consists of *magga*, which involves

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<sup>1</sup> There is an argument that Buddhism is not a religion but—given its lack of central authority and tight organizational structure—it is a philosophy. However, this definition of Buddhism fails to capture that there are trained leaders in Buddhism, monastic orders, scriptures, an identifiable community of believers and rules, or dogma, that have existed since the time of the Buddha. In other words, Buddhism is an “organized” religion as is Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Therefore, Buddhism conforms to the definition of religion proposed in this dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism*, edited by Charles S. Prebish, (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1993), pg. 2

<sup>3</sup> *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism*, pg. 3

three qualities—wisdom, morality, and meditation—and eight “right” actions: seeing, thinking, speaking, behaving, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and contemplation.<sup>5</sup>

The historic Buddha and his path to enlightenment make up the first of three “jewels” or the “triple refuge” of Buddhism, which is the structure of the faith. The second refuge is the teaching of the Buddha, the *Dharma*<sup>6</sup>—written down in the *Tipitaka*—the “three baskets” of texts concerning community behavior (usually of the monastic order), practical teachings, and philosophical teachings.<sup>7</sup> Buddhist scripture, therefore, consists of the *Tipitaka*, of which there is more than one translation, plus local texts and stories.<sup>8</sup> The third refuge is the monastic order, the *Sangha*, which is the body of religious leaders in Buddhism.

As with all other religions, Buddhism does not exist as a monolith. There are three major branches in Buddhism, or “vehicles.” The first and oldest is *Theravada* Buddhism, which predominates in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia. Theravada Buddhism is organized around the Pali canon of the *Tipitaka* and names the Sangha as the main body responsible for maintaining the tradition. Buddhist kings, *Sangharaja*, have been particularly important for supporting the Sangha and the Dharma, thus creating a tight relationship between religious and political authority.<sup>9</sup> *Mahayana* Buddhism—which is concentrated in China, Korea, Vietnam and Japan—was formed in reaction to what its leaders believed to be the elitist approach of *Theravada* Buddhism. It stresses compassion and strives to present a religion for the masses. *Mahayana* Buddhism

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<sup>4</sup> *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism*, pg. 4

<sup>5</sup> For a very concise description of these tenets, see “Essentials of Buddhism,” <http://home.earthlink.net/~srama/>, downloaded on 1/24/03

<sup>6</sup> Also transliterated *Dhamma*

<sup>7</sup> *Sacred Texts and Authority*, edited by Jacob Neusner, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1998), pp. 61-62

<sup>8</sup> *Sacred Texts and Authority*, pg. 61

has produced numerous offshoots including “Pure Land” Buddhism and Zen Buddhism.<sup>10</sup>

The third Vehicle is *Vajrayana* or *Tantric* Buddhism, which is most prevalent in Tibet.

Tibet also has adopted local religious beliefs and practices, which gives the faith unique tenets, most notably the offices of the Lamas.<sup>11</sup>

Buddhism began in current day India but quickly spread throughout South, East, and Southeast Asia via Buddhist missionaries and along trade routes. In the third century BCE, the Indian King Asoka converted to Buddhism and dispatched Buddhist missionaries to the North, Northwest, and South of his kingdom, including Sri Lanka. In the following centuries, Buddhism spread East along Central Asia’s trade routes, taking hold in China, Korea, and Japan by the sixth century CE.<sup>12</sup>

Most scholars agree that missionaries introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka around the third century BCE.<sup>13</sup> However, it is popularly believed that the Buddha himself visited the island three times during his life, 250 years before Buddhist missionaries came to the island.<sup>14</sup> In these visits he designated the island and the Sinhalese as the *Dhammadipa*, special keepers of the faith where Buddhism was destined to “shine in glory.”<sup>15</sup> Throughout its history, Sri Lanka has become the center of Theravada Buddhism. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Sri Lankan monks created commentaries on the *Tipitaka*, which they then carried to Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos, consolidating the

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<sup>9</sup> *Religions of the World*, Third Edition, edited by Robert K.C. Forman et al, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1993), Chapter 11: “Buddhism as a World Religion,” pp. 195-219, specifically pp. 195-200

<sup>10</sup> *Religions of the World*, pp. 200-210

<sup>11</sup> *Religions of the World*, pg. 213

<sup>12</sup> *Religions of the World*, pg. 194

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> Steven Kemper, *The Presence of the Past: Chronicles, Politics, and Culture in Sinhala Life*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pg. 26

<sup>15</sup> Kemper, quoting the *Mahavamsa*, pg. 26

Theravadan tradition across these regions.<sup>16</sup> In the modern era, Sri Lankan monks have continued to send out missionaries to spread and consolidated this form of Buddhism.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the Tipitaka, Sri Lankan Buddhists have their own sacred texts that describe the history of Buddhism on the island. The *Dipavamsa* is the oldest text, which chronicles early kings and the Sangha on the island. Compiled by monks, it also serves as a polemical defense of orthodox beliefs and practices of Theravada Buddhism.<sup>18</sup>

Borrowing largely from this earlier text, the *Mahavamsa* continues this tradition by chronicling Sinhalese kings and the history of Buddhism on the island. Monks first compiled the *Mahavamsa* around the sixth century CE and have updated it five times since— in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in the 1750s, in 1871, in 1933, and most recently in 1977— claiming to present an unbroken history of the Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka from the time of the Buddha.<sup>19</sup> It is important to stress that the *Mahavamsa* is not a historical document but rather a combination of myth, history, lineage, religion and politics.

The *Mahavamsa* is particularly important for understanding modern-day motivations for Buddhist violence. A major portion of the *Mahavamsa* is historic battles between Tamils and Sinhalese kings beginning around the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. As will be described, contemporary Sinhalese monks and politicians have interpreted these passages as examples of the chronic threat posed by Tamils to the Sinhalese and to Buddhism.

Finally, a key component of Theravada Buddhism, as previously mentioned, is the relationship between the king, the Sangha, and the Dharma. Historically in Sri Lanka, the

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<sup>16</sup> *Religions of the World*, pg. 198

<sup>17</sup> David Little, *Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity*, (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 1994), pg. 21-23, 33

<sup>18</sup> Kemper, pp. 35-36

<sup>19</sup> Kemper, pg. 42. Kemper notes that the extensions to the *Mahavamsa* are commonly called *Culavamsa*, or continuations.

king protected and promoted the Sangha, which maintained the texts and traditions of Buddhism and which, in turn, reinforced the king by endorsing his leadership and offering council. The laity—all subjects of the king not affiliated with the Sangha—also supported the system by providing some material support to Sangha—such as food from crops and recruits for the Sangha—in addition to patroning temples and sacred sites.<sup>20</sup> Although this social and political relationship had high and low points throughout Sri Lanka’s history, the introduction of colonial occupation—particularly the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—ended this system, thus restructuring political, social, and religious dynamics on the island.

### *Hinduism*

In addition to Christian and Muslim minorities on the Island—each about 8% of the island’s population—the other major religion in Sri Lanka is Hinduism, which makes up roughly 15% of the island’s population.<sup>21</sup> Hinduism played an important role in the formation of Tamil group identity in the 1800s. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the call for Tamil independence in Sri Lanka, Hinduism has not played a salient role; its leaders, its practices, and interpretations of its scriptures have neither motivated its practitioners nor designated the goals for which Tamil militants are striving. Therefore, this section will only provide a brief overview of Tamil Hinduism in southern India and Sri Lanka.<sup>22</sup>

Most scholars concur that Tamils in Sri Lanka are ancestors of Tamils in southern India and that they share several ties including a common language and religion. Most

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pg. 5

<sup>21</sup> “Sri Lanka: Country Profile,” *BBC News Online*, [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk), downloaded on 5/4/2000

<sup>22</sup> For more details on Hindu beliefs, scriptures and practices, see this dissertation’s chapter “Ayodhya: Hindu and Muslim Battles for Sacred Space.”

Hindus in Indian Tamil Nadu and in Sri Lanka are devotees of Saiva and practice a distinct form of Hinduism called *Saiva Siddhanta* or Dravidian Hinduism, which is based on sacred texts called the *Agamas*.<sup>23</sup> In northern India, Hindu textual authority is based largely on the *Vedas*, ancient scriptures that outline ritual practices such as sacrifice. In addition, the Brahmin caste predominates in the North, whereas the South came to be populated with mostly lower caste Hindus.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Hindus in the south mostly speak Tamil whereas in the north, most speak Hindi.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the aid of colonialism, the southern part of India underwent a transformation of identity based on its unique religious, linguistic and alleged racial distinctions from the North. This awakening evolved into the Self Respect Movement in the 1930s and the petition for an independent state in the South called *Dravidanad*.<sup>25</sup> Efforts to establish an independent Tamil state eventually died out in the 1950s after India's independence and the creation of a federal government with considerable state autonomy.<sup>26</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Tamils in Sri Lanka also underwent a transformation of identity based, in part, on their religious beliefs and practices. This awakening was led by an Indian Tamil named Arumuga Navalar. Navalar oversaw the reconstruction of Hindu temples in the area, stressed the importance of Hindu texts, and encouraged Tamils to boycott Christian missionary schools.<sup>27</sup> However, aside from this initial phase of religious revivalism, Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka have not organized around their religion

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<sup>23</sup> The roots of *Saiva Siddhanta* in the South can be traced back to the teachings of medieval scholar Meykanda Devar. See Little, pg. 131, footnote 8

<sup>24</sup> Little, pg. 38

<sup>25</sup> Little, pp. 39-42

<sup>26</sup> Sankaran Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 78-88

<sup>27</sup> Little, pp. 40-41



nor fought for saliently religious goals. Rather, more recent Tamil identity and separatism has been based largely on linguistic demands and territorial claims defined by historical, not religious, precedent. These points will be elucidated in the following sections.

### **Overview of Sri Lankan History and Conflicts**

Both Sinhala and Tamil Sri Lankans have myths, based partly on historic fact and partly on folklore, about when and how the island became populated. These stories play an important role in each ethnic group's current claims to territory on the island.

The Sinhalese believe that their ancestors came to the island around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The myth is that the island was uninhabited before the arrival of the first Sinhala, Vijaya, who then proceeded to populate the island with his offspring.<sup>28</sup> Alongside this myth of progeny, a popularly held Sinhalese belief claims that the Buddha himself visited the island on three occasions and designated Sri Lanka, the Sinhala people, and their king as special keepers of the faith.<sup>29</sup> These events were later chronicled in various manuscripts including the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*.

Also around the third century BCE, it is generally believed that Tamils from South India came to the island in connection with trade routes. In 237 BCE, two Tamils usurped the Sinhalese throne and ruled for a reported 22 years.<sup>30</sup> Ten years later, the Tamil King Elara ascended to power and ruled for 44 years. Elara's rule came to end after a 15 year-long battle with the Sinhala warrior king Duttagamani, who eventually succeeded in killing Elara and regaining the throne. There is much debate over the true

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<sup>28</sup> Kemper, pg. 108

<sup>29</sup> Kemper, pg. 52

<sup>30</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985*, (New York: University of America Press, 1986), pg. 11

content of this period of history.<sup>31</sup> Sinhalese tales of Elara often depict him as an illegitimate ruler and threat to Sinhala society whereas Tamil's describe his rule as just and tolerant with Duttagamani as an ethnic cleanser.<sup>32</sup> For the Sinhalese, this battle forms the bulk of the *Mahavamsa* and Duttagamani is portrayed as a hero, an ideal Buddhist leader and protector of the faith.<sup>33</sup>

From the second century BCE until around the seventh century CE, the Sinhalese kingdom flourished on the island. The kings built massive monuments to Buddhism and constructed a sophisticated irrigation system that allowed for cultivation of the island's Dry Zone.<sup>34</sup> It was in this time that the *Mahavamsa* was written, chronicling the Sinhala kings and their various accomplishments. Although the *Mahavamsa* depicts this era as one of national unity, the Sinhalese kingdom was not the only polity on the island. Three Tamil kingdoms also existed in the southern part of the island, although these kingdoms were not mentioned in the *Mahavamsa*.<sup>35</sup>

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, warriors from the southern Indian kingdom of Cola invaded the island and captured Anuradhpura, the Sinhalese capitol.<sup>36</sup> Although the Sinhalese managed to recapture the throne in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Colas retook the city and most of the kingdom, pushing the Sinhalese south. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century until the arrival of colonial powers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Sinhalese and Tamils maintained separate kingdoms on the island, with the Dry Zone as a buffer between the two.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kemper, pg. 132

<sup>32</sup> Kemper, pg. 117

<sup>33</sup> Kemper, pg. 124

<sup>34</sup> De Silva, pg. 9

<sup>35</sup> De Silva, pg. 12

<sup>36</sup> De Silva, pg. 13

<sup>37</sup> Gananath Obeyesekere, "On Buddhist Identity in Sri Lanka," *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict and Accommodation*, third edition, pp. 222-247, (Walnut Creek: Altamira Publishers, 1995), pg. 234; De Silva, pg. 14

The introduction of Portuguese (1505-1568) and Dutch (1568-1796) colonial rule was contained primarily to the littoral areas of the island, leaving the Kandy Kingdom of the Sinhalese and the Jaffna Kingdom of the Tamils largely intact. However, despite the limited presence of colonial powers on the island, both the Portuguese the Dutch brought missionaries who introduced Christianity to the population. Today, Christians make up approximately 8% of the island's population, nine-tenths of which are Catholic.<sup>38</sup>

Unlike its colonial predecessor, British rule introduced dramatic changes on the island. In 1815, the British signed an agreement with the last Sinhala king of Kandy, Nyakkar, which put the entire island under British rule.<sup>39</sup> The agreement stipulated to respect Buddhism and allow the Sangha to continue unhindered.<sup>40</sup> However, the arrival of Anglican missionaries in the beginning of the 1800s coupled with fewer resources allocated to the Sangha sparked monk-led rebellions against the British in 1818 and the 1820s.<sup>41</sup> These uprisings, however, did not succeed in changing the status quo.

The expanding presence of Christian missionaries, especially through missionary-run schools on the island, prompted Sinhala and Tamil backlashes in the 1800s.<sup>42</sup> From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both Tamil Hindus and Sinhalese Buddhists formed organizations aimed at resisting Christian influences. This included the formation of the Maha Bodhi Society in 1891 and the creation of the Young Lanka League, both of which were founded by the Buddhist leader Dharmapala, who is regarded as the father of

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<sup>38</sup> "Sri Lanka: Country Profile;" and De Silva, pg. 18

<sup>39</sup> Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pg. 158

<sup>40</sup> Little, pg. 13

<sup>41</sup> Kemper notes that around 15,000 Sinhalese died in the 1818 uprising, pg. 100. For more on the monks' uprisings in the 1920s, see Little, pg. 17; and De Silva, pg. 33.

<sup>42</sup> De Silva, pp. 35-37

Sinhala nationalism.<sup>43</sup> It also included a series of debates between Christian missionaries and Buddhist monks on the validity of their religious beliefs.<sup>44</sup> The Tamils attempted to counter the influences of Christian missionaries by creating their own schools and strengthening Saiva Hinduism on the island.<sup>45</sup> Muslims on the island—who trace their lineage back to Arab and Malay origins—also organized their own schools to counter the cultural and religious threat posed by the presence of Christian missionaries.<sup>46</sup>

In 1915, Sinhala and Muslim tensions over competing economic interests erupted into riots after rumors of a Muslim attack on a Buddhist temple.<sup>47</sup> British forces quelled the riots by imposing martial law and imprisoning numerous Sinhalese leaders, including Buddhist monks. Dharmapala, who was fingered as one of the leaders in the riots, fled the island and went into exile.<sup>48</sup> In 1916—amidst expanding colonial influences—Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim elites formed the Ceylon Reform League, which became the Ceylon National Congress in 1919. The goals of the National Congress were not to challenge British rule but, rather, to work for reforms under the British system.<sup>49</sup> However, the National Congress quickly collapsed and Tamils broke away to create their own organization.

In the 1920s, in an attempt to mollify tensions on the island and Tamil grievances in particular, the British authority imposed quotas in elections and government appointments. This policy became a major contention within the Sinhala elite and

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<sup>43</sup> Little, pg. 24; De Silva, pg. 41

<sup>44</sup> Little, pp. 17-18

<sup>45</sup> De Silva, pg. 37

<sup>46</sup> De Silva, pg. 40

<sup>47</sup> Tambiah, pg. 7

<sup>48</sup> Little, pg. 34-35; Tambiah, pp. 8-9; De Silva, pg. 50, 62

<sup>49</sup> De Silva, 29, 50

prompted the formation of Sinhala organizations aimed at redressing this grievance.<sup>50</sup> It was at this time that Buddhist monks became active in various movements including unions and political parties. In the 1947 elections, Buddhist monks formed the Ceylon Union of Bhikkus (LEBM), an umbrella organization designed to influence government policies, and were present in all major political parties.<sup>51</sup> The United National Party (UNP) won the elections and Don Stephen Senanayake became independent Ceylon's first prime minister.

Senanayake strove to galvanize Ceylon into a nation by using a secular nationalist ideology; this aim, however, never took root.<sup>52</sup> Rather, Sinhalese and Tamil communities continued to polarize, forming their own organizations and political parties. The 1956 elections proved to be a watershed for Sinhalese and Tamil relations. Through concentrated support from Buddhist monks, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) won the elections. Within days of assuming office, Bandaranaike issued the "Sinhala Only" Act, which made Sinhalese the official language of the country. The act ignited Sinhala-Tamil riots throughout the country. In attempts to mitigate these tensions, Prime Minister Bandaranaike and S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, the leading Tamil politician, signed a pact promising greater inclusivity of Tamil rights and calling for greater autonomy to Tamil regions through the formation of administrative councils. The pact collapsed, however, after intense pressure from Buddhist monks, which prompted further riots in 1958.<sup>53</sup> In 1959, a Buddhist monk assassinated Bandaranaike, citing his conciliatory tones to Tamils as the motive for the murder.

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<sup>50</sup> Tambiah, pg. 11-12; De Silva, pg. 58; Little, pg. 52-53

<sup>51</sup> Little, pg. 63; Tambiah, pg. 15, 19

<sup>52</sup> Little, pg. 58

<sup>53</sup> Tambiah, pp. 48-50

In 1960, Bandaranaike's wife Sirimavo became prime minister, ushering in a new era of Sinhala and Buddhist preferential policies. Her regime survived a 1962 Christian-led coup attempt, which prompted the purging of Christians from the government and military.<sup>54</sup> In 1970, Bandaranaike and the SLPF won another round of elections. In the face of flagging economic growth and high unemployment, Sinhala youth mounted an insurrection through the organization of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). In response, the government made concessions to Sinhalese nationalists by renaming the country Sri Lanka—harkening back to the ancient Sinhalese name for the island—and by rewriting the constitution, giving Buddhism and the Sinhala language a primary place in the country.<sup>55</sup>

The 1972 constitutional reforms spurred new tactics in Tamil politics. Chelvanayakam left the federal government and called for a Tamil secessionist movement. He founded the Tamil United Front (TUF) in 1972, which later became the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), and forged an alliance between “indigenous” Tamils and “estate” Tamils, 19<sup>th</sup> century émigrés from India.<sup>56</sup> In addition, militant Tamil organizations emerged during this time including the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which became the dominant militant group by the mid-1980s. The formation of these militant organizations paved the way for an armed Tamil resistance and civil war on the island.<sup>57</sup> The Vaddukoddia Resolution, signed in 1976, called for Tamils to fight to

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<sup>54</sup> Little, pg. 72

<sup>55</sup> Little, pp. 74-76

<sup>56</sup> Purnaka L. de Silva, “The Growth of Tamil Paramilitary Nationalism: Sinhala Chauvinism and Tamil Responses,” pp. 89-107, *Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Pear of the East or the Island of Tears?*, edited by Siri Gamage and I.B. Watson, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), pg. 93; Little, pg. 77; Krishna, pg. 77

<sup>57</sup> Gamini Samaranayake, “Responses of the State Towards the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka,” pp. 124-145, *Ethnicity, Identity and the State in South Asia*, edited by Kousar J. Azam, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 2002), pg. 128

liberate the homeland and issued the first formal declaration for an independent Tamil state.<sup>58</sup>

The 1977 elections brought the UNP back into power under the premiership of J.R. Jayewardene, who called for a new era of economic reform and multi-ethnic tolerance. Despite these claims, Jayewardene continued to implement policies that favored the Sinhalese Buddhist population including the restoration of Buddhist sites and revitalized efforts to colonize the Dry Zone with Sinhalese.<sup>59</sup> The result of these elections sparked another round of riots in 1977. In response to increasing acts of violence and terrorism against government sites in the North, Jayewardene signed the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1979, which granted the government sweeping powers to detain suspected terrorists. Tamil-Sinhala riots broke out again in 1981 over the government's failure to implement reforms allowing for district councils to manage local affairs.<sup>60</sup>

In 1983, the country's worst riots occurred after a Sinhalese funeral procession turned into attacks against Tamils in and around the capital city Colombo. The riots resulted in the deaths of around 2,000 to 3,000 people and from 70,000 to 100,000 Tamils were made homeless and forced into refugee camps.<sup>61</sup> The riots prompted the Indian government to intervene, eventually leading to the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Agreement of 1987 and the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF). Both Sinhala and Tamil militants protested the accords and the presence of the IPKF, initiating violent campaigns aimed at ousting the Indian military presence. An estimated 40,000 to 60,000

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<sup>58</sup> Krishna, pg. 77

<sup>59</sup> Little, pp. 78-80; Tambiah, pp. 68-69

<sup>60</sup> Tambiah, pg. 71

<sup>61</sup> Krishnan offered the estimates of the dead, noting that 2,000 was the government's toll, pg. 52. Little places the number at 70,000 refugees, pg. 89. Tambiah cites between 80,000 to 100,000 deaths, pg. 71

people were killed as a result of JVP initiated violence alone.<sup>62</sup> The 1988 elections ushered in a new leader, Jayewardene's former prime minister Premadasa, who vowed to dismantle the JVP and end the presence of the IPKF, both of which he accomplished by 1990.<sup>63</sup>

In the 1990s, the LTTE launched a new offensive in the Eastern Provinces, forcibly expelling Muslims in the region and conducting a series of massacres of civilians in Polonnaruwa district and Kalmunai.<sup>64</sup> The LTTE also executed over 600 Sri Lankan police and assassinated several political leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 and Sri Lankan President Premadasa in 1993.<sup>65</sup> These attacks prompted several Tamil groups to join forces with the Sri Lankan government in attempts to destroy LTTE forces. Tamils and Sinhalas formed the People's Alliance Government under President Kumaratunga in 1994, which brokered a ceasefire and round of peace talks in 1995.<sup>66</sup>

Negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE quickly broke down and a new phase of the civil war began with a suicide attack on a naval boat in the Trincomalee Harbor. This was followed by a LTTE attack on the Central Bank in Colombo, which killed more than 200 people.<sup>67</sup> In 1998, after the government initiated a public relations campaign with the Tamil population in the North, new elections drove the LTTE into the Vanni Jungles.<sup>68</sup> Attacks continued until the implementation of a

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<sup>62</sup> Mick Moore cites 40,000 deaths, "Thoroughly Modern Revolutionaries: The JVP in Sri Lanka," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (July, 1993), pp. 593-642, especially pg. 593; Samaranayake puts the number at 60,000 deaths, pg. 132

<sup>63</sup> Tambiah, pg. 99

<sup>64</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 134

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*

<sup>66</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 135

<sup>67</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 137

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*



February 2002 ceasefire, brokered by Norway, which has led to peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.<sup>69</sup>

### **Explaining the Waves of Sri Lankan Violence and Peace**

This chronology reveals that Sinhalese and Tamil violence has not been constant but, rather, has gone through several waves of peace and unrest. There are eight major incidents of violence in the island's recorded history: the ancient battle between Duttagamani and Elara around the second century BCE; the Cola conquest of the Sinhalese Kingdom beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE; violent uprisings of the Sangha against the British in the 1820s; Sinhalese-Muslim riots in 1915; the riots of 1956 and 1958; the 1971 JVP-led insurrection against the government; 1977 Tamil riots; and the 1981 and 1983 Sinhalese-Tamil riots, which then led to full-scale civil war. See Table 3.1 for details.

This section investigates three major incidents of violence and their surrounding periods of calm: the 1956 and 1958 riots; the 1977 riots; and the 1981 and 1983 riots followed by the outbreak of civil war. These incidents have been chosen because, first, with the exception of the ancient battle between Duttagamani and Elara, they include all the major outbreaks of violence between Tamils and the Sinhalese. Second, these violent clashes have occurred in the context of a newly emerging independent state and, therefore, offer insights into the challenges and opportunities of forming governments in multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries. And third, the twenty-year-old civil war has been one of the longest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has involved neighboring India, making it a conflict of regional concern.

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<sup>69</sup> "Bicycling Tigers," *The Economist*, November 7, 2002

The other incidents of violence are not critical for understanding the Sinhala-Tamil tensions. The fifteen-yearlong battle between Duttagamani and Elara will not be considered as a separate case but, rather, will be assessed as a historical tale interpreted by recent political and religious leaders for the purpose of mobilizing groups for violent ends. Furthermore, the monks' rebellions in the 1820s, the 1915 riots between Sinhalese and Muslims, and the 1971 JVP-led insurrection will not be independently addressed because they did not involve Tamils.

Drawing on the causal argument from chapter two, this section will ask the following questions surrounding these episodes of violence: Is there an identifiable threat or the perception of a threat to which the violent parties are responding? What are the resources available to the involved religious groups? And what is the relationship between political and religious leaders?

*The Turbulent Peace of the 1800 to Independence. The 1956 and 1958 Riots*

This section considers the absence of major Sinhalese and Tamil riots during British colonization and the island's independence followed by events leading up to the 1956 and 1958 riots. It argues that, prior to 1956, both groups attempted to use methods of civil society—formation of political organizations and parties, petitions and peaceful demonstrations—to voice their grievances to British authorities. However, the island's independence and the 1956 election of Sinhalese nationalists backed by Buddhist monks closed the door to civil society, making violence a more likely avenue of protest. In order to understand the evolution towards violence, it is important to outline the rise of Sinhala and Tamil nationalism, the organizations they formed, and how these developments impacted politics on the island.

### 3.1 Major Incidents of Violence in Sri Lanka

<b>Date</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>Causes</b>	<b>End</b>
~180BCE	Sinhala King Duttagamani and Tamil King Elara	Sinhala efforts to regain throne	Duttagamani kills Elara, regains throne
~900 CE	Sinhala Kingdom and Cola Kingdom (India)	Cola conquest of Sinhala Kingdom	Capture Sinhala capitol and kingdom
1820s	Buddhist monks and British	Loss of resources and legitimacy of the Sangha	British put down violence
1915	Sinhalese and Muslims	Rumored attacks on Buddhist temples Sinhalese attacks on Muslim merchants	British impose martial law, imprison key Sinhala leaders
<b>1956</b>	<b>Sinhalese monks/laity and Tamils in Colombo and North</b>	<b>Sinhala Only Act</b>	<b>Government deployed army</b>
<b>1958</b>	<b>Sinhalese and Tamil citizens</b>	<b>Government abandoned B-C Pact. Rumored Tamil attacks on Sinhalese in North</b>	<b>Government declared state of emergency, called out army, imposed curfew</b>
1971	Government and JVP (Sinhalese revolutionary movement)	High unemployment. Pressure government for more Sinhala Buddhist policies	Government quelled uprising, imprisoned thousands
<b>1977</b>	<b>Tamil militant groups and the police. Tamil and Sinhala citizens</b>	<b>Frustration over Sinhalese-biased policies. Minor incident in Jaffna</b>	<b>Government declared a state of emergency and called out the army</b>
<b>1981</b>	<b>Tamil militants and the police. Citizens</b>	<b>Derail district council elections</b>	<b>Called out armed forces</b>
<b>1983</b>	<b>Tamil militants and police. Citizens</b>	<b>Funeral for 13 police killed by LTTE</b>	<b>Government declared emergency (after 5 days)</b>
<b>1983- present</b>	<b>Tamil militants and government forces. Sinhala militants and government forces</b>	<b>Riots of 1983. Call for independent Tamil state. Sinhala call for new government</b>	<b>Protracted arm struggle. Indian intervention. Third party negotiations</b>

Most scholars on Sri Lanka date the origins of Sinhalese and Tamil nationalism to the mid-1800s and identifying the cause as a reaction to British occupation of the island.<sup>70</sup> Anthropologist Stanley Tambiah claims: “There is no doubt that Sinhala Buddhist revivalism and nationalism, in the form we can recognize today, has its origins in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”<sup>71</sup> Likewise, the emergence of Tamil nationalism is tied to this era as well. Consciously or not, the British instituted policies that drastically altered the social and political makeup of the island, leading to new forms of identity.

Perhaps the biggest change to Sri Lanka was the introduction of mass education through Christian missionary schools. Prior to mass education, the educated were confined primarily to the religious elite.<sup>72</sup> Mass education opened literacy up to people outside of the clerisy and gave them new skills. These new skills created a stratum of society that was neither the clerisy nor the peasantry, changing the traditional categories within pre-colonial society. In turn, it was the emergence of a literate middle class that came to play an important role in the development of Sinhalese and Tamil nationalism.

Christian-run schools also produced religious converts within both Sinhalese and Tamil communities. These converts spread new belief-systems into local communities and created a sub-category within both Sinhalese and Tamil groups.<sup>73</sup> Mass education exposed the population to new ideas and ways of thinking including western concepts of identity, society, and politics.<sup>74</sup> Of particular importance were the concepts of history,

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<sup>70</sup> Little, pg. xiii; De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions*, pg. 36; Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 202

<sup>71</sup> Tambiah, pg. 5

<sup>72</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 207

<sup>73</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 208

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

race and language as a source of identity.<sup>75</sup> Both British and local scholars began to conduct inquiries into the historical roots of the different groups on the island. Most scholars deemed the Sinhalese to be of superior Aryan stock and their language of Indo-European lineage.<sup>76</sup> The Tamils, on the other hand, were linked to the Dravidians of southern India.<sup>77</sup> These categories have persisted despite the fact that racial distinctions cannot be identified between the Sinhalese and Tamils.<sup>78</sup> In turn, these categories presented a new way of thinking about and organizing society on the island.

Mass education also fostered the creation of journals, newspapers and other forms of print media and their consumption. These media outlets, in turn, bound people together through information in a way that was new and made possible only through literacy. By the end of the 1800s, both Sinhalese and Tamils had their own publications including the *Sinhala Bauddhaya*, and the works of Tamil Arumuga Navalar.<sup>79</sup>

Another major change introduced by the British was the use of English as a skill for government employment.<sup>80</sup> The British instituted English as the government's language and, in doing so, produced competition between groups to learn English and attain these coveted posts. The best place to acquire English skills was in the Christian missionary schools. Thus groups that refused to attend these schools had trouble competing with those who received this education. The relative number of groups gaining government posts became a major grievance in the 1920s.

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<sup>75</sup> Little, pg. 15

<sup>76</sup> Little, pp. 15-16

<sup>77</sup> Little, pp. 37-38

<sup>78</sup> Krishna, citing Obeyesekere and Romaila Thapar, pg. 39

<sup>79</sup> Little, pp. 24 and 40-41, respectively.

<sup>80</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 208

Third, the British conducted censuses and comprised demographics of the island's population, which changed the way these groups saw each other. In these censuses, people were counted according to religion, not caste, region, class or other possible categories. Thus religion became the salient distinction between groups. Moreover, the census presented information about relative numbers of groups. Whereas Tamils thought of themselves as one of two majorities, with the aid of census material, they and the British became aware of their minority status, prompting policies aimed at protecting their rights as a minority group.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, British historians and officers sketched narratives of the island's demographic history, including the borders of former kingdoms. They created documents that would later be used by ethnic groups attempting to determine historical rights to territory. For example, the "Cleghorn Minute," a 1799 document produced by the first British officer to govern the island, named the borders of the Tamil Jaffna kingdom. This document has been used by modern Tamils to cite territorial dimensions of a separate Tamil state.<sup>82</sup>

These drastic changes to society produced reactions within the religious authority of the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities. The introduction of Christian-run schools in particular fueled a religious backlash. As previously mentioned, Sinhalese Buddhist monks were the literate class and also the ones charged with maintaining and interpreting the teachings of the Buddha. Monks were also the ones that recorded history, most notably through the *Mahavamsa*, which has chronicled the political and religious developments of the island.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Tambiah, pp. 11-12; Little, pp. 15-16

<sup>82</sup> K.M. de Silva, *The "Traditional Homelands" of the Tamils: Separatist Ideology in Sri Lanka: A Historical Appraisal*, (Kandy: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994), pp. 30-46

<sup>83</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 207-208

The introduction of Christian-run schools aimed at mass education challenged the structure of society. First, the emergence of schools outside the Sangha presented the masses with a new authority figure, the teacher, which competed with the monk as the source of knowledge.<sup>84</sup> Second, the emergence of British authorities and Christian schools changed the traditional relationship between the laity, the king and the Sangha. Historically, the role of the Sangha and its various tasks were the concern of the king. However, with the separation of the Sangha from the king in 1815, the monastic order no longer had to answer to the king's reforming powers. Coupled with a rising educated middle class, the Sangha now faced new criticism from the laity. In particular, monks were criticized for not being more active in society and politics and for not taking a greater role in the lives of the people.<sup>85</sup> Monks therefore began to perform new roles in society, such as chaplains in prisons, hospitals and the military, and began to offer messages on radio and TV.<sup>86</sup> These new roles for monks later came to include participating in trade unions and political parties, which will be discussed below.

Third, the educated laity became new chroniclers of history; literate individuals began investigating, recording, debating and interpreting history outside the Sangha. This led not only to lay people offering new interpretations of history for the public but also interpreting Buddhist doctrines for the masses, something that was without precedent. The archetype of the "new historian" was Dharmapala, who was educated in Christian schools and not part of the Sangha. He self-identified as a new authority figure in

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<sup>84</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 208

<sup>85</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pp. 225-227

<sup>86</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pp. 227-228

Sinhalese Buddhist society, a person outside the Sangha but, yet, one who conformed to many of its practices including service to society and a vow of celibacy.<sup>87</sup>

Dharmapala was the principal architect in what religious historians Gombrich and Obeyesekere have termed “Protestant Buddhism,” the transformation of Buddhist authority and interpretation of Buddhist scriptures in reaction to the threat of Christianity and British authority. Dharmapala targeted his interpretation of Buddhism towards the newly emerging literate middle class. He took the Sangha’s code of conduct—preserved in the *Vinaya* texts of the *Tipitaka*—and created a code for the laity, which included 200 rules that covered topics ranging from hygiene, travel, and funerals to civil behavior.<sup>88</sup> These rules contained not only traditional Buddhist practices but also elements of western, Christian piety—particularly concerning the behavior of women—and thus fused together the new and the old for the creation of etiquette defined as “pure and ideal Buddhist norms.”<sup>89</sup> In addition, Dharmapala called for greater reliance on the Pali canon for Buddhist beliefs and practices, encouraging the literate to read the texts for themselves.<sup>90</sup> He also stressed the importance of individuals taking responsibility for their own salvation and the prosperity of the faith.<sup>91</sup> Dharmapala criticized the Sangha for not being more active in worldly affairs, particularly the village monks.<sup>92</sup> In 1891, he founded the Maha Bodhi Society aimed at revitalizing Buddhism and, in 1912, he went on an island-wide tour to promote his interpretation of Buddhism and to awaken Sinhalese Buddhist identity.<sup>93</sup> These new interpretations of the faith gave Buddhism a

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<sup>87</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pp. 205-26

<sup>88</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pp. 212-14

<sup>89</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 215

<sup>90</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 220

<sup>91</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 216

<sup>92</sup> Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, pg. 226

<sup>93</sup> Little, pg. 33



revitalized role in Sinhalese society and helped to define and differentiate the Sinhalese Buddhists from their neighbors and their colonial powers.

Tamil and Muslim religious groups also had similar reactions to colonialism and the presence of Christian schools. The Tamils attempted to counter the influences of Christian missionaries by creating their own schools under the leadership of Arumuga Navalar, who sought to preserve and strengthen *Saiva Siddhanta* on the island. Navalar also organized the reconstruction of Hindu temples and revitalized the study of Hindu texts.<sup>94</sup> In addition, Muslims on the island organized to counter the cultural and religious threat posed by the presence of Christian missionaries. The Muslim leaders Orabi Pasha and M.C. Siddi Lebbe stressed the need for education within the Muslim community and established schools free of Christian subjects.<sup>95</sup>

Following this religious revival within the different faiths on the island, the educated class began to form social and political organizations. Most notably, this included the creation of the Ceylon Reform League in 1916, which became the Ceylon National Congress in 1919. The Congress was composed of educated elites who attempted to affect political change through civil society. In particular, it advocated for greater suffrage and political representation within the British administration, which was granted in the Donoughmore Constitution just prior to the 1931 elections.<sup>96</sup> The Tamils left the Congress in the early 1920s, however, and formed the All Ceylon Tamil Congress in attempts to ensure greater protection for Tamils within the administration and the political system.<sup>97</sup> It was this break, coupled with a boycott of the Donoughmore

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<sup>94</sup> De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Conflict*, pg. 37

<sup>95</sup> De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Conflict*, pg. 40

<sup>96</sup> De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Conflict*, pp. 29, 50; Tambiah, pp. 9-10

<sup>97</sup> Krishna, pg. 67

Constitution and 1931 elections, that marked the beginning of Sinhala majoritarian politics on the Island.<sup>98</sup>

In the 1930s, Buddhist religious leaders became more active in politics by forming organizations and endorsing political parties. Initially, Buddhist monks were active in emerging Marxist parties and trade unions, identifying with the Marxist ideal of supporting the disenfranchised working class.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, other monks began to mobilize for Buddhist and Sinhala specific ends. In 1935, these monks founded the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, an umbrella organization aimed at coordinating efforts to protect Sinhala Buddhist interest. That same year the politician S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike founded the Sinhala Maha Sabha, also with the goal of promoting Sinhala Buddhist interests.<sup>100</sup> The Sinhala Maha Sabha emerged as the dominant political voice within the Sangha, eventually winning out over the Marxist oriented monks.

After World War II, the British administration began to lay the foundation for Ceylon's independence. In 1946, Buddhist monks issued the Vidyalanakara Declaration, which called for monks to participate in politics and social mobilization.<sup>101</sup> That same year, the monk Walpola Rahula published *The Heritage of the Bhikku*, arguing that monks had always played a critical role in politics and, in fact, it was the fulfillment of their duties.<sup>102</sup> Rahula's book sparked a debate within the Sangha and the wider Sinhalese population over the role of monks in politics. The Maha Bodhi Society, the All Ceylon Buddhist Council and several high-ranking monks all opposed Rahula's assertions,

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<sup>98</sup> Tambiah, pg. 11

<sup>99</sup> Tambiah, pp. 12-13, 15

<sup>100</sup> Little, pg. 61, De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Conflict*, pg. 65; Tambiah, pg. 13

<sup>101</sup> Little, pg. 63

<sup>102</sup> Tambiah, pg. 17, 23-24

claiming that monks should not participate in elections or hold office.<sup>103</sup> Despite this, Rahula formed the Ceylon Union of Buddhists (LEBM) in 1946, with the aim of using elections to protect the financial and political rights of the Sangha.<sup>104</sup>

In the 1947 elections, all major parties had Buddhist monks who endorsed their campaigns.<sup>105</sup> The United National Party (UNP) won, the party formed out of the Ceylon National Council, and Senayanake became prime minister, later to become the first prime minister of independent Ceylon in 1948. Although Senayanake espoused a secular ideology, he implemented policies that favored the Sinhalese. In 1949, he passed legislation that denied citizenship to more than 900,000 “estate” Tamils brought in under British rule to work on the tea and coffee plantations.<sup>106</sup> He also made references to historic Sinhala kings and initiated an irrigation project to the Dry Zone of the island, harkening back to projects constructed in the golden age of the Sinhala kingdom. In addition, he made official visits to Buddhists temples and monuments, emphasizing his personal identity as a Sinhala Buddhist.<sup>107</sup> These actions prompted Tamil withdrawal from the UNP and the formation of the Tamil Federal Party in 1949, under Chelvanayakam, followed by the 1950 Federal Party’s call for greater regional autonomy and a federation-style government.<sup>108</sup>

In 1951, Bandaranaike, the founder of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, broke away from the UNP and formed the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP). Oxford educated and initially Christian, Bandaranaike converted to Buddhism in the 1930s and called on the

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<sup>103</sup> Tambiah, pg. 19

<sup>104</sup> *ibid*

<sup>105</sup> Tambiah, pg. 19

<sup>106</sup> Krishna, pg. 68

<sup>107</sup> Little, pp. 56-57

<sup>108</sup> Krishna, pg. 71

*Mahavamsa* to argue that the island's history and destiny were uniquely Sinhalese and Buddhist; therefore the government's role should be to preserve and ensure this destiny.<sup>109</sup> This argument gained momentum and provided his political party with a popular base that would bring him to power in the coming election.

Alongside the emergence of the SLFP and Bandaranaike, the debate over the relationship between the Sangha and the government continued in the 1950s. In 1954, the All Ceylon Buddhist Council formed the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry, a panel of seven Buddhist monks and seven laity aimed at evaluating the health of Buddhism on the island.<sup>110</sup> The report, entitled *The Betrayal of Buddhism*, was issued in 1956, coinciding both with the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment and with Sri Lanka's national elections. The report argued that Buddhism—and the Sinhalese as the protectors of Buddhism—had been under siege for more than four hundred years, first by Tamil invaders and then by colonial powers, which had left its institutions weak and vulnerable. The threat to Buddhism, however, was more than just one of military occupation; it was also cultural, specifically the cultural threat posed by the Christian missionary schools.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the current government in particular had failed to protect Buddhism and had left it prey to these various threats. To remedy the situation the committee proposed, first, to create the Buddha Sansana<sup>112</sup> Act, which would establish a government council aimed at protecting Buddhist interests. Second, it argued for the withdrawal of government grants to Christian schools. And third, it called for the government to give preferential

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<sup>109</sup> Little, pg. 60

<sup>110</sup> Tambiah, pp. 30-36, 42; Little, pg. 64

<sup>111</sup> Tambiah, pp. 30-33

<sup>112</sup> *Sansana* means, roughly, the Buddhist "church;" it is the community of Buddhist believers.

treatment to Buddhist schools.<sup>113</sup> This report and its recommendations became the foundation of Bandaranaike's 1956 election campaign.<sup>114</sup>

That same year D.C. Wijayawardena, a wealthy and educated layperson, wrote *Revolt in the Temple*, "to commemorate 2,5000 years of Buddhism, of civilization in Lanka, and of the Sinhalese nation that came into being with the Buddha's blessing."<sup>115</sup> In it he argued that Ceylon "was primordially destined as a land that united Buddhism with the Sinhalese nation."<sup>116</sup> Moreover, Buddhism was the religion of the state: the king had always been Buddhist, and the Sangha have always participated in politics through their council to the king.<sup>117</sup> The book served as another set of demands on the government to "restore" Buddhism to its place as the official religion of the island and to promote and protect the faith.

The 1956 elections proved to be the turning point in the island's modern history. Both Buddhist monks and various Sinhala and Buddhist organizations joined forces to defeat the UNP and elect Bandaranaike and the SLFP in its place. The Eksath Bhikku Peramuna, an umbrella organization of Buddhist monks and laity, was formed with the express purpose of defeating the UNP. Monks staged a hunger strike in front of the parliament and referred to the government as *mara*, or the devil.<sup>118</sup> The organization and efforts of the monks in backing the SLFP were so successful that Tambiah states: "it is no exaggeration to claim that the 1956 elections...were the climatic and singular moment in twentieth-century political life when a significant number of monks organized to win an

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<sup>113</sup> Tambiah, pp. 34-35

<sup>114</sup> Little, pg. 66

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Tambiah, pg. 37

<sup>116</sup> Quoted in Little, pg. 65

<sup>117</sup> Little, pg. 64-65

<sup>118</sup> Tambiah, pg. 45

election.”<sup>119</sup> Bandaranaike’s campaign capitalized on the fears and demands articulated in books such as *The Betrayal of Buddhism* and *Revolt in the Temple* to demand a government committed to the protection of Sinhala Buddhist interests.

The new government promised to revitalize and restore Buddhism to its pre-colonial state, to make Sinhala the dominant language of the country, and to foster Sinhala culture and identity.<sup>120</sup> To these ends it implemented new legislation, the most explosive of which was the Sinhala Only Act, which proposed to make Sinhala the official language of Ceylon. The Act initially called for Sinhala to be the language used in government and universities, which would put non-Sinhala speakers at a disadvantage for both employment and educational opportunities. Furthermore, the Act alienated minorities on the island not only for its discriminatory effects but also for its expressly Buddhist biases.<sup>121</sup>

The Sinhala Only Act raised immediate protest from minority groups, who demanded its revocation. Tamils staged sit-ins around the capitol, which prompted counter-demonstrations by Buddhist monks.<sup>122</sup> These demonstrations degenerated into riots in which over 100 people were injured, followed by the looting of an estimated 43 shops, most of which were Tamil, and around 113 arrests.<sup>123</sup> In the Gal Oya valley, bands of Sinhalese youth attacked the Tamil minority, resulting in an estimated 100 dead.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Tambiah, pp. 45-46

<sup>120</sup> Sudana Deshapriya, “The Rise of New Sinhala Nationalism,” pp. 146-163, *Ethnicity, Identity, and the State in South Asia*, edited by Kousar J. Azam, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 2002), pp. 148-149

<sup>121</sup> Little, pg. 69

<sup>122</sup> Tambiah, pp. 46-48

<sup>123</sup> James Manor, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pg. 261

<sup>124</sup> Manor, pg. 262

The riots, lootings and murders ended with the deployment of the army in the troubled areas.<sup>125</sup>

The government attempted to mitigate tensions over the Sinhala Only Act by softening its specifications. Negotiations between the government and the Tamil Federalist Party resulted in the 1957 Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, which called for the use of Tamil as an administrative language along with Sinhala, especially in the North where Tamils were concentrated, and for the creation of district councils, which would allow Tamils greater autonomy and control of their political and social destiny.<sup>126</sup>

Several scholars on Sri Lanka note that had this pact been fully implemented and allowed to take hold, ethnic tensions on the island may not have escalated into civil war.<sup>127</sup> The pact, however, was met with mass demonstration by monks and other Sinhalese nationalists who staged sit-ins and hunger strikes outside Bandaranaike's home.<sup>128</sup> One monk even claimed in front of a crowd of 5,000 demonstrators that the pact would "lead to the total annihilation of the Sinhalese race."<sup>129</sup> Moreover, the UNP, now under the leadership of future prime minister and president Jayawardene, also opposed the pact and agitated for its rejection; the UNP even organized a procession to the Buddhist Temple of the Tooth<sup>130</sup> to pray for the Pact's destruction.<sup>131</sup> In the end, Bandaranaike gave in to the protesters' demands and abandoned the agreement.

Amidst the tensions and disappointment surrounding the collapse of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, a new and bloodier round of riots exploded in May

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<sup>125</sup> Tambiah, pg. 47

<sup>126</sup> Tambiah, pg. 48

<sup>127</sup> Little, pg. 67 citing a 1992 *Economist* article

<sup>128</sup> Tambiah, pg. 50

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in Manor, pp. 285-286

<sup>130</sup> This is a Buddhist temple which houses a tooth believed to be from the Buddha.

<sup>131</sup> Tambiah, pg. 48

of 1958. The riots began in the North and Eastern Provinces after a band of Sinhalese gathered at a railway station and attacked a train that was believed to be carrying Tamil passengers. This was followed by the derailment of a train carrying Sinhalese passengers through a Tamil town. In the same town the former mayor, a Sinhalese, was shot while driving his car.<sup>132</sup> This event was broadcast over the media and blamed on Tamils, which then prompted bands of Sinhalese to take to the streets in several cities throughout the country.<sup>133</sup>

The riots were particularly bad in the cities of Padaviya and Polonnaruwa, where the government had recently transferred Sinhala laborers to work on development projects.<sup>134</sup> The riots included looting and destruction of property, the majority of which was Tamil owned, and attacks on Tamils resulting in numerous deaths. The riots spread to Colombo, where bands of Sinhalese attacked Tamil neighborhoods and merchants' stores.<sup>135</sup> After several days of rioting, Bandaranaike addressed the nation on radio, pinning the origins of the violence to the murder of a Sinhalese policeman by Tamils, further inciting Sinhalese-led violence.<sup>136</sup> After four days of violence, the government declared a state of emergency, called out the troops and imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew. However, before the violence could be contained, bands of Tamils launched a counter attack against Sinhalese in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The Tamil bands burned homes, attacked Sinhalese fishermen, and sacked Buddhist temples before the violence

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<sup>132</sup> Manor, pg. 288

<sup>133</sup> Manor, pg. 290

<sup>134</sup> Tambiah, pg. 52

<sup>135</sup> Manor, pp. 290-291

<sup>136</sup> Tambiah, pg. 55



could be successfully put down.<sup>137</sup> Bandaranaike modified the Sinhala Only Act in attempts to appease the Tamils and end the current tensions.<sup>138</sup>

The 1956 and 1958 Sinhala and Tamil riots contain elements that conform to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, religion played a salient role in the changing dynamics between the Tamils and Sinhalese and the violence these changes produced. Specifically, Buddhist monks became more active in the political landscape as Ceylon moved towards independence; their agendas, in turn, were a source of threat and alienation to the non-Buddhists on the island. Buddhist monks not only endorsed political leaders and parties, they actively sought to shape their platforms and policies. Through the formation of organizations, committees and reports, members of the Sangha put pressure on the government to protect and foster Buddhism. These efforts succeeded in bringing to power Bandaranaike and the SLFP, which were sympathetic to the Sangha's religious demands. Furthermore, the monks and their organizations succeeded in pressuring Bandaranaike to abandon the reforms of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact in 1957, magnifying the tensions that fueled the riots of 1958.

Furthermore, religion was a salient factor in the 1956 and 1958 riots through the use of Buddhist scriptures—specifically the *Mahavamsa*—by monks, laity and politicians to shape and justify governmental actions and policies. Bandaranaike used the *Mahavamsa* as a benchmark for leadership and the ideal state of the island. But even Senayake, who claimed to be committed to a secular agenda for a multi-ethnic state, called on the *Mahavamsa* as inspiration for his plans to redevelop irrigation projects in

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<sup>137</sup> Manor, pg. 291

<sup>138</sup> Little, pg. 71

the Dry Zone of the country. The *Mahavamsa*, therefore, was a powerful tool used not only to mobilize but also to shape and justify governmental priorities.

It is interesting to note that, despite the rise of Buddhism in Sinhalese politics in the 1940s and 1950s, the Tamils did not follow suit. Hinduism played an important role in Tamil mobilization against British Christian influences in the mid-1800s, as previously mentioned, particularly in the efforts to restore Hindu temples in the North and encourage *Saiva Siddhanta*. However, after the influences of Navalar, the emphasis on preserving Hinduism dwindled. Tamil leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly Chelvanayakam, did not call on Hinduism to mobilize Tamils against the Sinhalese Buddhist national threat, nor did Hindu leaders on the island emerge and form organizations aimed at political mobilization. This is particularly curious given that “estate” Tamils and indigenous Tamils were divided by history, geography, and interests, but had Hinduism in common. In the end, discrimination against the Tamil language proved to be the more salient point of mobilization for Tamils.

The events also shows that both groups have mobilized under perceived or actual threat. The threats posed by British colonization in general and Christian missionaries in particular caused Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims to mobilize in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in attempts of countering this threat. These groups mobilized to create their own resources, specifically their own schools, but also to foster a sense of identity independent of their colonial powers. Religion played a key role in both of these pursuits. Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims groups formed new schools that taught skills necessary for modern society but also offered knowledge on their respective religions. The creation of modern-day nationalist identities also involved religion. Dharmapala helped develop a Sinhalese

identity that was defined by Buddhist practices built on the Sangha's code of ethics. Likewise, Tamil and Muslim leaders stressed their unique identities through religion, promoting *Saiva Siddhanta* within the Tamil community and Islamic values for the Muslims.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the 1940s, Sinhalese leaders spoke in terms of a two-pronged threat. First, they cited external enemies to Buddhism. This included 400 years of colonial occupation, but also the perceived chronic threat posed by Tamils on the island and their ethnic kin twenty miles away in southern India. The second threat was the government, which either had to use its powers to protect and strengthen Buddhism against these threats or, if not, became a threat to the faith itself. Their prescription, laid out in *Buddhism Betrayed*, was for the government to resume its role as the protectorate of the Dharma and initiate policies that would restore the faith to its pre-colonial glories.

The proactive policies described by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists were a direct threat to Tamils and other non-Buddhist groups. The application of policies such as the Sinhala Only Act directly threatened Tamil access to government jobs and admissions to universities on the island. Furthermore, the idea to resurrect irrigation projects and relocate Sinhalese into the Dry Zone of the country threatened land that Tamils believed to be theirs.

The Sinhalese, as the primary perpetrators of the violence in 1956 and 1958, had resources that gave them the advantage over the Tamils. Aside from being the numerical majority on the island, the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists' greatest resource was a government that was sensitive to their demands and sympathetic to their actions. Prior to 1956, both Sinhalese and Tamils had worked through civil society means to voice

demands and ensure their rights. Both groups formed organizations—initially together as the Ceylon National Congress then through separate organizations—aimed at better political representation under the British. After independence, both groups used civil disobedience as a means of voicing their discontent with government policies.

However, with the rise of Sinhala nationalists to the government, these non-violent means of working to protect rights began to break down. The Bandaranaike-led government provided the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists with a new opportunity to implement their ethnic and religious agenda. The Tamils and other groups did not have this avenue of power. The 1956 riots were the result of mass demonstrations that got out of hand; they displayed, however, that the government was slow to respond to ethnic violence and when it did respond, it was lenient towards the Sinhalese. This became clearer with the 1958 riots, in which Tamils were erroneously fingered as the perpetrators and the Sinhalese were allowed several days to carry out their aggressions against Tamils in various cities. Although Chelvanayakam and the Tamil Federation Party made a promise to adhere to non-violent civil disobedience following the 1956 riots, this commitment did not prevent the Sinhalese-led atrocities in 1958 nor did it stop the Tamil's violent response.

#### *The Peace of 1958-1977. The Violence of 1977*

This section considers the absence of major Sinhalese and Tamil riots between 1958 until the outbreak of violence in 1977. It argues that the calm is best explained by the continued attempts of Tamil leadership under the Federal Party and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) to work within the political system to achieve regional autonomy. This avenue was abandoned after two decades of negotiations failed to

produce results for the Tamils and after militant Tamil groups began to form following Sinhalese-centric changes to the constitution in 1972. The 1977 riots, touched off by election results, demonstrated that the Tamils were capable of organizing and fighting against the state, foreshadowing the civil war to come. In order to understand these developments, it is important to outline the government's policies in this era and the Tamil response.

Following the bloody riots of 1958 and the government's conciliatory gestures towards the Tamil community, a Buddhist monk assassinated Bandaranaike in 1959. His wife Sirimavo replaced him and was elected to office as a member of the SLFP in 1960. Mrs. Bandaranaike's tenure in office was underscored by the implementation of a nationalist Sinhalese Buddhist agenda to the detriment of both Tamils and Christians on the island. Her government reversed all ambiguities with the Sinhala Only Act and made Sinhala the exclusive language of the government administration throughout the island by 1961.<sup>139</sup> In addition, she proposed legislation that would place all schools under government authority including, most notably, the Christian-run schools that were still administered by missionaries from the West; Catholic schools in particular were targeted.<sup>140</sup> As part of this legislation, which was fully implemented in 1967, Christian schools were required to teach Buddhism.<sup>141</sup> These policies prompted a Christian-led coup attempt in 1962, which was followed by Bandaranaike's decision to purge the government and military of Christians.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Little, pg. 72

<sup>140</sup> Little, pg. 73

<sup>141</sup> Tambiah, pg. 65

<sup>142</sup> Little, pg. 73

In the 1965 elections, Dudley Senanyake and the UNP defeated Mrs. Bandaranaike. The new government under Senanyake made one attempt to mitigate Tamil grievances in the 1965 Senayake-Chelvanayakam Pact. The pact, similar to its predecessor, the 1957 Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, sought to establish greater regional autonomy for the Tamils. The pact, however, was defeated by a SLFP and UNP alliance in parliament.<sup>143</sup>

The 1970 elections reinstated Mrs. Bandaranaike and the SLFP to power through a “United Front” coalition with several parties including the Sri Lanka Communist Party. In 1971, a Sinhalese insurrection led by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) forced the government to look at grievances within its own ethnic group. The JVP was founded by Rohana Wijeweera in the late 1960s as an organization bent on affecting radical change in Sri Lanka, either through the government or by popular revolution.<sup>144</sup> The movement consisted primarily of Sinhalese Buddhist youth but also including monks.<sup>145</sup> The JVP managed to capture several rural villages, which its members held for a few weeks before the government brutally put down the uprising.<sup>146</sup> An estimated 2,000 to 3,000 were killed in the uprising, mostly JVP members.<sup>147</sup> The JVP was new in that it fused together Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist aspirations with force in a way that was attractive to Sinhalese youth. This latter point in particular made them a dangerous threat to the stability of the government in the 1980s, which will be discussed in the following section.

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<sup>143</sup> Little, pp. 73-74

<sup>144</sup> For more on the JVP, see Moore, pp. 593-642. See also Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution? The Inside Story of the JVP*, (Sri Lanka: Institute of Fundamental Studies, 1990)

<sup>145</sup> Tambiah, pp. 96-97

<sup>146</sup> Moore, pg. 600-601

<sup>147</sup> Moore, pg. 593

Following the 1971 insurrection, the government introduced radical reforms aimed at appeasing discontented Sinhalese. First, Mrs. Bandaranaike's government renamed the country Sri Lanka, harkening back to the name of the Sinhalese kingdom. This was followed by major reforms to the Soulbury Constitution drafted in 1946 including making Sinhalese the sole language of Sri Lanka, revoking the protection of minority rights, and giving Buddhism "the foremost place [in the Republic of Sri Lanka]..." and making it "the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism..."<sup>148</sup> In addition, the government implemented more restrictions on university entrance requirements and regional quotas based on ethnicity. These two policies favored the Sinhalese over the Tamils. Between 1969 and 1974, northern Tamils admitted into science programs dropped from 27.5% to 7%.<sup>149</sup> In turn, a university education was necessary for government employment, further restricting the Tamils in this line of work.<sup>150</sup>

The 1972 constitutional reforms set in motion a new era in Tamil political tactics. Chelvanayakam and the Federal Party issued a six-point program two days after the initiation of the new constitution. In it the Tamils argued for linguistic equality between Tamil and Sinhala, full citizenship for all Tamils, the creation of a secular government and state, a new constitution that enshrines equality, a decentralized government, and the abolishment of untouchability.<sup>151</sup> The government rejected the proposal. That same year, Chelvanayakam left the federal government and called for Tamils to secede from Sri Lanka. He formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) in 1972, later to become the Tamil

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<sup>148</sup> Krishna, pg. 75

<sup>149</sup> Krishna quoting Wilson and Chandra De Silva, pg. 76

<sup>150</sup> Little, pg. 74; Krishna, pg. 76

<sup>151</sup> Little, pg. 77

United Liberation Front (TULF), which created an alliance between Tamils in the north and “estate” Tamils.<sup>152</sup>

Alongside the efforts of the TULF to work through the political system for change, militant Tamil organizations emerged during this time including the Tamil New Tigers (TNT), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Eelam People’s Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which eventually killed off the competition and emerged as the primary paramilitary organization in the 1980s.<sup>153</sup> The rise of the LTTE will be addressed in the following section.

For both the TULF and rising Tamil militant groups, two decades of negotiations with the Sinhalese dominant government for greater autonomy had resulted in little to no visible progress. The Tamils even argued that—in the face of rising Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist policies and increasing numbers of Sinhalese being transferred into the Dry Zone—they were literally losing ground.<sup>154</sup> This loss of political progress was also coupled with growing economic problems throughout the entire island, problems that both the Tamil and Sinhalese populations felt and that helped to pave the way for a change of leadership in the 1977 elections.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Little, pg. 77; Krishna, pg. 77; Purnaka de Silva, pg. 93

<sup>153</sup> Samaranayake, pp. 127-128

<sup>154</sup> For details on colonization of the Dry Zone, see Patrick Peebles, “Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (February, 1990), pp. 30-55. For details on the eroding territorial integrity of a Tamil region on the island, see Robert N. Kearney, “Territorial Elements of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Winter, 1987-1988), pp. 561-577; and Amita Shastri, “The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (February, 1990), pp. 56-77

<sup>155</sup> Little, pg. 78



In 1976, the TULF drafted the Vaddukoddia Resolution, which officially called for the creation of an independent Tamil state on the island. The drafters chose the name *Eelam*, harkening back to what the TULF identified as a historic Tamil homeland that existed prior to colonization.<sup>156</sup> The Vaddukoddia Resolution also called for all Tamils, “estate” and indigenous alike, to defend the homeland by force and to “throw themselves fully in the sacred fight for freedom and to flinch not till the goal of a sovereign socialist state of Tamil Eelam is reached.”<sup>157</sup> The Resolution received the backing of the major Tamil parties and movements, both “estate” and indigenous, which was a first for the Tamil movement.<sup>158</sup>

In 1977, however, the Tamils received a blow with the death of the three main leaders of the independence movement: Ponnambalam, Murugeysen Tiruchelvam and Chelvanayagam. Their passing created a void within the Tamil leadership which helped pave the way for the rise of militant groups composed of young leaders and disaffected youth.<sup>159</sup>

Also in 1977, the UNP succeeded in taking back the government under the leadership of Junius Richard Jayewardene. Both Sinhalese and Tamil parties had used ethnicity as a means of mobilizing votes, which whipped up tensions between groups.<sup>160</sup> In addition, campaigning had succeeded in winning the TULF, headed by Armirthalingam, the second largest number of seats in parliament. The new government promised economic reform and an era of social tolerance, what Jayewardene termed

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<sup>156</sup> Little, pg. 78. For a Sinhalese historical critique of the definition of the Tamil homeland on the island, see K.M. de Silva, *The “Traditional Homelands” of the Tamils*.

<sup>157</sup> Krishna, pp. 76-77

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*

<sup>160</sup> Jagath P. Senaratne, *Political Violence in Sri Lanka, 1977-1990: Riots, Insurrections, Counter-Insurgencies, Foreign Intervention*, (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1997), pg. 62

*dharmistha*, alluding to the Indian Buddhist King Asoka, who introduced an era of peace and prosperity to the Subcontinent. As part of his new policy of tolerance, Jayewardene promised to modify wording in the constitution, to give the Tamil language a more prominent place, and to give district councils more authority.<sup>161</sup> In addition, the government promised to redress grievances surrounding university admissions policies. These promises were implemented in 1978.

However, despite the conciliatory actions of the new government, voices within the Tamil community argued that it was too little too late. Militant groups, which had taken hold in the early 1970s, were frustrated by the TULF's inability to affect political change in the government. In August of 1977, only a month after elections, riots between Sinhalese and Tamils broke out after a minor incident between the police and a group of Tamil youth in Jaffna.<sup>162</sup> Violence spread throughout Jaffna to Colombo, Kandy, and then to various provinces throughout the island. The clashes left an estimated 100 Tamils dead and made over 25,000 homeless.<sup>163</sup> The government declared a state of emergency, imposed a curfew and deployed the military to quell the violence.<sup>164</sup>

The peace of 1959 to 1977 followed by the outbreak of Sinhalese and Tamil riots in 1977 contains elements that conform to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, religion continued to play played a salient role in the changing dynamics between the Tamils and Sinhalese. Specifically, the protection and promotion of Buddhism, as an integral component of the Sinhalese nationalist agenda, was a key demand of monks and politicians during this era. This is visible in the policies initiated

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<sup>161</sup> Little, pg. 86

<sup>162</sup> De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions*, pg. 288

<sup>163</sup> Senaratne, pg. 62; De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions*, pg. 288

by Mrs. Bandaranaike, most notably changes made to the constitution that gave Buddhism a privileged place in Sri Lankan society and politics. The prominence of Buddhism is also visible in Mrs. Bandaranaike's efforts to promote irrigation projects to the Dry Zone of the country and populate it with Sinhalese, the historic heartland of the Sinhalese Kingdom of the *Mahavamsa*. These religious, cultural and historical issues—coupled with discriminating reforms in university admissions and the failure to implement policies creating district councils—added to the Tamil community's sense of threat towards the Sinhalese dominated federal government.

Frustrations over Sinhalese-centric policies created new trajectories in Tamil tactics and strategies. The Tamils formed organizations in response to the 1972 constitutional reforms. This included the TULF, which united “estate” and indigenous Tamils, but also militant youth movements that abandoned diplomatic channels and pursued change through armed struggle. As with the 1956 and 1958 riots, religion did not play a salient role in the mobilization of Tamils or in their justification for a forceful response to Sinhalese threats. The TULF organized around shared language and ethnic heritage between “estate” and indigenous Tamils, not around Hinduism. Likewise, the emerging militant organizations capitalized on leftist Marxist ideologies, not on Hindu ideologies.

The rise of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism was clearly a threat to Tamil communities on the island. The government's preferences for Buddhism and the Sinhalese language were a cultural threat. However, in addition, greater restrictions on university admissions to Tamils—which imposed barriers to government jobs—coupled with the transplant of Sinhalese into Tamil and Muslim areas in the Dry Zone were

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<sup>164</sup> Senaratne, pg. 62

economic and territorial threats to the Tamils. The failure of two decades of negotiations prompted a stronger response from the Tamils, including the call for an independent state and the use of force to achieve that goal.

The Sinhalese-dominant government's actions during this era have two possible motivations. First, Mrs. Bandaranaike's pro-Sinhalese Buddhist policies appear to have been motivated by the opportunity to implement a Sinhalese nationalist agenda and less by fears of Buddhism's extinction. In the early 1970s, at the time of the constitutional reforms, there were no new threats posed by foreign sources or domestic minorities. However, Mrs. Bandaranaike's policies could also have been the result of the threats posed by factions *within* the Sinhalese Buddhist community. The 1971 JVP insurrection was aimed not at Tamils but, rather, at the Sri Lankan government, which they saw as too conservative on issues relating to Sinhalese nationalism. It is possible that the pro-Sinhala policies were implemented as a means of appeasing this rightwing threat; however, many of the policies, including particularly the elevation of Sinhala as the national language, predate the 1971 insurrection. Therefore, it appears that the SLFP government led by Mrs. Bandaranaike was acting more out of opportunity than threat regarding the promotion of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism. As in the previous rounds of riots, the Sinhalese had the resources of the state at their disposal. Similar to the 1956 and 1958 riots, casualties and property damage were greater among the Tamils, suggesting that the government failed to protect them against Sinhala rioters.

The biggest change between the 1956 and 1958 riots and the 1977 riots, however, was the resources available to the Tamils. Specifically, the greater degree of organization with the Tamil community—including at the political level with the TULF and on the

ground with Tamil militant groups—allowed the Tamils to strike back with greater velocity. The Tamils, particularly the disaffected youth, were better mobilized by the time of the 1977 riots. Although the Tamil community was fraught with internal divisions and suffering from the death of its key leaders in 1977, they were nevertheless better prepared to fight back than in the previous riots.

### *The Riots of 1981 and 1983 and Escalation to Civil War*

This section addresses the riots of 1981 and 1983—the worst in the country’s history—followed by the outbreak of civil war. Specifically, it considers the consolidation of Tamil militant groups, their resources, and their relationship to Tamil politicians. It also addresses the emergence of ultra-nationalist Sinhalese Buddhist organizations—the JVP and the MVP—and their use of force for saliently Buddhist goals. Finally, this section considers the current bid for peace. This section argues that the escalation to civil war in Sri Lanka is best explained by the consolidation of Tamil militant groups into the LTTE and the resources they gathered through various international sources. Likewise, the presence of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist militant groups fueled the conflict by challenging the government’s authority and destabilizing peace talks.

The period between the 1977 riots and the riots of 1981 and 1983 continued to be politically turbulent for the island. In 1977, as an alleged confidence building measure within the Sinhalese community, Jayewardene released from jail members of the JVP, who were imprisoned as a result of the 1971 insurrection. This act, instead of calming Sinhalese Buddhist anxieties, paved the way for a new wave of militancy.<sup>165</sup> In 1979,

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<sup>165</sup> Moore, pg. 608

following the death of 14 Sri Lankan police in LTTE raids and the bombing of an Air Ceylon airliner, the government passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which gave sweeping powers to the police and military to conduct operation against suspected terrorists, the overwhelming majority of whom were Tamil.<sup>166</sup>

In 1981, as a conciliatory measure to the Tamil community, the government passed legislation that would allow for the creation of District Development Councils (DDC) throughout the country. The LTTE and other militant groups opposed the initiative, arguing that full secession was the only route for the future of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. In attempts to derail the 1981 elections, Tamil militants assassinated a Tamil member of the UNP and several police officers. This, in turn, sparked riots in the city resulting in the burning of the Jaffna Public Library, which housed over 90,000 volumes of Tamil books.<sup>167</sup> The government did not hold inquiries into the causes of the event or attempt to punish the parties responsible for the library's destruction, which enraged the Tamil population.<sup>168</sup> Shortly after this event, Sinhalese gangs in Colombo and Ratnapura sacked, looted and burned Tamil shops and houses, causing at least seven deaths and the destruction of more than 200 buildings.<sup>169</sup> Jaywardene called out the armed forces to stop the violence.

In 1982, despite his controversial policies and actions, Jayewardene won another term in office. Sporadic incidents of violence continued throughout the following year including an LTTE attack on a train outside of Jaffna and a few attacks on Tamil

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<sup>166</sup> The Sri Lankan government also had to contend with Sinhalese Buddhist militants, especially members of the JVP and MSV. For details on the events leading up to the passage of the 1979 act, see Senaratne, pg. 64.

<sup>167</sup> Senaratne, pg. 65

<sup>168</sup> Senaratne, pg. 66

<sup>169</sup> *ibid*

merchants spearheaded by Sinhala militant groups.<sup>170</sup> However, the most serious riots in Sri Lanka's history came in July of 1983, after LTTE forces killed 13 Sri Lankan soldiers in a raid in Jaffna. The following day, riots broke out in Colombo following the soldiers' funeral procession. The riots began around the area of the cemetery then quickly spread to Tamil neighborhoods. Angry Sinhalese mourners looted and burned Tamil shops and houses, eventually killing between 2,000 to 3,000 people and forcing from 70,000 to 100,000 Tamils into refugee camps, or just over 60% of the Tamil population in the area.<sup>171</sup> In addition, an estimated 35,000 Tamils fled to India and, within the coming year, the number is believed to have reached 125,000.<sup>172</sup>

The government was slow to respond to the violence. In particular, Jayewardene did not address the nation until five days after the riots had begun, at which time he criticized the Tamils for instigating the events through their terrorist acts.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, rumors that the government had supplied lists of Tamil-owned businesses to angry Sinhalese groups and that the police and military actually participated in the riots weakened the government's credibility with the Tamil population.<sup>174</sup> Following the riots, the government banned the JVP, which it fingered as the organization responsible for most of the bloodshed.<sup>175</sup> This, however, did little to console the Tamil population.

The 1983 riots were the turning point for Sinhalese and Tamil relations on the island. From this point, the Tamil bid for a separate homeland took a more militant

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<sup>170</sup> Senaratne, pg. 68

<sup>171</sup> Krishnan offered the estimates of the dead, noting that 2,000 was the government's toll, pg. 52. Little places the number of refugees at 70,000, pg. 89. Tambiah cites between 80,000 to 100,000 refugees, pg. 71

<sup>172</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Politics in Sri Lanka*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999), pg. 200

<sup>173</sup> Little, pg. 89

<sup>174</sup> Most scholars agree that the Sri Lankan armed forces did not do enough to stop the violence and, in some cases, actually participated, see Little, pg 88; and Tambiah, pg. 75.

<sup>175</sup> Tambiah, pg. 97; Little, pg. 91

trajectory, which quickly led to full-scale civil war. Three stages are visible in the war, which will be briefly outlined below: from the early 1970s until the early 1990s; from 1990 until 1995; and from 1995 until the present ceasefire in February 2002.<sup>176</sup>

The first phase of the Sri Lankan civil war ran from the mid-1970s until 1990, and involved three developments. The first was the emergence of Tamil militant groups in the early 1970s and their attacks primarily on Sri Lankan police, military and government targets, including the 1972 assassination of the mayor of Jaffna.<sup>177</sup> These developments further escalated after the 1983 riots, at which time militant Tamil groups attacked Sinhalese civilians in the North. The Sri Lankan government deployed forces to the area, which attempted to dismantle militant Tamil organizations in the region.

The second development in this phase was the LTTE's machiavellian consolidation of power and emergence as the primary militant organization in Tamil Eelam. Beginning in May of 1986, the LTTE engaged in fratricidal killings, murdering the leadership of three rival militant organizations, the TELO, the EPRLF and the PLOTE. By 1987, the LTTE stood as the only major militant organization fighting for Tamil independence.<sup>178</sup> Militants affiliated with other groups were taken prisoner, forced into exile or retreated to areas on the island not dominated by the LTTE.<sup>179</sup> The LTTE's goal, not unlike its rival militant organizations, was the creation of an independent state, an objective that it has not wavered on over the course of the twenty-year civil war. Also like its militant rivals, the LTTE began as a Marxist-Leninist group, consistent with

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<sup>176</sup> These three stages are identified by Samaranayake, pp. 125-145

<sup>177</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 128

<sup>178</sup> Dayan Jayatilaka, "The LTTE and Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka," pp. 231-262, *Pursuit of Peace in Sri Lanka: Past Failure and Future Prospects*, edited by K.M. de Silva and G.H. Peiris, (Washington, DC: US Institute for Peace and the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 2001), pp. 234-235

<sup>179</sup> Purnaka L. de Silva, pp. 98-99



numerous armed movements around the globe in the 1970s. However, the group quickly moved more towards a right-winged ideology based on Tamil ethnicity and nationalism, which succeeded in gaining recruits and some popular support.<sup>180</sup>

The LTTE has been extremely successful in raising money and military assets from international sources. In particular, the LTTE has mobilized the Tamil diaspora for the cause of an independent state of Eelam. As early as the 1970s, Sri Lankan Tamils had set up organizations, based in London, aimed at raising awareness of the Tamil's plight and mobilizing the diaspora to contribute money to its cause. This includes organizations such as the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), the Tamil Liberation Organization (TLO), and various charity groups.<sup>181</sup> By 1995, an estimated 40% of the LTTE's war budget was generated from overseas donations, which climbed to 60% by 1996.<sup>182</sup> The LTTE also has engaged in money laundering, gold smuggling, drug trafficking, arms transfers, and real estate investments to raise money.<sup>183</sup> In 1984, the LTTE set up an information news center in London and publish several periodicals including *Kalathi*, *Viduthalai Pligai* and *Tamil Land*.<sup>184</sup> In addition, the LTTE has worked with other liberation movements, especially the Palestinians but also groups from "Libya, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, Morocco, Turkey and Yemen" along with ties to the ETA in Spain.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, by the 1980s, the LTTE had become a resource-rich, powerful organization and a formidable foe in the Sri Lankan civil war.

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<sup>180</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict (and its Implications)," pp. 109-137, *Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Pear of the East or the Island of Tears?* Edited by Siri Gamage and I.B. Watson, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), pg. 119

<sup>181</sup> Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict," pp. 110-111

<sup>182</sup> Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict," pg. 120

<sup>183</sup> Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict," pp. 120-121

<sup>184</sup> Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict," pp. 113-114

<sup>185</sup> Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict," pp. 114-115

The third development in the first phase of the war was India's involvement in the conflict. The Indian government, under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, became publicly involved in the Sri Lankan conflict following the 1983 riots. However, prior to this, it is believed that Indira's government, through the Indian secret service the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), began training Tamil militant as early as 1982, first by allowing training camps to be built in Tamil Nadu, followed by financing and arms.<sup>186</sup>

After the 1983 riots, Indira offered India's services as a mediator between Tamils and the Sri Lankan government. It is believed that several motives were behind this offer. First, the Indian government claimed a special relation to the conflict given the ethnic tie between Tamils in Sri Lanka and those in Tamil Nadu. This tie was strengthened by public opinion in Tamil Nadu, which was outraged by the riots and pressured the Indian government for action.<sup>187</sup> Second, India wanted to act as a defense umbrella for the smaller countries in South Asia and to proactively seek stability in the region; intervening in the Sri Lankan conflict was an important step in achieving this goal.<sup>188</sup> Third, it is also argued that the Indira-led government intervened in the conflict as a means of pandering to Tamil Nadu votes in the upcoming 1984 elections.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, India's involvement in the Sri Lankan conflict stemmed from a mixture of domestic and international policy motives.

India pushed for reconciliation in Sri Lanka by, first, sending a mediator to the island to talk with both parties. This was followed by the 1984 All Party Conference, which sought to reach common ground on the creation of district councils for the North

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<sup>186</sup> Gunaratna, "Internationalization of the Tamil Conflict," pg. 116. This story broke in the press, including *India Today*, in 1984. See K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pg. 214

<sup>187</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pp. 200-201

<sup>188</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pg. 196

and Eastern Provinces of the island, and by encouraging the Sri Lankan government to grant citizenship to “estate” Tamils, which it did in 1988.<sup>190</sup> Following Indira’s assassination in 1984, her son Rajiv continued to negotiate for a peaceful resolution to the escalating civil war. He met with President Jayewardene in 1985 and agreed to further help coordinate talks between the Tamils and Sri Lankan government, first in Thimpu, Bhuttan, followed by talks in New Delhi, which resulted in the Delhi Accords of 1985.<sup>191</sup> The Delhi Accords eventually became the framework for the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Agreement, signed in July of 1987. The accords called for the creation of nine provincial councils across the island, a referendum in the East Province to determine if its citizens wanted to merge their district with the North, the repatriation of recent Tamils refugees, the expulsion of Tamil militants on Indian soil, and the rapid deployment of 7,000 Indian troops to form the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).<sup>192</sup>

The LTTE flatly rejected the agreement and began to attack the IPKF shortly after their deployment. This forced the Indian government to increase the number of deployed soldiers in the region, eventually reaching between 75,000 to 100,000 troops at its zenith,<sup>193</sup> and costing the lives of more than 1,250 soldiers before their withdrawal in 1990.<sup>194</sup>

It is important to note that Sinhalese militants were equally hostile towards to 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement as were the Tamils. Following a 1985 LTTE attack on Buddhist pilgrims in Anuradhapura, in which 150 civilians were killed, Sinhalese

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<sup>189</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pg. 201

<sup>190</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pp. 203-204

<sup>191</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pp. 218-219

<sup>192</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pp. 233-234

<sup>193</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pp. 244

<sup>194</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 132

Buddhist nationalists began to form organizations aimed at protecting Buddhism and defending the homeland against the Tamil threat. In 1986, militant monks founded the *Mavbima Surakime Vyaparaya* (MSV). The MSV acted as an umbrella organization that sought to coordinate efforts of other Sinhala nationalist groups and work with political parties, specifically the SLFP, to maintain territorial unity of Sri Lanka and Sinhalese Buddhist sovereignty over the island.<sup>195</sup> It drew heavily on the *Mahavamsa* to justify this goal, claiming that the ancient Sinhalese kings unified the island as part of their role of protecting the Sangha, which in turn protected the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, the organization argued that force was necessary to repel the Tamil threat and defend the Buddhist state. To this end, the MSV believed that monks should be “foot soldiers” for “the revolutionary struggle.”<sup>197</sup> The organization sought to mobilize the Sinhalese population through the creation of literature, speeches, and demonstrations including union strikes.<sup>198</sup>

The JVP—the same revolutionary organization that attempted to overthrow the government in 1971—also remobilized during this period for militant action to “defend the motherland.” Along with the MSV, the JVP took up arms to protest the signing of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement, which it believed would compromise the territory and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Beginning in 1987, the JVP launched an insurrection aimed at overthrowing the government and thwarting the implementation of the accords. The organization had almost no external support for its operations but, rather, relied on the charismatic and innovative leadership of Rohana Wijeweera along with popular support

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<sup>195</sup> Tambiah, pp. 80-81

<sup>196</sup> Tambiah, pg. 80

<sup>197</sup> Tambiah, pg. 88

<sup>198</sup> Tambiah, pp. 88-89

and the structure of the Sangha to organize and violently challenge the government.<sup>199</sup> They carried out assassinations of UNP politicians, raids on military installations, bombing attacks on government buildings including the parliament, and violent attacks on infrastructure nodes such as power plants and the state-run media.<sup>200</sup> They also organized widespread strikes, boycotts on Indian-made products, and mass demonstrations.<sup>201</sup> From 1987 to 1989, an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 people were killed as a result of the JVP insurrection.<sup>202</sup>

In 1988, a new UNP president was elected, Ranasinghe Premadasa, who articulated two goals in his campaign: the end of terror caused by the JVP, and the complete withdrawal of the IPKF. The government's vow to dismember the JVP was, ironically, aided by the JVP's threat to kill family members of Sinhalese soldiers in the Sri Lankan army, which alienated their popular base.<sup>203</sup> In 1989, the government captured and assassinated Wiljeweera and, by 1990, they had succeeded in killing off the organization's key members, effectively destroying the movement. Likewise, Premadasa negotiated to have the IPKF withdrawal from the island by March of 1990, marking the end of phase one of the civil war.<sup>204</sup>

Phase two of the civil war lasted from the withdrawal of the IPKF in 1990 until the breakdown of major negotiations between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government in 1995. Amidst negotiations with the Indian government for the withdrawal of the IPKF, the new Sri Lankan government also engaged in talks with the LTTE. In 1989,

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<sup>199</sup> Moore, pp. 612-615

<sup>200</sup> Moore, pp. 634-635

<sup>201</sup> *ibid*

<sup>202</sup> Moore cites 40,000 deaths, pg. 593; Samaranayake puts the number at 60,000 deaths, pg. 132

<sup>203</sup> Moore, pp.638-640

<sup>204</sup> K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, pg. 242

Premadasa reconvened the All Party Conference (APC) with the aim of reaching common ground between the LTTE and the government on the creation of regional councils.<sup>205</sup> Negotiations broke down after the SLFP withdrew from the talks and the LTTE rejected the district council schema, charging that it compromised the goal of an independent Tamil state.<sup>206</sup>

Failed negotiations resulted in renewed violence, this time between the LTTE and government forces in the Eastern and Northern Provinces. Between 1990 and 1993, the LTTE launched several attacks against the Sri Lankan police and military including the seizure of 600 police, who were later executed, and attacks on army camps at Mankulam, Elephant Pass, and Poonarin.<sup>207</sup> The LTTE also assassinated several politicians including the Deputy Defense minister, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the former Deputy Defense minister, and President Premadasa in 1993.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, the LTTE conducted attacks against civilians in the Eastern and Northern Provinces, including the 1990 ethnic cleansing of Muslims from the North and confiscating of their property.<sup>209</sup>

The government responded to these acts with military confrontation, particularly after the assassination of Premadasa, who was replaced by D.B. Wijerunga. During phase two, remnants of rival Tamil militant groups joined forces with the Sri Lankan military to challenge the LTTE.<sup>210</sup> The 1994 elections ushered in the People's Alliance government, headed by Chandrika Kumaratunga. This new government revitalized negotiations with the LTTE. In January of 1995, the government and LTTE agreed to a ceasefire and

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<sup>205</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 133

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*

<sup>207</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 134

<sup>208</sup> *ibid*

<sup>209</sup> *ibid*

<sup>210</sup> *ibid*

several rounds of talks.<sup>211</sup> In negotiations, the LTTE made four demands: the end of the embargo to the North; the end of Sri Lankan fishing businesses off the northern coast; the removal of a key military camp in the North; and the legal right for LTTE members to carry weapons in the North. The government agreed to all demands except the removal of the military camp in the North.<sup>212</sup> In response, the LTTE withdrew from negotiations and resumed fighting in April of 1995. Phase two of the civil war cost over 11,000 lives of civilians and soldiers and around 12,000 LTTE troops.<sup>213</sup>

Phase three of the Sri Lankan civil war began with an LTTE suicide attack on a naval boat in the Trincomalee Harbor and lasted until the February 2002 ceasefire and resumption of negotiations. This phase of the war was marked by combined military confrontation and the Sri Lankan government's negotiations with the LTTE. In 1995, the government recaptured Jaffna City and Kilinochchi, two LTTE strongholds.<sup>214</sup> In retaliation, the LTTE attacked the Central Bank in Colombo, killing more than 200 people followed by attacks on the country's oil refinery plants.<sup>215</sup>

Amidst this violence, the government used military and diplomatic methods aimed at ending the war. This included efforts to rebuild civil society in Jaffna after its capture in 1995, and by holding elections in which the LTTE was defeated and forced to retreat to the jungles.<sup>216</sup> In 2000, the Norwegian government began to work with members of LTTE and the Sri Lankan government on a resolution to the conflict.<sup>217</sup> This

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<sup>211</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 135

<sup>212</sup> *ibid*

<sup>213</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 134

<sup>214</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 136-137

<sup>215</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 137

<sup>216</sup> *ibid*

<sup>217</sup> "Norway's Role in Sri Lanka Peace Plan, *BBC News Online*, Tuesday, February 1, 2000, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), downloaded on 1/31/2003; "Norway opens up Sri Lankan Peace Talks, *BBC News Online*, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), downloaded on 1/31/2003

resulted in a ceasefire in February of 2002, followed by talks in Thailand later that year.<sup>218</sup> The parties have yet to reach an agreement but have made progress on confidence building measures including the return of internally displaced refugees and the creation of a sub-committee to work on this issue.<sup>219</sup>

The riots of 1981 and 1983 followed by the outbreak of civil war contain elements that conform to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, religion continued to play a salient role in Sinhalese and Tamil tensions. Sinhalese Buddhist militant organizations were a key disruption to the peace, specifically the formation of the MSV and the reemergence of the JVP in the 1980s. Both of these militant organizations formed in reaction to threats of federal devolution to Tamils in the North and East. Both groups made it their priority to “protect the motherland,” to keep the territorial and sovereign unity of the island under Sinhalese Buddhist authority. Both groups identified this goal through their interpretation of the *Mahavamsa* and the belief that the Sinhalese people were chosen as a special race to defend and propagate the teachings of the Buddha. Furthermore, both groups contained Buddhist monks and organized militant operations through various temples and monasteries. Both groups enjoyed popular support throughout the 1980s. These groups’ militant operations against the Sri Lankan government and IPKF proved to be costly and bloody.

However, despite the mobilization of the Sinhalese through religious reasoning, the Tamils continued organize their militant resistance through non-religious channels. After the 1983 riots, the Tamils received support from India along co-ethnic lines, but

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<sup>218</sup> For the text of the ceasefire, see “Peace Agreements Digital Collection: Sri Lanka,” *United States Institute of Peace*, [www.usip.org/library/](http://www.usip.org/library/), downloaded on 1/8/03

<sup>219</sup> “Sri Lanka: Bicycling Tigers,” *The Economist*, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002



religion appeared to play no role in the Tamil-Indian alliance. The goal to create an independent state and protect the Tamil “homeland”—defined by history not religion—was the clarion call to mobilize and take up arms. Thus Tamil violence was not inspired by religion.

Second, both Tamil and Sinhalese militants took up arms in response to threats during this era. Somewhat ironically, both groups responded to the same threats posed by the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. Both the LTTE and the JVP opposed the creation of district councils. The LTTE wanted nothing short of an independent state, while the JVP demanded the entire island and Sinhalese Buddhist leadership over the territory. The accords’ call for provincial autonomy threatened both of these groups’ goals. Furthermore, both the LTTE and JVP opposed the deployment of Indian forces. In addition to the presence of Sri Lankan troops, the LTTE saw the IPKF as a threat to their regional stronghold and a potential hindrance to their operations against the Sri Lankan government. The JVP opposed the IPKF for what they believed to be an Indian attempt to seize pieces of Sri Lanka and compromise its territorial integrity. The 1987 accords, therefore, and the presence of the IPKF created a common threat for both groups.

Perhaps the greatest change to Tamil and Sinhalese dynamics was the LTTE’s ability to consolidate Tamil backing and raise substantial resources for its operations against the IPKF and the Sri Lankan military and government. By killing off rival militant groups, the LTTE was able to emerge as the primary Tamil organization by the mid-1980s. This in turn allowed for resources—donations, recruits, materiel, publicity, and investments—to be concentrated into this one force, making their organization truly formidable. The JVP was also able to conduct a series of crippling attacks. However,

without the overseas networks to replenish their resources, the government was able to destroy the movement in under two years.

Another important development to the Sri Lankan conflict is the changes that occurred between Sinhalese religious militants and the Sri Lankan government. With the rise of bloody confrontation between Buddhist revolutionaries and the government, Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist groups ceased to be an asset to political parties and power-politics. Premadasa came to power in 1988 with the promise to end JVP assaults on civilians and government property, a goal that he carried out by 1989, albeit with enormous bloodshed. It appears that the power of militant monks ended at this time and, while monks still continue to play an active role in political agitation, their presence is less of a force than it once was.

Finally, the civil war has come to a tentative halt with the aid of Norway—a truly neutral third party—and their work on negotiations. These negotiations show signs of hope, with both Tamil leaders and the Sri Lankan government meeting face-to-face and considering alternatives to violence.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that Sinhalese motivations and goals for violence in Sri Lanka have been saliently religious. This is in contrast to several scholars who have argued that the violence in Sri Lanka is not about religion. For example, Barbara Crossette's analysis of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict is: "Although most Sinhalese are Buddhists and most Tamils are Hindu, the present dispute was never religious..."<sup>220</sup> Likewise, Gamini Samaranayake states at the end of his chapter: "Although religion is

not a factor which contributed to the origin and development of the conflict, the Buddhist clergy (Sangha) have played an influential role in the ethnic conflict.”<sup>221</sup> Lastly, the *Historical Dictionary of Sri Lanka* claims: “It is important to point out that the current ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils is not based on a Buddhist-Hindu religious divide. Its origins are largely linguistic, political and economic. Religion enters it only indirectly through the identity issue.”<sup>222</sup>

These analyses claim that the conflict in Sri Lanka is largely ethnic. However, this argument fails to explain key motivations of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists. First, the salient goal of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists and their organizations has been the creation of not just a Sinhalese state in Sri Lanka, but a Sinhalese *Buddhist* state, excluding not only other ethnic groups but religious groups as well. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist Dharmapala articulated this goal, calling for all Sinhalese—as *de facto* Buddhists—to unify, embrace their faith, and defend the sacred land of Sri Lanka from “foreign” elements including Christians, Muslims and Tamils. Religious and political leaders adopted this call including Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and his wife, in addition to members of the JVP and the MSV. Therefore, the goal of extreme Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists is not just the eradication of ethnic “foreign” elements but religious ones as well; Sri Lanka, in their minds, should be purely Buddhist and purely Sinhalese.

Second, interpretations of religious texts have also played an important role in the Sri Lankan violence. Dharmapala based his call for Sinhalese Buddhist rights to Sri

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<sup>220</sup> Barbara Crossette, “Hatreds, Human Rights, and the News: What We Ignore,” *SAIS Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (Winter-Spring 1991), pg. 5. Cited in Little, pg 156-157

<sup>221</sup> Samaranayake, pg. 139

Lanka on his interpretation of the *Mahavamsa*, a religious text that has chronicled the relationship between the king, the Sangha and the Dharma of the Buddha on Sri Lanka. The *Mahavamsa* claims that Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese are a chosen nation through which the Buddha's teachings were destined to "shine in glory." Religious and political leaders have also interpreted the *Mahavamsa* to identify what they claim to be a chronic threat to the "Buddhist island"—external invasion and foreign occupation by Tamils and colonialists—and the need to take action to defend the Dharma of the Buddha.

Third, religious clerics have played a key role in fomenting and executing violent action against non-Buddhists on the island. This is most visible from the 1950s until the present day. Monks formed various organizations, such as the LEBM, the Eksath Bhikku Peramuna, the JVP and the MSV, with the aim of protecting Buddhism against non-Buddhist threats and even the Sri Lankan government. The government's attempts to create regional autonomy for the Tamils—in 1956, 1976, and 1986—all collapsed under intense pressure from monks performing sit-ins, hunger strikes, and fomenting riots. The JVP and MSV in particular called on monks to use violence in order to "defend the motherland" against territorial concessions to the Tamils, resulting in between 40,000 to 60,000 deaths before the government's successful destruction of the JVP in 1989. Therefore, radical Buddhist monks have caused considerable bloodshed on the island.

Fourth, Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists have benefited from their ties to the government; this has been the greatest resource that has allowed for the implementation of their goals. Tamil-Sinhalese dynamics took a turn for the worse when Bandaranaike and the SLFP came to power in 1956, implementing policies that discriminated against

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<sup>222</sup> *Historical Dictionary of Sri Lanka*, edited by S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe and Vidyamali Samarasinghe, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), pg. 73

non-Sinhala speaking citizens. Relations worsened when Mrs. Bandaranaike changed the country's constitution to give Buddhism and Sinhala a special place in the country, and renamed the island to reflect its Sinhalese history. Furthermore, the government did not sufficiently restrain Sinhalese violence against Tamils in the riots preceding the civil war; evidence even suggests that police and the armed forces participated in the 1983 riots. Therefore, Sinhalese nationalists benefited from their ties to the government. This relationship changed after the government violently put down the Sinhalese militant threat of the JVP.

Tamil mobilization and goals, on the other hand, have not involved religion. Initial Tamil reactions to British colonization in the 1800s did involve religion, specifically the efforts of Hindu activist Navalar to revitalize *Saiva Siddhanta* among the Tamils in northern Sri Lanka through stressing Hindu texts, rebuilding temples, and creating Hindu schools. However, since that time, Tamils have neither mobilized nor articulated their goals around religion.

The key leaders of the Tamil independence movement were secular individuals. This is particularly true of Chelvanayagam, who was secular and socialist in his political ideology. Moreover, Tamil religious leaders have not played a visible role in the current conflict. Virtually nothing has been written about Hindu leaders in Sri Lanka and their reaction to the conflict, suggesting their inactivity in the war. Likewise, Hindu scriptures have not surfaced as a tool of mobilization or justification for "defending the homeland." Rather, the call to arms and defense of Tamil-majority areas has been founded on historic precedent, specifically through the existence of the Jaffna Kingdom just prior to the era of colonization. Tamil territory, therefore, is based on history, not religious precedent.

Likewise, Tamil unity on the island has not been based on religion. The “indigenous” Tamils, concentrated in the North, and the “estate” Tamils of the Eastern Province did not initially enjoy unity against the Sri Lankan government. In 1948, when the government revoked citizenship to “estate” Tamils, “indigenous” Tamils did not mobilize to fight the policy. However, after a series of damaging legislation involving the status of the Tamil language and restrictive quotas for university admittance, Tamils united in the 1970s to fight these discriminations. Tamil unity on the island, therefore, was driven by language and access to education, not by religion.

In addition, material support for Tamil military action against the Sri Lankan government has not been generated through religious networks or resources. Tamil militants enjoyed a friendly relationship with India in the 1980s, including permission to build training camps in Tamil Nadu along with funding and materiel. This was complimented by Indian efforts to negotiate a peace agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamils, ensuring regional autonomy to the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The motivation, in part, for Indian support of the Tamil movement was based on ethnic ties between the Tamils of Sri Lanka and their “kin” in Tamil Nadu. This tie was not forged through religion.

The Tamils have also been very successful in securing financial and political support from Tamils in the diaspora. This includes, most notably, various London-based organizations and their networks with other liberation movements from around the globe. It also includes Tamil groups in countries like Canada and the US, and the efforts of these groups to lobby on behalf of the Tamil cause. Tamils have also been active with various media outlets and human rights NGOs, spreading information about the treatment of

Tamils by the Sri Lankan government. These organizations and networks do not appear to be motivated by religion; they are generated primarily through ethnic ties to Tamils.

The religious motivation and goals of the Sinhalese on the one hand, compared to the ethnic motivations of the Tamils on the other, reveal some interesting dynamics concerning religious wars. First, this case demonstrates that religious violence can be in reaction to non-religiously motivated threats. Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism formed in reaction to British colonization, a mixture of religious threats—most notably the introduction of Christianity through missionary schools—and non-religiously motivated threats such as restructuring of society brought on by an educated middle-class, economic changes to the island, and newfound competition for government jobs. However, the current Tamil threat does not involve religion. Tamils are not attempting to make the island Hindu instead of Buddhist. Rather, Tamils are seeking territorial autonomy based on ethnic, historic, and linguistic justification. These are non-religious goals. However, this has fueled a religious reaction from Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists.

The flip side of this dynamic is that religiously motivated violence and goals can produce a non-religious reaction. Sinhalese Buddhists have called for violence to defend the faith and create a Buddhist-pure state free of “foreign” ethnic and religious groups. The Tamils, in response, have mobilized to defend territory that they believe to be historically theirs; they have not countered this religiously motivated threat with their own religious arguments. This suggests that the maintenance of territory is a salient issue for which both groups are fighting. However, the motivations underlying both Tamil and Sinhala demands for territory are quite different. The Sinhalese are driven by arguments that are saliently religious whereas the Tamils are motivated by ethnicity.

#### 4.1 Sinhala and Tamil Violence

	<b>Threat Perception</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Religious and Political Authority</b>
1956-1958 Riots	<i>Tamils</i> —Sinhala Only Act <i>Sinhalese</i> —Believed decline of Buddhism	<i>Tamils</i> —Political organization <i>Sinhalese</i> —Orgs., monks, parties	Government sympathetic and aided Sinhalese agenda
1977 Riots	<i>Tamils</i> —Gov. policies, colonize Dry Zone <i>Sinhalese</i> —Gov. believed to be too sympathetic to Tamils	<i>Tamils</i> —emerging militant orgs, unity of Tamil population <i>Sinhalese</i> —Orgs, monks, state	Government sympathetic and aided Sinhalese agenda
1981, 1983 Riots and Civil War	<i>Tamils</i> —Gov. policies, IPKF <i>Sinhalese</i> —JVP/gov. Tamil insurgency	<i>Tamils</i> —internat. org, financial and military resources, safe havens <i>Sinhalese</i> —loss of state support and resources	Government attacked by Buddhists, reduction of influence with government



## **Chapter 4**

### **Defending the *Dar al Islam*: Jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Today**

“The doctrine of Jihad is not the product of a single authoritative individual or organization’s interpretation. It is rather the product of diverse individuals and authorities interpreting and applying the principles of sacred texts in specific historical and political contexts.”—John L. Esposito, *Unholy War*.<sup>1</sup>

Jihad is perhaps the example that comes to most people’s minds when considering the role of religion in violent conflict and war. Particularly after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in New York and Washington, DC, most Americans are concerned with the role that Islam and its doctrines of jihad and martyrization have played in mobilizing individuals for war against the US. What is the doctrine of jihad in Islam? Who interprets this doctrine? Why are jihads called at some times and not at others? Why have Bin Laden and his followers called for jihad against the US? Why now?

This chapter aims to offer insights on these questions by comparing two major waves of jihad in history: the outbreak of jihads throughout the Muslim world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and the current surge of jihads around the globe, including Bin Laden’s call for war against the United States. Drawing from the causal argument presented in chapter two, this chapter will focus on three variables as possible explanations for the call to jihad: the relationship between religious and political leaders, the role of threat perception in influencing actions of religious leaders and their groups, and the amount of material resources available to religious groups initiating violence. This chapter will test three empirical predictions from the causal argument. First, religious leaders will use violence

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<sup>1</sup> John L. Esposito, *Unholy War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pg. 64

if they feel their authority is under threat. Second, religious violence will occur more frequently if political and religious leaders are intertwined, allowing religious leaders the opportunity to use state resources to further their agendas. Third, jihad will be initiated in response to perceived or actual threat to the people and land deemed essential to the vitality of the religion. And fourth, the religious group initiating the violence will have sufficient resources including strong leadership, organization, finances and technological assets to carry out the jihad.

This chapter argues that, first, there is no one doctrine of jihad; rather, jihad is subject to interpretation and these interpretations are the product of individuals grounded in specific circumstances. Therefore, in order to understand why jihad is called at some times and not at others, social and political circumstances need to be considered. Second, the call for jihad is largely in response to perceived or actual threats to Muslim land, communities, or the very existence of the faith. Therefore, in times of great threat, real or perceived, leaders have called for jihad to defend Islam; this is also true of the current wave of jihads around the world including Bin Laden's war against the US. Third, the call for jihad involves several doctrines and religious resources within Islam including the doctrine of martyrization and the use of legal opinions, or *fatwas*, to justify the use of force. Fourth, Jihads require resources to succeed, especially skilled leaders and resilient, efficient organizations. Jihads are enhanced in scope and intensity by networks, means of communication, and financial resources. These latter resources explain, by in large, the current successes of various jihad movements around the globe and differentiate these movements from their 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first section provides a brief overview of Islam: its core beliefs, its historical developments, its divisions, and its leadership. The second section outlines the doctrine of jihad, considering the legal doctrine, mystical dimensions, holy warriors and martyrization, and a brief overview of historical examples of jihad. The third section analyzes two major waves of jihad: in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the current wave of jihads beginning in 1979, including Bin Laden's call for war against the US. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks.

### **Overview of Islam**

Islam is a rich, complex, and diverse religious tradition that spans across every continent and has nearly 1,400 years of history. For the purpose of understanding the doctrine of jihad, this chapter will provide a very brief outline of Islam's core beliefs, the historical development of the faith and community, divisions within Islam, and forms of leadership.

The central message of Islam stresses the oneness of God, or *tawhid*, and the role of the Prophet Muhammad in transmitting God's message. This belief, which is called the *shahaddah* or the proclamation of faith, forms the first of five pillars of Islam; one who proclaims the shahaddah is a Muslim. The other four pillars include ritual prayer said five times a day facing towards Mecca (*salat*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, the month the Prophet first received revelations from God (*sawm*); almsgiving to the poor (*zakat*); and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), which should be taken by every Muslims at least once in his or her life, finances and health permitting. Along with the pillars, Islam emphasizes the unity of the worldwide Muslim community, the *ummah*, which, in

principle, is not divided by gender, race, class or any other human distinction.<sup>2</sup> In addition Islam, like Judaism, has religious law, *Shari'a*. Ideally, Shari'a should be upheld by a nation's leader and be the law that governs society.

Islam began not as a new religion but, rather, as a reform movement of existing monotheistic religions, particularly Judaism and Christianity.<sup>3</sup> Like Judaism and Christianity, the call to reform came through a prophet, Muhammad ibn Abdullah, who began receiving divine revelations in 610 CE during the lunar month of Ramadan, on the night now called the "Night of Power." Along with receiving God's messages, the Prophet Muhammad (here forward the Prophet) was commanded to recite, to spread the message. The first ten years of the Prophet's preaching were met with hostility by the people of Mecca, forcing the Prophet, his family, and his followers to leave for the city of Medina in 622 CE, in what became known as the *hijra*, or emigration. Unlike in Mecca, the Medinans were receptive to the Prophet's message; the community grew and returned to Mecca in 630 CE after defeating the city's army and negotiating peaceful terms with its leaders.<sup>4</sup> From this point, the faith spread throughout the region rapidly, particularly in the following decades.

After the sudden death of the Prophet in 632 CE, a debate broke out within the Muslim community regarding leadership and succession. The majority within the community believed that a new leader, called the *khalifa* or Caliph, should be elected from within the community. A minority believed that the Prophet had designated a successor, his cousin and son-in-law Ali, and that leadership be in the form of an *Imam*,

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<sup>2</sup> For more details on key beliefs in Islam, see John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Chapter Three: "Religious Life and Belief," pp. 69-113

<sup>3</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 14

<sup>4</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 12

which should be determined from the bloodline of the Prophet.<sup>5</sup> This division in the understanding of leadership and succession evolved into the Sunni and Shii factions, respectively. Shii Islam underwent an additional schism over succession of leadership, creating the Ismaili Shii faction, which exists primarily in South Asia today, and the Twelver Shii faction, which predominates in Iran but also has substantial numbers in Iraq and Lebanon. In 874 CE, the Twelver Shii Imam disappeared. This faction believes that he has gone into hiding and will return as the *Mahdi*, the “expected one” to restore justice to the world at the end of the ages.

In addition to the split between Sunni and Shii Muslims, political authority of the *ummah* has undergone several changes since the time of the Prophet. Ideally, the community should be united and governed by one “rightly guided leader,” the *Imam* or *Khalifa*.<sup>6</sup> However, the first four Caliphs after the Prophet were the only ones to realize this ideal. Abu Bakr (632-634), Umar (634-644), Uthman (644-656), and Ali (656-661) are therefore called the “rightly guided caliphs” and this brief era is known as the “Golden Age of Islam.”<sup>7</sup> These leaders are also special because they were all companions of the Prophet, earning the title *al-salaf al salih*, the pious ancestors. After the Golden Age, political authority fractioned into multiple, and often competing, polities.

Alongside political leaders, Islam also has trained scholars, the *Ulama*, which are schooled in history, philosophy, language, law, and art. The Ulama are usually responsible for formulating shari’a law and often guide communities on their religious paths. Within the Ulama, there are leaders who act as religious judges, *Muftis* and *Qadis*.

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<sup>5</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 37-47

<sup>6</sup> *Imam*, has come to mean several things in Islam. It still refers to the one “rightly guided” leader in Shii Islam. It also refers to the one who leads a mosque in Sunni Islam.

<sup>7</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 37-39

Islam also has mystical leaders, *Sufis*, often given the title *Sheikh* or *Pir*. Lastly, there are individuals who attain status as religious leaders either through their charisma or success, but are neither Sufis nor members of the Ulama. They are also often referred to as *Sheiks, Pirs* or *Mullahs*.

### **The Doctrine of Jihad and Holy Warriors in Islam**

This section outlines the different types of jihad in Islam. First, it considers jihad as a legal doctrine and debates surrounding its function and use. Second, this section looks at two non-judicial forms of jihad, the belief in the *mahdi*—the “expected one” who will restore justice to earth at the end of ages—and the notion of *baraka*, or God’s blessing on military leaders evident in battlefield success. Third, this section presents the concept of holy warriors in Islam and the doctrine of martyrization. Lastly, this section offers brief examples of different forms of jihad throughout history.

#### *Jihad as a legal doctrine*

Jihad is one component of Islamic law, or shari’a, along with all other matters governing the familial, social, and political dimensions of Muslim life. Therefore, in order to understand jihad as a legal concept, it is important to outline the sources and development of Islamic law, who interprets the law, and how the law has changed over time.

Islamic law is based on two primary texts: the Qur’an, which is the literal word of God; and the *Sunna*, which are sayings of the Prophet recorded in the *Hadith* and the customs of the Prophet and his companions.<sup>8</sup> The Qur’an, as the literal word of God, is

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<sup>8</sup> David S. Pearl, *A Textbook on Muslim Law*, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pg. 4. Pearl cites the definitions of scholars Ignac Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translated by Andras

the primary text and cannot be contradicted by any passages of the Sunna or interpretations of the law. However, despite this, the Qur'an contains few passages that offer explicit legal instruction; the Sunna, therefore, is used as authoritative examples of how the Prophet and his companions applied the message of the Qur'an to actions in every day religious, societal and political life.<sup>9</sup>

The Qur'an and the Sunna are the textual sources of Islamic law. However, the textual sources of law alone cannot prescribe guidance for all human actions; this requires interpretation. Under the first Islamic polity, the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750 CE), the leaders adopted legal scholars, *Qadis*, for the purpose of applying the message of the Qur'an and the examples of the Sunna to the everyday problems of social and political life. Qadis usually were promoted from within the ranks of the Ulama, who possessed the skills and knowledge necessary for interpreting the law. Under the Abbasid Dynasty (750-1258 CE), Qadis and members of the Ulama codified the law through *qiyas*, a process of analogy by comparing cases, and *ijma*, consensus among the jurists in the interpretation. Therefore the traditional sources of Islamic law are the Qur'an, the Sunna, *qiyas*, and *ijma*.<sup>10</sup>

Islam spread rapidly throughout the region in its first few decades, establishing urban centers in Medina, Mecca, Kufa, and Damascus. Expansion brought the faith into contact with regional norms and practices that posed different questions for the law. Within these urban centers, different schools of law emerged to tackle these unique

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and Ruth Hamori, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Joseph Schacht, *Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), which are the foundational western works on Islamic jurisprudence.

<sup>9</sup> Pearl notes there are only around 80 verses in the Qur'an that offer explicit legal instruction, pg. 1. This is also noted by Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 77

<sup>10</sup> Pearl, pg. 14; Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 79-83

questions, producing variance in the law. Ultimately, several schools of law developed. Four of these schools remain in Sunni Islam today: the Hanafi school, which was the official school of the succeeding Abassid Dynasty and is most commonly practiced today in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, the Balkans and Cyprus; the Maliki school, which grew out of Medina and is practiced in the North and West African countries and in the eastern coastal territories of the Persian Gulf; the Shafi'i school, which began in Cairo and is most commonly practiced in Southeast Asia today; and the Hanbali school, which is followed in Saudi Arabia.<sup>11</sup> In addition, there are several schools within the *Shia* branch of Islam; the most prominent is the *Jafari* school, which is practiced by Twelver Shias concentrated in the Persian Gulf and Lebanon.<sup>12</sup>

Three bodies of religious authority have been responsible for developing and applying Islamic law. First, as previously mentioned, the Ulama have studied the textual sources of the law—the Qur'an and the Sunna—to debate how these texts reveal the will of God for the everyday lives of Muslims. Ulama still perform this task today. Second, also previously mentioned, dynasties employed Qadis, usually from within the Ulama, as the official body responsible for applying the law. Qadis issued legal edict, *hukm*, which were fixed and binding but not to serve as a legal precedent for future cases. Third, also usually from within the ranks of the Ulama, were the muftis or legal consultants. Traditionally a mufti issued a legal opinion, *fatwa*, which was non-binding.<sup>13</sup> However, with the decline of Qadis, fatwas have taken on greater importance for interpreting legal matters. More recently, individuals that are not part of the Ulama and do not have

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<sup>11</sup> Pearl, pp. 16-17

<sup>12</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 85

<sup>13</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 86



training in Islamic law have issued fatwas; this includes Bin Laden, which will be discussed in the second half of this chapter.

Islamic law involves all aspects of Muslim life including personal, spiritual, family, societal, criminal, economic and political life. The doctrine of jihad, therefore, is just one component of shari'a law and—like all other categories of the law—has been subject to debate and interpretation by various scholars and jurists over time. In order to understand the legal aspects of jihad, it is necessary to explain the broader meaning of the word, the early legal understandings of jihad, and subsequent interpretations of the doctrine that have had a lasting impact.

Jihad, in its broadest sense, means to struggle, to strive, or to make an effort to follow the path of God.<sup>14</sup> This struggle occurs both in the spiritual and in the physical world. The spiritual jihad, often called the Greater Jihad, involves the individual struggle that each person faces in his or her walk as a Muslim, including resistance to earthly temptations and the submission to the will of God. It is generally believed that the spiritual struggle is the more difficult and more important of the two jihads and thus it is the Greater Jihad. The Lesser Jihad is the physical struggle to spread and defend the faith, including by force.<sup>15</sup> The distinction between the lesser and greater jihad comes from an *ahadith* of the Prophet. After returning from battle he is quoted as saying: “We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.”<sup>16</sup> The greater jihad is therefore understood not as the physical battle but the spiritual struggle. In addition, the greater and the lesser jihads are understood as four actions: the Jihad of the Heart, which

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<sup>14</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pp. 27-28

<sup>15</sup> Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History*, (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), pg. 10

<sup>16</sup> Peters, pg. 118; and Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 28

involves overcoming one's sinful nature; the Jihad of the Tongue, which is ordering good over evil; the Jihad of the Hand, which involves disciplinary measures; and the Jihad of the Sword, which is fighting and defending against non-believers.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the term jihad has many meanings, both spiritual and physical.

There are dozens of passages in the Qur'an that address fighting, *qital*, and war; these passages do not all say the same thing. For example, Sura 2:190 states: "Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin no hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors." Sura 22:39 states: "Sanction is given to those who fight because they have been wronged; and Allah is indeed able to give them victory." Sura 9:12 states:

And if they break their pledges after their treaty (hath been made with you) and assail your religion, then fight the heads of disbelief—Lo! they have no binding oaths—in order that they may desist.

The "Sword Verses," Sura 9:5 asserts:

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye may find them, and take them (captive), and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent, and establish worship and pay the poor-due [*zakat*], then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

And Sura 9:29 states:

Fight against those who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day and do not make forbidden what Allah and His messenger have made forbidden, and do not practice the religion of truth of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the *jizya* off hand, being subdued.<sup>18</sup>

Religious scholars have debated how to interpret these different verses for when and who to fight, with varying conclusions. Religious historian Reuven Firestone notes:

The Qur'an's message on this topic [jihad], however, is actually far from consistent. The verses on warring are numerous, amount to scores in number, and

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<sup>17</sup> Peters, pg. 10; James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pg. 61

<sup>18</sup> Suras 2:190, 22:39, 9:12, 9:5, and 9:29, *The Qur'an*, Pickthall translation, (London: Ta-Ha Publishing, Ltd. 1930, first publication). Sura 9:29 taken from Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 14

are spread out over more than a dozen chapters...Some Qur'anic statements may or may not even refer to war, depending on how one views their context, but are nevertheless considered by post-Qur'anic tradition as articulating divine pronouncements on the subject.<sup>19</sup>

Some scholars have argued for a hierarchy of verses, placing the sword verses as a last resort. Others have argued that the passages were revealed to the Prophet in connection to the circumstances of the community, calling first for non-violence, then defensive force, culminating with offensive force when the community was strong enough to initiate attack against unbelievers.<sup>20</sup> Other scholars have argued that when these passages were transmitted to the Prophet determines their importance, making the last verses, the Sword Verses the most important.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, these verses have not produced a consensus about when Muslims should fight and to what ends.

The classical legal doctrine of jihad, which is the Lesser Jihad, was an attempt to comprehend the messages of the Qur'an and Sunna and apply them to actions towards non-believers. This doctrine begins by dividing the world into two spheres, the *dar al Islam*, which is the abode or land of Islam, and the *dar al harb*, which, literally, is the land of war.<sup>22</sup> Legally, the *dar al Islam* is that land which is governed by a just Muslim ruler and is ordered by shari'a law.<sup>23</sup> The *dar al harb* is all other land and is marked by chaos, inequality, and corruption. In the legal understanding of Jihad, it is the duty of those in the *dar al Islam* to spread their order, justice and belief in one God to the *dar al*

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<sup>19</sup> Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origins of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pg. 47

<sup>20</sup> Firestone, pp. 48-51. Firestone demonstrates in his book that this hypothesis does not conform to the order in which texts were revealed.

<sup>21</sup> Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Times*, (Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1996), pg 2

<sup>22</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 35

<sup>23</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 11

*harb* by force, if necessary. More recent scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have called this “offensive” jihad.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note that, despite this bifurcation of the world and the classification of all non-Muslim territory as the land of war, this does not mean that jihad against non-believers is perpetual or even inevitable.<sup>25</sup> Classical law has provided guidelines for how and when to conduct offensive jihad, but these guidelines are subject to interpretation.<sup>26</sup> These principles assert, first and foremost, that offensive jihad is a collective duty; it is fought by members of the *dar al Islam* corporately for the good of the whole community. By classical standards the Imam, the leader of the *dar al Islam*, must call for a raid against the *dar al harb* once a year, preferably to those most threatening to the community. This call can be delayed if conditions are not ideal.<sup>27</sup> Before a Muslim ruler attacks the *dar al harb*, he invites the local inhabitants to either accept the faith of Islam and become Muslims—this is called the *da’wa*—or to pay a poll tax, *jizya*, and a land tax, *kharadj*.<sup>28</sup> If they become Muslims or if they submit to taxes, then war does not occur. Most schools of law consider lands where non-Muslims pay the poll tax as *dar al harb*. However the Shafi’i school names a third sphere, the *dar al sulh* or *dar al ‘ahd*, which is the land of treaty between *Islam* and *harb*.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, classical *hukm* on law describe those exempt from participating in offensive jihad, specifically women, children, the elderly, the mentally ill, slaves, and the

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<sup>24</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, Chapter 4: “The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern Islam,” pp. 105-150; Johnson, Chapter 4: “Authority to Make Holy War,” pp. 76-99

<sup>25</sup> Johnson, citing Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pg. 63

<sup>26</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 12

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, pg. 62; Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 13

<sup>28</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 18-19

<sup>29</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 11

infirm.<sup>30</sup> Sources also outline the proper procedures for the *da'wa*, methods of warfare, when soldiers can flee the battlefield, who is protected during battle, and when jihad ends. All of these issues are debated in the different schools of *fiq*, creating variation of opinion.<sup>31</sup>

Along with offensive jihad to spread the *dar al Islam*, there is the obligation for all Muslims to defend the faith if attacked; this is “defensive” jihad. Defensive Jihad is discussed much less in the classical texts. All schools agree that if Muslim land and people are attacked, all must fight to defend the faith including those exempt under offensive Jihad.<sup>32</sup> The imperative for all to fight is not only for the defense of land held by Muslims and their inhabitants but also for the very survival of the faith. The classical texts suggest that, unlike the organized nature of offensive jihad, the response to attack is a spontaneous reaction, not one issued or organized by the community’s leader.<sup>33</sup>

After the initial expansion of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, defensive jihad has become more the norm in Islamic holy war. For Shia Muslims, offensive jihad has not been an option since the time of their Imam’s disappearance in 874 CE, because an Imam is required to call and organize offensive holy war. Likewise, the use of offensive jihad in Sunni Islam has been rare. Ideal leadership in Sunni Islam is for one rightly guided ruler, the Caliph, to preside over the entire Muslim community, as previously mentioned.<sup>34</sup> However, as early as 756 CE, multiple Muslim dynasties emerged with different leaders

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<sup>30</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 15-16

<sup>31</sup> For details on all of these issues and their variants within the different schools of law, see Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 15-37

<sup>32</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 15; Johnson, quoting Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); and Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shiite Islam: The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pg. 63

<sup>33</sup> Johnson, pg. 63

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, pp. 64, 139

making the legal ideal of offensive jihad under one Imam impossible.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the fractioning of the ummah led to fighting *between* Muslims. This prompted debates about the definition of a Muslim, a Muslim ruler and his territory, and the right to use force against other Muslims. This latter point is of particular importance for current battles of jihad, which are typically directed not only at external, non-Muslim enemies, but also at Muslim rulers and populations deemed “un-Islamic.” This will be discussed further below.

Lastly, it is important to note that there is another option besides force for Muslims living under non-Islamic leadership, which is emigration or *hijra*. The example of *hijra* comes from the Prophet, who left Mecca with his followers in 622 CE and settled in Medina as a means of escaping the hostilities of those opposed to the message of the Qur’an, as previously mentioned. The *hijra* has been interpreted as an option for Muslims in the *dar al harb*. As will be discussed in the following section, jihad movements have called for *hijra* as a means of consolidating forces and resources for attack against the *dar al harb*.

In addition to classical law—and more important for understanding modern examples of jihad—are scholarly interpretations of jihad in the post-classical period. In particular, the writings of Ibn Taymiyya (1268-1328) have contributed to radical Islamic groups in the modern era including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Bin Laden.<sup>36</sup>

Taymiyya—who lived during the fall of the Abassid Dynasty to the Mongols and whose

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<sup>35</sup> Johnson, pg. 139

<sup>36</sup> In Bin Laden’s 1996 Fatwa in particular, quoted in Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Islam*, translated by Anthony F. Roberts, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), pg. 317. For Taymiyya’s influence on radical Islamic groups in Egypt, see Peters, *Jihad*, chapter 5: “The Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihad: Ibn Taymiyya on Jihad,” pp. 43-54; and chapter 9: “The Relevance of the Jihad Doctrine in Sadat’s Egypt,” pp. 149-170.

family had to flee from Baghdad to Damascus—offered a revitalized call for jihad against internal and external threats to Islam. Taymiyya was a member of the Ulama and adhered to the Hanbali school of law in addition to practicing Islamic mysticism, *Sufism*.

Taymiyya argued that faith and action were intrinsically bound in Islam as were religious, social and political power. He called for the faith to return to its foundations—the Qur’an, the Sunna, and the examples of the Prophet and his companions in the “golden age” of Islam.<sup>37</sup> He exemplified the *hijra* of the early community as one means of protecting and purifying the Muslim community. In addition, Taymiyya was outspoken against the impiety of the Mongol rulers in the region who claimed to be Muslim but did not conform to many of its practices, particularly the implementation of Shari’a law. He issued several fatwas legitimating the use of force against the Mongols, despite the fact that they were Muslim; these fatwas set a precedent for future use of force of Muslims against other Muslims believed to be unfaithful in their practice of Islam.<sup>38</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya’s interpretations of Islam and staunch call to protect the purity of the faith directly impacted Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1791), the founder of what has become known as Wahabbism. Like Taymiyya, Wahhab interpreted Islam through the Hanbali school of jurisprudence to argue that the decline in the Muslim world was due to Muslim leaders’ straying from the true path of Islam. He stressed the need for Islam to return to its basics—the oneness of God or *tawhid*, the Qur’an, the Sunna, and the example of the pious ancestors, *al salaf al-salih*, of the Golden Age of Islam—and to end reliance on the interpretations of previous scholars. He called for a return to pure Islam by waging war against resisters and non-believers—non-Muslims and Muslims

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<sup>37</sup> Peters, *Jihad*, chapter 5: “The Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihad: Ibn Taymiyya on Jihad,” pp. 43-54; Esposito, *Unholy War*, pp. 45-46

alike—and by cleansing the faith from deviant innovations, including Sufism.<sup>39</sup> In order to realize these goals, Wahhab formed an alliance with Muhammad ibn Saud, a local tribal chief in the Gulf region. Together they used each other’s resources to consolidate power, unite the tribes of Arabia, and pave the way for a future Saudi nation, which was formally declared in 1932.<sup>40</sup>

The advent of European colonialism into the Muslim world brought western and Islamic ideals into direct contact. This confrontation produced two polarized camps within Islamic thought, which also led to different interpretations of jihad. The first group sought to accommodate western ideals into Islam; they viewed resources from the West not as incompatible with the faith but, rather, as tools that could prosper the tradition. This group included scholars such as Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) and Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938) of South Asia; and Taha Hysayn (1889-1973) in Egypt.<sup>41</sup> These scholars stressed the non-violent form of the Greater Jihad in an effort to curb the negative image of Islam in the West.<sup>42</sup> These interpretations of jihad, while still referenced by contemporary scholars, have failed to impede the revival of the Lesser (violent) Jihad and those who argue its necessity for the modern-day survival of Islam.

The second group that has offered up new legal interpretations of jihad is often referred to as “fundamentalists” but what this chapter will call Islamic “radicals.” This group includes the works of Egyptian Hasan al-Bana (1906-1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and his protégée Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), who authored numerous

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<sup>38</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 46

<sup>39</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 117-118

<sup>40</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 48; Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 187-190

<sup>41</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 77



books on the need for force in the Islamic revival, including *Signposts*. Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi of India/Pakistan (1903-1979) is also one of the founders of the Islamic radical school of thought. He formed the *Jamaat-i-Islamii* in 1941, a political party that has shaped political and social life in Pakistan. His books have been translated and distributed throughout the world, including *Towards an Understanding of Islam*. Dr. Ali Shariati (1933-1977) of Iran was instrumental in fomenting the Iranian revolution. He has written extensively on Jihad and Martyrization including his pamphlet *Shahadat*. Lastly, Hasan al-Turabi of Sudan (1932-), is an important person not only for the intellectual thought he has provided on radical Islam, but also on his creation of an Islamic state after a 1989 coup in Sudan, his organization and coordination of numerous radical Islamic groups, and his alliance with Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, which will be discussed in the following section.

These radicals, building on the ideas of Taymiyya and Wahhab, have called for a return of Islam to its pristine state at the time of the Prophet and his companions: stressing the oneness of God, and teaching from the Qur'an and the Sunna. They, therefore, often identify themselves as *Salafiyya*, referring to the pious ancestors and the Prophet. Unlike their predecessors, these thinkers—although highly educated—have not had formal theological training and are not members of the *ulama*. Hasan al Banna studied at Cairo's Dar al-Ulum, a school designed to train teachers in “modern” (meaning western) thinking.<sup>43</sup> Mawdudi was a journalist.<sup>44</sup> Sayyid Qutb also studied at Dar al-

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<sup>42</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 110

<sup>43</sup> John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 126-127

<sup>44</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 50

Ulum in addition to studying in the United States.<sup>45</sup> Shariati received his doctorate in Sociology at the Sorbonne in Paris.<sup>46</sup> And Hasan al-Turabi received his masters in law at the University of London and his PhD at the Sorbonne.<sup>47</sup> Despite (or perhaps because of) their western educations, these scholars have been instrumental in interpreting Islam in a modern context. Most of them have advocated for a resurgence of violent jihad to protect and purify Islam both from corrupt Muslims within the faith and from external threats. Most of the current jihad movements throughout the world can be traced back to the writings and inspiration of these modern thinkers including Islamic violence in Palestine/Israel, Lebanon, Egypt, Pakistan, Kashmir, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia.

#### *Mystical dimensions of jihad*

The legal use of jihad is not the only means by which to mobilize Muslims to spread and defend the faith. In addition, there are mystical forms of jihad that exist outside the juridical world and are governed by different types of authority in Islam. Whereas, historically, the legal use of jihad has been debated and used primarily by the members of the Ulama, the mystical forms of jihad are pronounced by individuals recognized by their constituents as possessing a unique link with the divine. This mystical link between charismatic individuals and God has two manifestations: as the *Mahdi*, a messianic-type figure who is believed to appear before the end of time and bring justice to the world, often by force; and as the *baraka*, the blessing of God and the Prophet on individuals manifested in success on the battlefield.

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<sup>45</sup> Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, pg. 127

<sup>46</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 178

Both Sunnis and Shias believe in the Mahdi. In Sunni Islam, the Mahdi is an individual who will rise up, often in the midst of calamity and great injustice, and restore order to society in preparation for the end of time.<sup>48</sup> The Mahdi could be any Muslim and appear anywhere and at any time.<sup>49</sup> In Twelver Shia Islam, the Mahdi is understood to be the hidden Imam who will return to restore justice and rule over the Muslim community as its one rightly guided leader. In this case, the Mahdi is believed to be the same Imam that went into hiding in 874 CE. As with the Sunni understanding of the Mahdi, this figure will “vindicate his loyal followers, restore the community to its rightful place, and usher in a perfect Islamic society in which truth and justice will prevail.”<sup>50</sup>

The concept of the Mahdi is important for the topic of jihad because, first, the Mahdi is believed to come at times of particular hardship and injustice to Muslim communities. Therefore, military, economic, social, and political instability are the conditions under which Muslims may long for and expect the coming of the Mahdi. Second, with this expectation in mind, individuals claiming to be the Mahdi can harness these emotions to mobilize Muslims into helping to overthrow oppression, including by force. Historical examples of individuals claiming to be the Mahdi have risen up in precisely such circumstances and mobilized Muslims to attack their oppressors. These examples will be highlighted below.

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<sup>47</sup> Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*, (New York: Random House, 1999), pg. 32

<sup>48</sup> It is important to note that the Mahdi is different from Jesus Christ in two important ways. First, the Mahdi is believed to be the one who will prepare the way for the end of time and the final judgment of humanity; in Christianity, Jesus is believed to be the one who brings the end of time and is the judge. Second, the Mahdi is an individual believed to be blessed by God; in Christianity, the Christ is God incarnate. Therefore the Mahdi is not a Messiah in the way that Christianity and Judaism understand the one who will bring the end of time.

<sup>49</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 41-43

<sup>50</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg 47

The second mystical form of jihad is the *baraka*, or the blessing of God and the Prophet in earthly success, including success on the battlefield. Unlike the Mahdi—which usually claims to be the expected one, mobilizes forces, and then goes out into battle—this form of mystical jihad is recognized *post facto* in a battle.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, if a ruler or individual in Islam mobilizes followers, goes into battle and is successful, his or her success, especially if against great odds, can be a sign of God’s blessing on the individual and on their decision to use force. The concept of God’s *baraka* in battle is often linked to the Prophet’s return from Medina to Mecca where he and his followers, despite being outnumbered, defeated the Meccan army and returned to the city to triumphantly proclaim God’s message. In addition, the *baraka* is cited as an explanation for the rapid spread of Islam throughout the Gulf region and beyond in the first years of the faith.<sup>52</sup> Conversely, for those who fail in battle, this can be an example of God’s disfavor with the leader and his decision to use force.

#### *Holy warriors in Islam and the doctrine of martyrization*

Within both the legal and mystical doctrines of Islam is the concept of holy warriors—individuals sanctioned by leaders or by God with the express purpose of fighting in battle. There are two terms associated with holy warriors in Islam: the *ghazi* and the *mujahidin*. Ghazi literally means “warrior for the faith.” Originally a word used to describe mercenaries that fought on the borders between the *dar al Islam* and neighboring empires, ghazis were organized by the Caliph al-Nasir into a Muslim fraternity in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, at which time the term took on special meaning as a holy

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<sup>51</sup> Johnson, pg. 149-151

<sup>52</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 35, 40

warrior.<sup>53</sup> Ghazis were employed by the Ottoman Empire to expand the borders of the *dar al Islam*, battles that were called *ghaza*. In this use, therefore, a ghaza conforms to the classical understanding of offensive jihad. This term has largely died out with the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

The second term for an Islamic holy warrior, the one in common usage today, is the Mujahid (singular, plural Mujahidin). Mujahid comes from the same root as *mujaddid*, one who renews the faith, and *mujtahid*, one who discerns (*ijtihad*) shari'a law based on his interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna.<sup>54</sup> Therefore a mujahid is one who struggles in the faith, expressly by force. Unlike Ghazi, the term Mujahid corresponds more with defensive jihad. It emerged after the fractioning of leadership within Sunni Islam and the disappearance of the Imam in Shia Islam.<sup>55</sup> The term came into common usage first in India, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads of resistance against British occupation.<sup>56</sup> In modern times, Muslim fighters from around the world used the term to describe participants in the Soviet-Afghan War. The term was also used in connection with the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>57</sup> Today, this is the term used to describe the now defunct Taliban, members of al-Qaeda, and various other Muslim fighters waging war in the name of Islam. It is this term, therefore, that is important for the following discussion on jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and jihad today.

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<sup>53</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume IV, edited by B. Lewis and J Schacht, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1965), pp. 1043-1045

<sup>54</sup> *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: Glossary and Index of Technical Terms*, compiled by J. van Lent and H. U. Qureshi, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1995), pp. 224-225

<sup>55</sup> Johnson, pp. 64-65

<sup>56</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume VII, edited by C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Dumzel, W.B Heinrichs, and Ch. Pellat, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1965), pp. 290-292

<sup>57</sup> John Kelsay, *Islam and War: The Gulf War and Beyond* (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1993), pp. 48-52, 93-94

Both Ghazi and Mujahidin are believed to receive unique blessings from their death in battle to defend or spread Islam; this is the doctrine of martyrs for the faith or *shuhada*, which literally means witnesses. The doctrine stems from passages in the Qur'an, such as Sura 2: 154: "Say not of those who die in the path of God that they are dead. Nay rather they live."<sup>58</sup> The doctrine is also strongly informed by Hadith of the Prophet and the Sunna of the early Muslim community.<sup>59</sup> Martyrization is strong in both Sunni and Shia Islam. Sunni Islam looks to the example of the early Muslim community, particularly the battle-deaths that occurred in the return from Medina to Mecca, and the early wars of expansion in the first years of the faith.<sup>60</sup> Shias look to the history of their Imams, all of whom died violently except for the twelfth Imam, who has gone into hiding and is not dead. In particular the death of Husayn in the Battle of Karbala—son of Ali, grandson of the Prophet, and entitled *sayyid al-shuhada*, prince of martyrs—is exemplified in Shia Islam.<sup>61</sup> It is generally believed throughout Islam that those who die in defense of the faith will be free of sin and thus pardoned from judgment in the final days, that they will go straight to paradise where they will occupy a special place, and even that they are allowed to return to earth to fight on behalf of the faith.<sup>62</sup> There are also popular beliefs that young men who die in battle will be greeted by 70 virgins and 70 wives upon their arrival in Paradise.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume 3, edited by John L. Esposito, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Also referenced are Suras 3:169-171; 9:20-22; 47:4; 61:11; 3:157-158, pg. 55

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

<sup>60</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume 3, pg. 57

<sup>61</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume 3, pg. 56

<sup>62</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume 3, pp. 58-59

<sup>63</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pg. 78

The doctrine of martyrization in Islam has been identified as a key component for individuals willing to fight as *mujahidin* and to die for the faith today. In particular, Palestinian suicide bombers and those that carried out the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks are believed to be motivated by the doctrine of martyrization. This type of death corresponds with the concept of “eternal salvation” outlined in chapter one. However, it is important to note—while no doubt critical for understanding Islamic holy war, holy warriors, and belligerence in defense of the faith—first, that the violent means of Bin Laden, Al Qaeda and other Islamic terrorists today are not exclusively directed towards attaining eternal salvation. In other words, these groups have earthly goals for which they are working and are equally important for explaining religious mobilization and the use of force. These earthly goals will be discussed in the next section.

Second, it is important to note that the doctrine of martyrization in Islam is debated. There are interpretations of the doctrine that call for “spiritual” martyrization; it argues that Muslims who keep the tenets of the faith and strive in the greater jihad are the true martyrs, not those that die in battle. It is also argued that the true martyrs are those who suffer in daily physical struggles, such as starvation, poverty, and even women who die while giving birth.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, while martyrization is a powerful doctrine in Islam, it is not universally supported as death on the battlefield in defense of the faith. Third, it is also important to keep in mind that Islam is not the only religion that contains a doctrine of martyrization; this doctrine is present in all of the world’s major religious traditions, including Buddhism and Hinduism.

Finally, it is important to state that suicide bombing and a glorious death on the battlefield are not exclusive to religion. Numerous secular groups have used suicide

bombing as a form of terrorism, including anarchists at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and current-day Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, the 42 million soldiers who died in World War I on behalf of their nation were honored as heroes for their sacrifice. The same can be said of battle-deaths in most all nations' wars. Therefore, a glorious death in battle—particularly for a just cause—is a powerful motivation for war both within and outside the realm of religion.

### *Historical examples of jihad and mujahidin*

Historical examples of jihad can be divided into three major waves: the initial spread of Islam through offensive jihad in the years immediately following the Prophet's death; a surge of defensive jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and the current onslaught of jihads throughout the Muslim world, including Bin Laden's international declaration of jihad against the US.

As previously mentioned, there are few historical examples of offensive jihad as described in classical Islamic jurisprudence. The most common examples are those of the Prophet and his companions including, particularly, the community's victorious return to Mecca in 630 CE. This success was followed by 23 years of rapid expansion immediately following the death of the Prophet, from 632 to 655 CE, including the defeat of Byzantine and Sasanian forces throughout the region, the conquest of Jerusalem, Cyprus, Armenia, Sicily, and forces in Egypt both by land and sea.<sup>66</sup> After this initial phase of rapid expansion, the Muslim community fell into disagreement over leadership,

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<sup>64</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Volume 3, pp. 57-58

<sup>65</sup> Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 100-101

<sup>66</sup> For more details on the initial phase of Muslim expansion, see Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 200-216



eventually leading to the fractioning of the *ummah*, which made the condition of offensive jihad under one ruler impossible.

In addition to this initial surge of offensive jihad in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, there are a few post-classical examples of offensive jihad that conform, in part, to the legal code. The frontier wars of the Turcoman principalities in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the Ottoman Empire, beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, were undertaken as holy wars to expand the borders of the *dar al Islam*. In particular, the leaders of the Ottoman Empire claimed to be engaging in holy wars of expansion under obligation to fulfill the command to spread the faith. In doing so, the rulers argued that they were the sole true leaders of the *ummah* for fulfilling this obligation. These raids, however, were not performed once a year but rather on a continual basis, a digression from the classical norm.<sup>67</sup> The Ottomans used the term *ghaza* instead of jihad, deriving the term from the holy warriors that carried out the battles, *ghazi*.<sup>68</sup> This example of offensive jihad is, by and large, an outlier to general trends in the use of the doctrine, and therefore, will not be analyzed in the following section.

The second major wave of jihad began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and peaked around the 1880s. This era of jihad was defensive and mystical, often involving a leader who declared himself to be the *Mahdi*. Examples include ‘Abd al-Rahman (1812) and Sayyid Ahmad of Barelewi (1831) in India; Bu Ma’zah in Algeria (1839); Muhammad Ahmad in Sudan (1881); Ahmad Urabi in Egypt (1882); and Muhammad ibn Abd Allah in Somalia (late 1800s).<sup>69</sup> In addition, jihad movements erupted in Indonesia in 1825-1830 and again in Ache from 1873-1904; in Central Asia in the second half the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Johnson, pp. 151-155

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, pg. 152

century; in present day Iran (1826-1828, 1891); and in Morocco (1912).<sup>70</sup> See Table 3.1 for a list of 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads. This wave of jihads will be analyzed in the next section.

It is also important to note that there have been other incidences of defensive jihad throughout history. First, in general, the command for all Muslims to fight in defense of the faith as a spontaneous reaction to immediate threat has undoubtedly occurred. However, concrete examples of spontaneous responses to attacks are not well chronicled, making the analysis of these events difficult. Second, there are, however, historical examples of defensive jihad undertaken by the command of a leader; this is a new interpretation of jihad, combining both offensive norms—the leader’s call to fight—and defensive norms to fight in defense of land and faith, what this chapter calls *organized defensive jihad*. Beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, Nur al-Din and Salah ed-Din called for jihad to take back land captured by Christian Crusader forces. Nur al-Din succeeded in recapturing Damascus in 1148, during the Second Crusade. Salah ed-Din reclaimed Jerusalem in 1187 and portions of Palestine.<sup>71</sup> In both of these cases, leaders called for jihad to take back what was viewed as the *dar al Islam*. These cases will not be considered in this chapter but are included in the chapter on Jerusalem and the battle for sacred space.

The third wave of jihads began in 1979 and continues to the present. This wave was initiated by the Iranian Revolution in January 1979, followed by the June seizure of the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia by Juhayman ibn-Muhammad ibn-Sayf al-Utaibi, who claimed to be the Mahdi. This turbulent events were followed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December of 1979, the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the intensification of

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<sup>69</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 42-103

<sup>70</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 39-40; and Johnson, pp. 158-159

the Lebanese civil war in the 1980s, the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994), a coup in Sudan and the instillation of Islamic law (1989), and then a string violent conflicts in the 1990s involving Islam, chronicled on Table 3.2, including Osama Bin Laden's declaration of jihad against the US in 1996 and Al Qaeda's attack on the US in 2001. This third wave will also be analyzed in the following section.

In sum: There is not one set doctrine of jihad; rather there are legal and mystical forms of jihad, both of which are subject to interpretation. Jihad, as a legal doctrine, includes an offensive mode—annual raids on the *dar al harb* led by the ummah's one Imam to expand the *dar al Islam*—and a defensive mode—the spontaneous uprising of all Muslims to defend land, faith and community. In addition to these legal forms, there are mystical dimensions of jihad including the *Mahdi*—the “expected one” who will end chaos and establish justice, often by force—and the *baraka*—the blessing of God and the Prophet in battlefield success. Historical examples of offensive jihad are confined mostly to the initial expansion of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. A variation of defensive jihad, *organized defensive jihad*, called by a ruler, occurred in reaction to the Crusades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. And examples of the mahdi calling for jihad are most prevalent during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Jihad Today**

This section outlines two major waves of jihad: the outbreak of jihads in several regions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the current surge of jihad in various parts of the world, beginning in 1979. Drawing on the causal argument from chapter two, this section will ask the following questions concerning these episodes of jihad: Is there an identifiable

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<sup>71</sup> Johnson, pp. 148-151

threat or the perception of a threat to which the violent parties are responding? What are the resources available to the involved groups? And what is the relationship between political and religious leaders?

### *1. Jihads of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

Beginning around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim leaders from a variety of regions called for jihad and mobilized local Muslims for holy war; these violent conflicts are listed on Table 3.1. Why was jihad such a common occurrence across such a wide span of regions and cultures? Why at this time and not others? In order to answer these questions, this section will consider the threats to which these groups were responding, their goals, their leaders, their interpretation of beliefs and scripture, and the connection between religious and political elites.

First and foremost, this wave of jihads, with few exceptions, was in reaction to the rising presence of colonial forces throughout the Muslim world. Historian Rudolph Peters notes: “In the initial stages of European expansion into the Islamic world, Moslems [sic] in many places forcefully resisted the new situation and appealed to the doctrine of jihad in order to mobilize the population, to justify the struggle and to define the enemy.”<sup>72</sup> Colonizing forces included the British in South Asia, Egypt, Palestine, sub-Saharan Africa, and current day Malaysia; the French in North Africa and the Levant; the Dutch in Indonesia; the Russians in Central Asia and current day Iran; and the Italians in Somalia and Ethiopia. Local Muslim leaders called for jihad against their colonizers in all of these regions, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

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<sup>72</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 2

### 3.1, Jihads of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Location	Date	Against	Leader	Mahdi
Nigeria	1804-1810	Hausa Kingdoms	Usman dan Fodio	No
Iran (Persia)	1804-1813	Russia	Abbas Mirza	No
India	1810	British	'Abd al-Rahman	Yes
India	1818-1898	Sikhs, British	Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilwi	Yes
India	1820s-1883	British	Titu Mir	No
Indonesia	1821-1838	Dutch	Iman Tjanku Bonjol	No
Indonesia	1825-1830	Dutch	Dipo Negaro	No
Iran	1826-1828	Russia	Fateh Ali Shah/ Ulama	No
Algeria	1832-1843	French	'Abd al-Qadir	No
Algeria	1843-1847	French	Bu- 'Ma'zah	Yes
Indonesia (Ache)	1873-1904	Dutch	Sultan Ibrahim Mansur	No
Sudan	1881-1885	Egyptians	Muhammad Ahmad	Yes
Egypt	1882	British	Ahmad 'Urabi	No
Iran	1891	British/Shaw	Ali Shiraz	No
Sudan	1898	Egyptians/British	'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad al-Ta'ayishi	No
Somalia	1899-1920	British/Italian	Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah	Yes
Libya	1911-1915	Italians	Al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif	No
Morocco	1912	French	El-Hiba	No
Libya	1923-1931	Italians	'Umar al-Mukhtar	No

The goals of these jihadist movements were two fold. First, these leaders and their constituents called for defensive jihad to protect land, faith and community from occupying colonial forces. The advance of non-Muslims was understood as the *dar al harb* encroaching on the *dar al Islam* and, therefore, required action to repel the invasion. For example, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian Muslim scholar Shah 'Ad al-'Aziz declared all land

under British occupation in India to be part of the *dar al harb*. His declaration inspired Sayyid Ahmad of Barelewi to call for a jihad against the British.<sup>73</sup> Second, these movements typically understood their current demise to be the result of corrupt Muslim rulers, particularly their failure to implement Shari'a law, as the reason for their weakness. They further argued that the success of European powers in conquering the *dar al Islam* was punishment from God for straying from the true path of Islam.<sup>74</sup> Therefore a second goal of these movements was to establish Islamic leadership based on the example of the Prophet and his companions and reestablish Shari'a as the law of the *dar al Islam*. These movements often referred to themselves as *salafiyya*, connecting their uprisings to the example laid out by the Prophet and his companions.

The leaders of these jihad movements largely came from outside the Ulama. In particular, this era witnessed a rash of Muslims leaders claiming to be the Mahdi, the “expected one” destined to restore justice and order before the end of time. Mahdist movements include ‘Abd al-Rahman (1810) and Ahmad Shahid of Barelewi (1831) in India; Bu Ma’zah in Algeria (1839); Muhammad Ahmad in Sudan (1881); Ahmad Urabi in Egypt (1882); and Muhammad ibn Abd Allah in Somalia (1899).<sup>75</sup> Historian Rudolph Peters notes that rash of Mahdis was probably due to two factors. First, the conditions for the coming of the Mahdi—corrupt and cruel leaders, the oppression of the masses, and difficult socio-economic conditions—were pervasive in most of these regions. Egypt, Sudan and Libya all had undergone particularly difficult economic conditions and its

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<sup>73</sup> Paul Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pg. 51; Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 123

<sup>74</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pp. 123-124

<sup>75</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 42-103

Arab citizens were subject to heavy taxation from their occupiers.<sup>76</sup> Such conditions even led to famine in Sudan.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the masses were most likely in desperate search for an end to injustice and divine intervention. Second, Peters also notes that the approaching Muslim Millennium, in 1882 (h. 1300), may also have increased popular expectations for the coming of the Mahdi and inspired the surge of self-proclaimed restorers of justice.<sup>78</sup> Jihadist leaders also emerged who did not declare themselves to be the Mahdi. This includes Titu Mir of India (1820s-1883); the uprisings against the Dutch in current day Indonesia; and the Persian uprisings against the Russians and the British, to name a few. See Table 3.1.

Moreover, by and large, the Ulama in various countries did not support the jihadist movements but, rather, tried to work for reform within their new social and political environments. The Ulama achieved this process by writing and reasoning—the jihad of the pen—rather than through force. As previously mentioned, scholars such as Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), and Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938) of South Asia; and Taha Hysayn (1889-1973) in Egypt all offered ways in which the Muslim world's exposure to the West could actually benefit the faith instead of threaten it.<sup>79</sup> In addition, members of the Ulama in 19<sup>th</sup> century Sudan, Egypt and India often sided with their colonial powers, condemning jihadist uprisings as unlawful.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, generally speaking, the Ulama sought to work within the new political structure of colonialism rather than to declare war against it.

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<sup>76</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 63-89

<sup>77</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 64

<sup>78</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 65. The Muslim's use a lunar calendar and thus its years are shorter than a solar year.

<sup>79</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 77

<sup>80</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 50-52, 67

Those leaders that did take up arms against the encroaching colonial presence used several religious doctrines and resources as a means of mobilization. First and foremost, they used the doctrine of jihad. However, their interpretations of jihad did not conform to the legal doctrine. Their interpretations of jihad were not offensive, which required the presence of the imam to declare raids on an annual basis. Nor were their interpretations purely defensive jihad either, which was supposed to be a spontaneous reaction to imminent threat. Moreover, these uprisings were directed against the Muslim authority, which is not the classical understanding of defensive jihad, although it has its historical precedents, most notably the writings ibn Taymiyya and ibn al-Wahhab. This form of jihad therefore—not unlike the holy wars of Nur al-Din and Salah ed-Din—was *organized defensive jihad*.

Another key religious resource employed in this era, as mentioned above, was the belief in the Mahdi. Mahdist uprisings sparked some of the more successful campaigns in this era, including a jihad in Sudan, which succeeded in establishing an independent state from 1885-1899 and took British and Italian forces twenty years to put down.<sup>81</sup> In addition to the belief in the Mahdi, many of these leaders also called for *hijra*—the retreat of Muslims from the *dar al harb* with the goal of creating a nearby *dar al Islam*. For example, Sayyid Ahmad of Barelewi moved into the Northwester Frontiers of the Indian Subcontinent and declared war against the Sikhs with the goal of creating a *dar al Islam* free from British and corrupted Muslim influences.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, ‘Abd al-Qadir carved out a sphere of influence in the Algerian hinterlands with the intent of maintaining the *dar al*

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<sup>81</sup> Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 120; Peters, pp. 39-40, 44

<sup>82</sup> Hardy, pp. 50-54; Esposito, *Islam*, pg. 123



*Islam* in those areas.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the hajj—the pilgrimage to Mecca—was an important point of contact for these various movements. The hajj draws Muslims from all across the *ummah*, offering an opportunity for Muslims from around the globe to share ideas and information about religious, social and political happenings.<sup>84</sup> For example, it is believed that Sayyid Ahmad of Barelewi drew inspiration for his hijra and jihad from his 1821 hajj to Mecca.<sup>85</sup>

Despite the fact that most jihad leaders came from outside of the Muslim leadership, these movements still consulted the Ulama regarding the legality of their uprising and asked for fatwas. For example, the Algerian ‘Abde al-Qadir consulted scholars both within Algeria and abroad concerning his conduct of jihad against the French. In 1837, he wrote to the Moroccan al-Tusli to ask for a fatwa on the use of force against local tribes that refused to pay taxes to support the war effort.<sup>86</sup> He also consulted several scholars on whether or not Muslims under French rule in Algeria were required to emigrate, receiving fatwas from Egyptian and Turkish members of the Ulama.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, Muhammad Ali of the Sudan wrote to various Muslim leaders throughout the region asking them to accept his authority as the Mahdi.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, despite jihad leaders coming largely from outside the trained clerisy, these movements still consulted the Ulama and other Muslim leaders for legal advice and recognition.

Overall, despite their success in mobilizing Muslims against their occupiers, these jihad movements lacked critical material resources to prosper their causes. The greatest

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<sup>83</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 54

<sup>84</sup> Hardy, pg. 52-53

<sup>85</sup> Hardy, pg. 51

<sup>86</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 56

<sup>87</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pp. 57-58

<sup>88</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 69

material resources these movements had were the organizations they formed and the men they mobilized. The Egyptian Ahmad ‘Urabi raised 25,000 troops to challenge the British in 1882.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, a few campaigns did enjoy a period of success in fending off foreign forces. For example, Sayyid Ahmad of Barelewi’s organization, the Path of Muhammad, existed for nearly a century before the British were finally able to squash its last remnants in the Northwestern Frontier in India.<sup>90</sup> As previously mentioned, the jihad in Sudan resulted in the formation of an independent state from 1885-1899. Likewise, the Libyan jihad defeated Italian forces in 1915. The final destruction of the Somali jihad in 1920 required the combined efforts of the Italians and the British. In addition to organizations and manpower, some movements attempted to accrue financial assets from other regions, including Sayyid Ahmad’s jihad in India and ‘Urabi’s jihad in Egypt.<sup>91</sup> However, overall, the greatest material resources that these movements had were manpower and the organizations these groups formed, not the material resources they attempted to solicit.

It is also worth noting that despite the emergence of so many jihad movements during this time and that they were likely conscious of one another—either through contact from the hajj or through correspondence and solicitations for money and legal advice—these movements could not join forces to create a trans-regional force against their occupiers. Even in neighboring countries, such as Morocco and Algeria, jihad movements did not join forces against common enemies. This is most likely due to two factors. First, these movements did not have access to rapid sources of communication that could have facilitated cooperation; they had to rely on correspondence by post and meetings at Mecca. This undoubtedly slowed the process of coordinating efforts of

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<sup>89</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 79

<sup>90</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 49

leaders and their jihads across the *ummah*. Second, these movements were also largely personality driven and organized around a charismatic figure. This likely hindered cooperation in regions that experienced multiple uprisings, such as India, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco. In the last case, the Moroccan Sultan ‘Abd al-Rahman handed over the Algerian jihadist ‘Abd al-Qadir—who was seeking refuge in Morocco—to the French in 1846.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, despite jihadist uprisings across the *ummah* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these movements did not join forces.

Likewise, it is equally important to note that Muslim religious and political elites did not join forces with the jihad movements, hindering these movements’ success. As previously mentioned, most of these movements were equally critical of their European colonial occupiers as they were of their Muslim religious and political elites. The jihadists’ goals were not only to expel colonial powers but also to depose Muslim leaders believed to be corrupt. Therefore the jihadists, the Ulama and Muslim political and intellectual elites were not united against the common threat of colonial occupation. This lack of unity most likely affected the success of these movements.

Virtually all of the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihadist uprisings across the *ummah* ended with colonial military power eliminating the movements’ leaders and most of their constituents. Although this took time—particularly in India, the Sudan, Somalia, and Libya—the end of these jihads occurred through force. However, this method of suppression was not exclusive to religious uprisings but to most all uprisings against colonial power in general. Therefore, the side with the greater resources prevailed.

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<sup>91</sup> Hardy, pg. 54; and Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 81, respectively

<sup>92</sup> Peters, *Islam and Colonialism*, pg. 60

## 2. *Jihads today*

In November 1979, a Saudi named al-Utaibi—claiming to be the Mahdi—organized a group of around 1,300 to 1,500 mujahidin from several countries and stormed the Grand Mosque, holding around 6,000 pilgrims on *hajj* hostage. He and his followers demanded the resignation of the Saudi royal family, which they perceived as corrupt and failing to uphold the tenets of Islam. The Saudi military, aided by French Special Forces, engaged in a two-week long siege of the mosque before finally squashing the uprising and executing the leaders of the movement.<sup>93</sup> This event was the beginning in what has become a surge of jihadist movements around the globe. Muslim leaders from a variety of regions have called for jihad in defense of the *dar al Islam*; these jihads are listed in Table 3.2. Why has jihad become such a common occurrence across such a wide span of regions and cultures? Why now? In order to answer these questions, this section will consider recent historical events that have led up to this current outbreak of jihads, the threats to which these groups are responding, their goals, their leaders, their use of religious and other resources, and the connection between religious and political elites.

In order to understand this current proliferation of jihads from around the world, it is important to outline three historical events that help shape religious, social and political dynamics within the Muslim world in general, and the Arab world in particular. First, the 1967 Six-Day War is important for understanding this current wave of jihads. The stunning victory of Israel in a three-front war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria humiliated these states and their governments. All three of these countries had attempted to modernize their societies by embracing secular governments and nationalism based on a

### 3.2, Major Jihads of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

Location	Group	Date	Against	Leader(s)	Constituents
Saudi Arabia	Group not named	Nov., 1979	Saudi regime	al-Utaubi	Saudi, Egyptian, Kuwaiti, Sudanese, Iraqi, Yemeni
Afghanistan	Mujahidin (7 factions)	1979-1989	Soviet Union	Massoud, Azzam, Bin Laden, Zawahiri, Hekmatiyar	Afghani, Pakistani, Saudi, Yemeni, Algerian
Iran	State	1980-1988	Iraq	Iranian Government	Iranians
Iran	None	1989-2000	Salman Rushdie	Ayatollah Khomeini	Global
Trans-national	International Islamic Front for Jihad against the US and Israel	1996, 1998-	US, Israel	Bin Laden, Zawahiri	Global
Egypt	Islamic Jihad	~1978—	Egyptian Government	al-Zamour	Egyptian
Egypt	Gamaat al-Islamiyya	~1982—	Egyptian Gov., US	Rahman	Egyptian
Lebanon	Hizballah	1982—	Israel	Nasrallah, Fadlallah	Shia Lebanese
Gaza/West Bank	Islamic Jihad	1980s—	Israel	Shiqaqi, 'Awda	Palestinian
Gaza/West Bank	Hamas	1987—	Israel	Yassin, Rantisi	Palestinian
Algeria	GIA	1990-1998	Algerian Gov., France	Zitouni	Algerian
Kashmir	Lashkar-e-Toiba	1993—	India/ US	Muntazir	Kashmiri, Pakistani, Arab
Kashmir	Jaish-e-Muhammad	2000—	India/ US	Massod Azhar	Kashmiri, Pakistani, Arabs
Uzbekistan	UMI	mid-1990s-	Uzbek Gov., communists	Namangani (d. Nov. 2001)	Uzbekistani, Tajikistani, Kyrgyzstani, Chechen, Pakistani
Chechnya	Chechen Rebels	1994—	Russia	Khattab (Saudi) (d. 2002)	Chechen, Arab
Philippines	Abu Sayyaf Group	1989—	Philippine Gov. Christians	Janjalini (d. 1998)	Filipino, possibly Arab
Philippines	Moro Islamic Liberation Front	1997—	Philippine Gov.	Hashim Salamat	Filipino, possibly Arab
Indonesia	Lashkar Jihad	2000—	Moluccan Christians	Thalib	Indonesian
Malaysia	Jemaah Islamiyya	Early 1990s	Secularism, US	Ba'aysir, Isamuddin	Malay, Filipino, Indonesian

<sup>93</sup> Bodansky, pp. 6-8

pan-Arab identity.<sup>94</sup> The Six-Day War demonstrated that both of these tools of modernization had failed. Islamic revivalists cast the humiliating defeat in religious terms; it was a sign that these nations' secular leaders had turned from the path of God and only the overthrow of these regimes and the return to Islam could save them.<sup>95</sup> This catastrophic event, therefore, became the cornerstone for revivalist Islam, the call to return Islam to central positions within society and government.

It is also important to note that in the Six-Day War, Israel—in addition to seizing the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula—successfully captured and held the Old City of Jerusalem, which hosts the compound of the *Haram al-Sharif*/Temple Mount (here forward the Compound). The Compound, which is sacred to both Jews and Muslims, contains the Dome of the Rock Shrine and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third most holy site in Islam. The capture of these sites was both humiliating and threatening to Muslims across the *ummah*, prompting the call by some to rise up in defense of these sites.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, the 1967 Six-Day war also placed roughly three million Palestinians under Israeli military occupation. The conditions of the occupation and the fate of the Palestinians, the overwhelming majority of whom are Muslim, have become an

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<sup>94</sup> Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, pp. 70-73, 76; Meir Hatima, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement*, (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2002) pg. 17

<sup>95</sup> It is important to acknowledge that Israel's success in the Six-Day War also inspired Jewish radicalism, including Jewish terrorism, for the opposite reasons. Fueled by Israel's stunning victory, radical settler movements, like *Gush Emunim*, moved into the newly acquired territories in the West Bank, citing religious obligation to hold the land as justification, see Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World*, (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1992), Chapter Three: "Gush Emunim and a Fundamentalism of the Land," pp. 89-128.

<sup>96</sup> Examples of current-day groups that call for violently defending Jerusalem include the Lebanese Hizbollah, Egyptian groups, and the Palestinian Hamas, to name a few. For the Lebanese Hizbollah, see Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 49-51; for Egyptian terrorist movements, see Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, pg. 133; for Hamas, see the Hamas Covenant (Charter), Article Fifteen, "The Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine is an Individual Duty," [www.mideastweb.org/hamas.htm](http://www.mideastweb.org/hamas.htm), downloaded on 7/10/02.

emotional topic for the worldwide Muslim community and, as will be described, one of Bin Laden's main grievances.

The second key historical event to precipitate the current rise of global jihad movements was the 1973 "Yom Kippur/Ramadan" War and the oil embargo to the West. The 1973 attack of Egypt and Syria against Israel—although ultimately a failure in defeating Israel and recapturing land from the 1967 War—still managed to surprise and inflict suffering on the Israeli military. It therefore was regarded as a success to many in the Muslim world, an example that the Arabs could fight back.<sup>97</sup> The 1973 OPEC oil embargo against the West, in retaliation to US military support to Israel, heightened that sense of empowerment. It demonstrated both to the Arabs and the Muslim world, as well as to the West, that peoples of the former European colonies had regained some of their strength and could also exert pressure on the powerful states in the West, particularly the US.

Western dependence on Middle Eastern oil and the newfound strength of oil states through OPEC also brought financial prosperity to Muslim nations in the Persian Gulf region. This boom in revenue has become an influential resource for the Gulf States. Saudi Arabia, in particular, has devoted portions of its wealth to international Islamic organizations primarily geared towards providing social services to Muslims around the globe. Along with financial aid, the Saudi government has exported its particular brand of Islam, *Wahabbism*, which is believed to be influencing violent Islamic movements throughout the Muslim world.

The third key historical event that helped to foment jihad movements was the January 1979 Iranian Revolution. Although primarily a Twelver Shia country, the success

of the radical Iranian clergy in leading a revolution that overthrew the corrupt, secular regime of the Shah resonated throughout the *ummah*. Like the 1973 war and the oil embargo, the revolution stood as a symbol of empowerment for Muslims everywhere, especially Muslims that felt under the thumb of western influence and domination. The revolution demonstrated that Muslims could shake off the powers of the West and find their own authenticity in politics and identity.<sup>98</sup>

The creation of the first modern-day Islamic government also has offered a template for others aspiring to create an Islamic state. Although the Twelver Shia state has components that are unique to this particular branch of Islam—most notably differences in understandings of religious and political leadership, as previously mentioned—it nevertheless has made tangible the concept of the Islamic state. In addition, Iran—emblazoned with religious zeal—has sought to export its own brand of Islamic revivalism abroad. This has included sending aid—money, military equipment and training—to Shii and Sunnis alike outside its borders.<sup>99</sup> Iran’s attempt to export its particular interpretation of Islam has been countered and possibly checked by Saudi Arabia’s efforts to spread its own interpretation of Islam abroad through schools, hospitals, and other social services.<sup>100</sup> This ideological spiraling has accelerated the spread of radical forms of Islam, which will be addressed further below.

These three events helped pave the way for a resurgence of jihadist movements. Key movements includes, first and foremost, the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) and the

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<sup>97</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, pg. 17

<sup>98</sup> Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, pg. 18

<sup>99</sup> Hilal Khashan asserts that these groups were united only by their hatred towards Israel. Hilal Khashan, “The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp. 5-24, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1997), pg. 15.

<sup>100</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Jihad*, pp. 6-7; Guila in Denoeux, “The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam,” pp. 56-81, *Middle East Policy*, Volume 9, No. 2, (June 2002), pg. 61.



international call for Muslims to fight and defend Afghan land and people; the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988); the intensification of the Lebanese Civil War in the 1980s and the creation of the Hizbollah; the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994) and the emergence of Hamas. These events were followed by a string of violent conflicts in the 1990s—declared by some to be holy wars—including conflicts in Kashmir, Egypt, Algeria, Chechnya, the Philippines, Central Asia, and Indonesia, chronicled on Table 3.2. This wave of jihad includes Osama Bin Laden’s declaration of jihad against the US in 1996 and Al Qaeda’s attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in 2001.

Like the wave of jihads in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this current wave is largely in response to perceived or actual domestic and international threats. These twin threats have called for a two-front war against domestic and international adversaries. First, many of these movements have formed in response to what they perceive to be impious and corrupt domestic leaders. Countries that have attempted to implement secular agendas—such as Egypt, Pakistan, India, Sudan, Syria, Palestine and Iran—all witnessed the emergence of radical Islamic groups who named secularism as a threat to the faith. For example, a key Egyptian activist, Abd al-Salaman Faraj, called for Muslims to violently defend the faith against the Sadat regime in his booklet *The Neglected Duty*, circulated in the late 1970s. In it, he argued that Jihad was the forgotten duty of Muslims and that force was not only necessary but also required for all Muslims to defend and purify the faith from the threat of secularism. This interpretation of the faith inspired the Islamic Jihad to assassinate Sadat in 1981; Faraj was executed in connection with the assassination.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> His name is also transliterated as al-Farag, see Juergensmeyer, pp. 81-82; Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, pg. 96-97

Likewise, jihadist groups have emerged in reaction to monarchies that they perceive to be religiously and politically corrupt. For example, the 1979 storming of the Grand Mosque was in reaction to the practices of the Saudi monarchy and the threats it posed as the custodians of Islam's most sacred sites. Osama Bin Laden also has been critical of the Saudi monarchy, which he perceives as failing to practice "true" Islam. In particular, he cites the monarchy's alliance with the United States as particularly threatening to the sanctity of the holy sites in Saudi Arabia.<sup>102</sup> He thus has called for the overthrow of the Saudi regime in order to ensure the safety of these sites and the reinstatement of "right" Islamic practices.

Second, many of these groups are reacting to international threats that they believe require force in order to defend the faith. Several jihadist groups have named the US in particular as an international threat for its support of regimes perceived as corrupt and threatening. This includes groups in Egypt such as Islamic Jihad and Gamaat Islamiyya, which have called for jihad against the US because of its financial, military and political support of the Egyptian government. Bin Laden also has criticized the US on this score. For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, Bin Laden called for a boycott of US goods as a means of protesting their presence on Saudi soil and their support of Israel:

American companies make millions in the Arab world with which they pay taxes to their government. The United States uses that money to send \$3 billion a year to Israel, which it uses to kill Palestinians...When we buy American goods we are accomplices in the murder of Palestinians.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, these jihadist movements are responding to both domestic and international threats.

Directly related to the threats these groups perceive are the goals for which they are striving. First, most groups are calling for the overthrow of secular regimes in the

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<sup>102</sup> Bodansky, pp. 115-120

Muslim world and the instillation of rightly guided leaders that will implement Shari'a law; this is, at its core, the definition of the *dar al Islam*. Moreover, many of these groups are calling for the recreation of the Caliphate, one rightly guided leader to rule over the entire *dar al Islam*. In addition, most of these groups are attempting to push the *dar al harb* out of lands and region that they understand to be inherently belonging to Islam. This includes, most importantly, removing foreign elements from Saudi Arabia and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina but also Jerusalem and other regions where Islam has had a history and Islamic sacred sites exist.

Bin Laden in particular has named several specific goals for which he is declaring jihad. First, as mentioned above, he is fighting for the removal of US troops from Saudi soil. He and his supporters believe that the presence of non-Muslim troops is polluting the two most sacred sites in Islam, the Kaba in Mecca and the Prophet's tomb in Medina. Second, Bin Laden is calling for the overthrow of the Saudi regime, which he believes is religiously corrupt. Third, Bin Laden has taken very seriously the plight of the Palestinians, calling for an end to Israeli occupation and oppression, in addition to the suffering of the Iraqi people under the decade-long UN sanctions, headed by the US. Fourth, in order to achieve these goals—remove US troops from Saudi soil, overthrow the Saudi regime, defeat Israel, and end sanctions in Iraq—the United States must be attacked, humiliated, made to suffer, and beaten out of the Muslim world. More broadly, he aims to remove threats that face the worldwide Muslim community: corrupt leadership, foreign troops on Muslim soil, and the oppression of Muslims.

Similar to the 19<sup>th</sup> century wave of jihadist movements described in the previous section, most of the leaders of these radical Islamic groups come from outside the Ulama.

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<sup>103</sup> Bodansky, pg. 30

Examples include Gulbaddin Hekmatiyar, the Afghani leader of the Hizb-i-Islami;<sup>104</sup> Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, the leader of Hamas;<sup>105</sup> Djamel Zitouni, the leader of the Algerian GIA;<sup>106</sup> Khattab, the leader of Chechen rebels;<sup>107</sup> and Bin Laden and Zawahiri, the leaders of Al Qaeda.<sup>108</sup> Almost all come from educated backgrounds but have not been trained in theology or Islamic jurisprudence. Also like the 19<sup>th</sup> century wave of jihadists, these movements have sought support from members of the Ulama. Trained scholars that have backed these movements include the late Sheikh Abdullah Azza m, former partner to Bin Laden during the Soviet-Afghani war; Skeikh Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of the Lebanese Hizbollah; Sheikh Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas; and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the spiritual leader of the Egyptian Gammat. These men all have had religious training and, by traditional standards, are religious scholars.<sup>109</sup>

These movements have interpreted several religious beliefs and doctrines to support their violent campaigns against domestic and international foes. Most all groups have referred to their actions as jihad and their constituents as either mujahidin or as jihadis. Similar to the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads, these groups have defined their actions in terms of defense, calling for all Muslims to rise up and fight “infidels” to protect the faith. For example, in his 1998 fatwa, Bin Laden states:

The Arabian Peninsula has never—since Allah made it flat, created its desert, and encircled it with seas—been stormed by any forces like the crusader armies spreading in it like locust, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations. All this is happening at a time in which nations are attacking Muslims like people fighting over a plate of food...All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on Allah, his messenger [the Prophet], and Muslims. And

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<sup>104</sup> Bodansky, pg. 16

<sup>105</sup> Juergensmeyer, pg. 72

<sup>106</sup> Kepel, pp. 308-310

<sup>107</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992), pg. 40

<sup>108</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pp. 3-18; Bodansky, pp. 2-5

<sup>109</sup> Kepel, pp. 318; for Fadlallah, see Ranstorp, pp. 25-30

ulema [sic] have throughout Islamic history unanimously agreed that the jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries.<sup>110</sup>

These calls for jihad do not comply with the classical doctrine of offensive jihad or to the spontaneous imperative to defend Muslim land and faith. As with the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads, these calls correspond more to the *organized defensive jihads* of Nur al-Din and Salah ed-Din, historical examples that Bin Laden in particular refers to in his fatwas.<sup>111</sup>

Similar to the 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads, these groups have also used fatwas to gain legitimacy for their violent actions. For example, initially Bin Laden consulted with religious clerics in Saudi Arabia to attain fatwas to condemn the presence of non-Muslim troops on its soil.<sup>112</sup> However, beginning in 1996, Bin Laden himself began to issue his own fatwas, calling for the killing of Americans and jihad against the United States.<sup>113</sup> Also like the previous wave, this round of jihads has benefited from the contacts made through the pilgrimage to Mecca, the *Hajj*. For example, Bin Laden's family hosted high-profile pilgrims in their Meccan home during his youth, including Afghan leaders. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Bin Laden used these contacts to meet with key members in the Afghan resistance and eventually establish organizations geared at recruiting and training mujihidin for the Afghan cause.<sup>114</sup>

Another key religious resource used by most of these groups is the doctrine of martyrization, or *shuhadah*. This doctrine has been particularly visible in the Palestinian suicide bombings against Israel, a key component of the second uprising, the "al-Aqsa

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<sup>110</sup> Osama Bin Laden, "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," *World Islamic Front Statement*, February 23, 1998, taken from the Federation of American Scientists' website, <http://www.fas.org>, downloaded on 6/27/2002.

<sup>111</sup> Bodansky, pg. 185

<sup>112</sup> Kepel, pg. 316. The Saudis succeeded in gaining fatwas from high-ranking members of the Ulama in Saudi Arabia allowing for the presence of US troops. See Bodansky, pg. 30

<sup>113</sup> Kepel, pg. 317; and Bergen, pg. 30

<sup>114</sup> Bergen, pp. 50-51; Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 10

Intifada,” which began in September 2000. Martyrization also undoubtedly played a role in motivating the 19 hijackers on September 11<sup>th</sup>. It is commonly cited that groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad profess that those who give their lives in the jihad against Israel will die a martyr’s death; they will go straight to heaven where they will be greeted by virgins and a host of celestial delights. It is important to reiterate, however, that martyrization—while now commonly associated with Islamic terrorist groups—also has secular counterparts including nationalist ideologies, Marxism, and Anarchism, as previously mentioned. It is also important to restate that these movements have earthly goals for which they are working such as the end of Israeli occupation, the creating of Islamic governments, and the withdrawal of US troops from Saudi soil, as previously mentioned. Therefore, these groups are motivated both by earthly and eternal salvation.

Unlike the surge of organized defensive jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this wave has only had one leader claiming to be the Mahdi, al-Utaubi, who stormed the Grand Mosque in 1979. It is worth noting that despite the success of many of these leaders—both locally and globally—and despite the fact that they are claiming to bring justice back to the world by purging it of its evil elements, none of these leaders has claimed to be the Mahdi. Not even Bin Laden, with his international notoriety as the “Man Who Declared War on America” has assumed this title.<sup>115</sup> This suggests that this current wave of Jihad is less mystical in nature than its 19<sup>th</sup> century counterpart.

However, the *baraka* of God and the Prophets has played a critical role in validating the current wave of jihads, particularly for Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Bin Laden’s battlefield successes in Afghanistan, particularly the 1986 battle of Jalalabad,

earned him the reputation as courageous and blessed by God.<sup>116</sup> A mujahidin that served under Bin Laden is quoted as saying, “He not only gave his money, but he also gave himself. He came down from his palace to live with the Afghan peasants and the Arab fighters. He cooked with them, ate with them, dug trenches with them. That was bin Laden’s way.”<sup>117</sup> Bin Laden’s reputation as an individual not afraid to take action on God’s behalf earned him the honorary religious title *Sheikh* and his successes have been interpreted as God’s *baraka*.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, Bin Laden himself has attributed the battlefield success of Al Qaeda to the *baraka* of God. In his October 7, 2001 statement following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the US, Bin Laden claimed: “God Almighty hit the United States at its most vulnerable spot. He destroyed its greatest buildings. Praise be to God.”<sup>119</sup> Therefore, the *baraka* of God on the battlefield has been an important validation for modern day jihadist groups, particularly Bin Laden.

However, what really distinguishes this current wave of jihad from its predecessor are not the interpretations of religious beliefs and texts for jihad but, rather, the resources available to these groups. First, these groups have profited from well-trained leaders. Despite the fact that most leaders are not trained as religious scholars they, nevertheless, are usually highly educated with professional experience. Bin Laden holds degrees in public administration and economics. He also has had experience running portions of his family’s multi-billion-dollar business.<sup>120</sup> Zawahiri was trained as a surgeon and put these

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<sup>115</sup> Citing the title of Yossef Bodansky’s book on Bin Laden

<sup>116</sup> Bodansky, pg 19

<sup>117</sup> Quoted by Bodansky, pg. 19

<sup>118</sup> Bodansky, pp. 185-186; Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America*, (Washington, DC: Brassey’s Inc. 2002), pp. 31-32

<sup>119</sup> Osama Bin Laden, “Bin Laden’s Warning to the US,” October 7, 2001. Taken from BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, downloaded on 11/10/2001.

<sup>120</sup> Bergen, pp. 43-63; Bodansky, pp. 3-4

skills to use treating Afghan refugees during the Soviet-Afghan war.<sup>121</sup> Al Turabi holds a master's degree in law from the University of London and a PhD from the Sorbonne in Paris.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, in addition to being highly educated, many of these leaders are trained battle-hardened mujihidin from the Soviet-Afghan War. This includes Bin Laden, Zawahiri, the Saudi-born Chechen leader Khattab and, by some counts, thousands of soldiers that returned from Afghanistan to their homes throughout the *ummah*.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, this current wave of jihads is punctuated by educated, highly trained leaders and individuals.

This degree of knowledge and training has helped create resilient, efficient, and effective organizations, this is especially true of Al Qaeda. In Afghanistan, Sheikh Azzam and Bin Laden founded a safehouse and training center for incoming mujihidin, the *Beit Al-Ansar*.<sup>124</sup> This developed into the first military training camp, *Ma'sadat Al-Ansar*.<sup>125</sup> In 1984, Bin Laden and Azzam founded the *Maktab al-Khidamat* (MAK), which sought to recruit individuals with specialized training to aid in the war, in addition to keeping records on international mujihidin that came through the training camps.<sup>126</sup> This organization evolved into Al Qaeda in 1986, the base, or the *data* base, as Gilles Kepel translates it.<sup>127</sup> These organizations turned the recruitment and training for jihad into what Bin Laden scholar Peter Bergen dubs "Holy War, Inc.," a multi-national jihad corporation, headquartered in Peshawar.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Bergen, pg. 59

<sup>122</sup> Bodansky, pg. 32

<sup>123</sup> Kepel, pg. 300; Bergen, pp. 30-31, 40

<sup>124</sup> Bergen, pg. 51; Bodansky, pg. 10

<sup>125</sup> Bodansky, pg. 10

<sup>126</sup> Bodansky, pp. 10-11

<sup>127</sup> Kepel, pg. 315

<sup>128</sup> Taken from the title of Bergen's book



These organizations persisted beyond the end of the Soviet-Afghan War in 1989. Leaders of the Afghan campaign, particularly Zawahiri and Bin Laden, did not see the threat against Islam subsiding with the end of the war but, rather, the emergence of new battles threatening Muslim land and people including conflicts in Palestine, Algeria, Kashmir, Bosnia, and Chechnya. Therefore—with Azzam now dead from a car bomb in 1989—Bin Laden and Zawahiri continued to mobilize, recruit and train mujahidin from all over the Muslim world with the aim of perpetuating the struggle to reestablish and preserve the *dar al Islam*. It was during the 1990s that a variety of regional and international organizations partially or wholly committed to jihad emerged. This included a proliferation of Islamic charities and coordinating bodies—organized largely with the help of Hasan al-Turabi, Islamic leader of the Sudan—who had granted Bin Laden and Zawahiri refuge in his country until 1996. See Table 3.3 for a list of international Islamic organizations.<sup>129</sup>

Another key resource that has aided the current wave of jihadist groups is “safe havens,” countries that have allowed these groups to base their operations within their borders. Despite US rhetoric and policies after September 11<sup>th</sup>, Afghanistan was not the only safe haven for Bin Laden and his cohorts; rather, much of Al Qaeda’s operational success and ideological evolution came from its years based in Sudan. Bin Laden scholar Bodansky states: “Under Turabi [in Sudan], the Armed Islamic Movement played a major role in the consolidated emergence of a genuine international terrorist training and deployment system.”<sup>130</sup> While in Sudan, Bin Laden and Zawahiri worked with Turabi to

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<sup>129</sup> It is important to note that this list of organizations and their connections to the global war on jihad changes daily as more information is uncovered and made public. This list, therefore, is inherently dated and incomplete.

<sup>130</sup> Bodansky, pg. 48

### 3.3, Major International Islamic Organizations

<i>Group</i>	<i>Founded</i>	<i>Founder/Leader</i>	<i>Function</i>
International Muslim Brotherhood (IMB)	1930s	Al-Banna	Spread the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Support existing chapters
World Islamic/Muslim League	1962	Saudi Arabia	Spread Wahabbism. Finance mosques, schools, hospitals, clinics, libraries
Islamic Charter Front (ICF)	mid-1960s	Al-Turabi	International coalition of radical Islamic individuals and groups
Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)	1969	Saudi Arabia	Promote Islamic solidarity. Safeguard Holy Sites. Support Palestinian Struggle
Islamic Development Bank	1970	OIC	Promote Islamic banking. Finance development projects
Human Concern International Society	1982	Afghanistan (HQ in Stockholm)	Funnel charity to Afghani refugees. Later to wars involving Muslims
Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)	1984	Bin Laden and Azzam	Recruit radical Muslims for the jihad in Afghanistan
Al Qaeda	1986	Bin Laden and Azzam	Recruit radical Muslims. Create a database of Muslims that have received training in camps
World Assembly of Muslim Youth	1975	Saudi Arabia	Expose Muslim youth to Wahabbism
International Islamic Relief Organization	1978	Saudi Arabia	Provide service to refugees. Believed to fund terrorists
Islamist International	1991	Al-Turabi	Umbrella organization for various jihadist organizations. Recruit and send jihadists around the globe.
Armed Islamic Movement (AIM)/ International Legion of Islam	Early 1990s	Islamist International	Militant arm of the Islamist International comprised mostly of vets from the Afghan war
Popular International Organization	1991	Al-Turabi	Unify Sunni Islam to challenge the threat from the West. Hold international conferences
Advice and Reform Committee	1994	Bin Laden (HQ London)	Criticize the Saudi regime for its alliance with the US

mobilize radical Islamic leaders from around the globe for jihad against the US. They argued that the Gulf War had shown US intentions to destroy the Muslim world and

prop-up corrupt regimes in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and Pakistan. The only solution to this threat was to attack the US, the source of the problem.<sup>131</sup> To mobilize for jihad against the US, Bin Laden, Turabi, and Zawahiri organized umbrella organizations, held conferences, met with state officials from Iran and Iraq, established publications, and opened up satellite offices in London and other cities in the West.<sup>132</sup> Bin Laden also moved his corporation to Sudan, built up Sudan's infrastructure with his construction business, and helped to route money for international jihad through his various financial channels.<sup>133</sup> Bin Laden and Zawahiri were deported from Sudan in 1996 after increasing US pressure on the Sudanese government; both returned to Afghanistan, their next safe haven, to resume the international Jihad.

In addition to Sudan and Afghanistan, key safe havens have been provided by open societies in the West. This is true not only of Al Qaeda, but also of other groups such as Hamas, the GIA and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad in addition to non-Islamic groups such as the Tamil LTTE. London, in particular, has hosted numerous terrorist and jihadist organizations. This includes the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Gammat and the Vanguard of the Conquest, a faction within Islamic Jihad; Bin Laden's Advice and Reform Committee; Turabi's International Muslim Brotherhood; the jihadist website *azzam.com*, and the Arab publications *Al Hayat* and *Al Quds al Arabi*.<sup>134</sup> Islamic terrorist scholar Gilles Kepel claims that the proliferation of terrorist organizations in London was no accident but, rather: "In return for its hospitality, the militants declared Britain a sanctuary: no act of terrorism was committed there, and the refugee activists made no

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<sup>131</sup> Bodansky, pg. 33

<sup>132</sup> Bodansky, pp. 32-40

<sup>133</sup> Bodansky, pp. 40-47

<sup>134</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 14; Bodansky, pp. 33-34; Bergen, pg. 38; Kepel, pp. 303-304

attempt to stir up the young Indo-Pakistanis...”<sup>135</sup> In addition, groups such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Gammat, the Algerian GIS and FIS, and former mujahidin from Afghanistan sought refuge in Stockholm and Copenhagen.<sup>136</sup> Likewise, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Gamma also set up bases in New York, particularly around the Al-Farooq mosque in New Jersey where Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman was imam.<sup>137</sup> Safe havens for these groups, therefore, exist not only in failed states like Sudan and Afghanistan but also in thriving western industrial democracies.

These jihadist groups have also made good use of communications technologies to mobilize for holy war. Most all jihad organizations have websites today including the Lebanese Hizbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda has used CD-roms and videotapes to recruit members, which Bergen states “is a graphic demonstration of how bin Laden [sic] and his followers have exploited twenty-first-century communications and weapons technology in the service of the most extreme, retrograde reading of holy war.”<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, these groups have used fax machines, cell phones, encrypted emails, and satellites to spread their messages and mobilize for jihad.<sup>139</sup> These groups have also established media outlets and created mass publications such as *Al-Ansar* and the Lebanese Hizbollah’s *Al-Manar*. In addition to creating their own media sources, these movements have profited from high exposure in international media outlets, using corporations such as CNN, BBC, Time, and

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<sup>135</sup> Kepel, pg. 303

<sup>136</sup> *ibid*

<sup>137</sup> Steven Emerson, *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living Among Us*, (New York: The Free Press, 2002) pg. 21

<sup>138</sup> Bergen, pg. 27

<sup>139</sup> Bergen, pp. 27-29

Newsweek to broadcast their grievances and spread the call for jihad against the US.<sup>140</sup>

Various groups have also profited from rapid transportation, particularly airlines that have allowed their members to travel quickly around the globe. This technology is totally new and distinct from the past wave of jihad.

Lastly, these organizations have prospered from financial assets. First, although difficult to prove, it is generally believed that many of these groups have received money and other material aid from states. Iran is reputed as a key sponsor of radical Islamic groups, both Sunni and Shii. Bodansky names an alliance between Iran and Sudan's al-Turabi as critical for developing Al Qaeda's capacity as a jihad organization.<sup>141</sup>

Likewise, Iran is believed to finance Hamas and the Lebanese and Saudi Hizbollah, to name a few.<sup>142</sup> Saudi Arabia also has been named a state sponsor of violent Islamic radical groups particularly through educational institutions like the madrasas in Pakistan, Central and Southeast Asia, and Indonesia, some of which preach jihad in order to cleanse the Islamic world of domestic and foreign threats. Several scholars note that competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia over the export of their brand of Islam has created a spiral effect between the two states, perpetuating the spread of radical, violent Islam and material assets to prosper various movements.<sup>143</sup> Therefore state funding of radical Islamic groups appears to be an important dynamic for the proliferation of radical Islamic groups and the call for jihad.

Many of these jihad groups also have profited from manipulating international financial systems. In 1991, the Bank of England shut down the Bank of Credit and

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<sup>140</sup> Bin Laden's speeches have appeared frequently on the independent Arab network *Al Jazeera* and he has been interviewed by Time, Newsweek, and CNN. See Bergen, pp. 37-38

<sup>141</sup> Bodansky, pp. 35-40

<sup>142</sup> Kashan, pp. 14-15

Commerce International (BCCI), a Pakistan-based institution suspected of financing radical Islamic groups, particularly with drug money and funding from Gulf States.<sup>144</sup> To compensate for this loss, Bin Laden used his family's multi-national corporation to route finances for various groups and projects throughout the 1990s.<sup>145</sup> In 1994, the Saudi government froze Bin Laden's personal assets in addition to expatriating him; this however, did little to slow financial flows to various jihad groups.<sup>146</sup> Moreover, these radical groups have continued to prosper through opaque banking systems—banks that have not conformed to international regimes on banking practices—particularly in UAE, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Iran.<sup>147</sup> In addition, the *Hawalah* system—informal money transfers routed through familial, tribal, and business networks—has worked alongside institutional banking systems to spread financial resources throughout the globe. Tracking these informal networks has proven extremely difficult for law enforcement agencies.<sup>148</sup>

Many of these groups have also accrued financial and material assets through international Islamic charities and NGOs. The pillar of *zakat*, the 2.5% alms giving on accumulative wealth, has been the source of significant funds to Islamic charities, money that is then given to Islamic NGOs to provide services for Muslims in need around the globe.<sup>149</sup> Since September 11, the US government has taken measures to identify which

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<sup>143</sup> Kepel, pp. 6-7; Deneoux, pp. 60-61; Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 108

<sup>144</sup> Bodansky, pg. 40

<sup>145</sup> Bodansky, pp. 40-47

<sup>146</sup> Esposito, *Unholy War*, pg. 14

<sup>147</sup> For more on international banking regimes, see The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), [www1.oecd.org/fatf](http://www1.oecd.org/fatf), visited on 6/30/03. For US initiative on combating terrorist funding, see US Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control. [www.ustreas.gov/ofac](http://www.ustreas.gov/ofac), visited on 6/30/03.

<sup>148</sup> N.S. Jamwal, "Hawala—the Invisible Financing System of Terrorism," (*Indian Strategic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (April-June, 2002), pp. 1-14, taken from the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, website, [www.idsa.org](http://www.idsa.org), downloaded on 10/18/02.

<sup>149</sup> Anonymous, pp. 36-37

charities are fronts for violent Islamic groups and to freeze their assets.<sup>150</sup> Often times, however, it has proven difficult to discern which charities are funding what; many of these charities are indeed providing social services to populations in need in addition to, perhaps, funding violent operations.<sup>151</sup>

Another source of revenue for these radical groups is drug trafficking. Afghanistan, in particular, has a thriving trade in opium, the largest in the world by some counts. The Afghan mujahid Hekmatiyar has relied heavily on the opium trade, which has continued to fund his radical Islamic group well beyond the Soviet-Afghan war into the 1990s.<sup>152</sup> The Taliban were reported as possessing assets around \$8 billion, the majority of which were earned through drug trafficking.<sup>153</sup> Likewise, it is reported that Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have profited considerably from drug trafficking, particularly from South Asia to Europe, which supplies an estimated 80% to 95% of Heroin in European countries, particularly in Great Britain.<sup>154</sup> One scholar argues that Bin Laden and Al Qaeda see drug trafficking to the West as killing two birds with one stone; the drugs finance their operations and help to undermine the social fabric of the West.<sup>155</sup>

Finally, this current wave of jihad groups has worked with and against political elites to achieve their goals. Many of these groups have prospered from financial and material aid from states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, as previously mentioned. It is important to note that this aid is usually given from a state to a jihad group that is not

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<sup>150</sup> *The Patriot Act*, which President Bush signed into law on October 26, 2002, aims to investigate and arrest patterns of terrorist financing. See "Patriot Act Oversight: Investigating Patterns of Terrorist Financing," *US House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Financial Services*, February 12, 2002. Take from <http://commdocs.house.gov>, downloaded on 10/23/2002.

<sup>151</sup> Bodansky, pp. 44-45. There is a website that posts all articles written on Islamic charities, [www.newstrove.com](http://www.newstrove.com), keyword search Islamic 'Charities,' visited 10/30/2002.

<sup>152</sup> Bodansky, pg. 42

<sup>153</sup> Anonymous, pg. 42

<sup>154</sup> *ibid*

within its own borders, thereby creating problems for another state's political elites. Iran and Saudi Arabia are both religiously based governments, which may explain their motivation to fund religious groups. However, it is also worth noting that the US funded mujahidin in Afghanistan in the 1980s, Pakistan is also believed to have funded mujahidin in Afghanistan and Kashmir, irrespective of its governments' adherence to the tenets of Islam.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, despite the religious adherence of the government, it is strongly believed that many of these groups have prospered from financial and material aid from states. Second, many of these groups have also worked with state elites that have provided safe havens for these movements and their leaders. This includes Sudan and Afghanistan but also the "open societies" of the West such as the UK and the US. These "basing privileges" have also been named as a valuable asset for jihad groups and their abilities to organize and execute their operations.

Jihad groups have also worked against political elites. Most notably, these groups have targeted secular regimes in the Muslim world in their bid to purify the *dar al Islam*. Many of these groups—including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Kashmiri groups, and Al Qaeda—see the overthrow of these regimes as necessary in order to install "right" leaders that uphold Shari'a law. Furthermore, many of these groups are working to reinstate one Caliph to rule over the *dar al Islam*, which requires the destruction of secular, political elites and states altogether. Therefore, despite receiving aid from certain states, most of these groups are at odds with political leaders.

In sum: This current wave of jihads contains several similarities to the 19<sup>th</sup> century wave that preceded it. Most of these movements are reacting to perceived or

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<sup>155</sup> Anonymous, pp. 41-43

<sup>156</sup> Bergen, chapter 3: "Blowback: The CIA and the Afghan War," pp. 63-75



actual domestic and international threats. Their goals, therefore, are to repel these threats by overthrowing secular domestic governments, to create an Islamic government that upholds the tenets and Shari'a law, and to repel the international threats that are bolstering these regimes and threatening Islam itself. Most leaders of these movements come from outside the Ulama, are well educated, and consult religious leaders for support in their jihads. These movements have called on the doctrines of jihad and martyrization in addition to making use of connections made during the hajj. Unlike the previous wave of 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads, this wave has not seen many claiming to be the Mahdi, but leaders have emerged who are popularly recognized as receiving the baraka of God and the Prophet, most notably Bin Laden.

This current wave of jihads differs from its predecessors in the resources available to these movements. These groups have well trained leaders who have formed resilient, efficient and effective organizations. These movements also have benefited from safe havens including Sudan, Afghanistan, and the "open societies" of the West. They have particularly profited from communications technology, which has aided their organization and mobilization. Lastly these groups have prospered from financial assets including state funding, Islamic charities and NGOs, opaque banking systems, informal money flows and drug trafficking.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has argued, first, that the doctrine of jihad is not fixed but rather subject to interpretation, which is the product of individuals grounded in specific contexts. In addition to the legal doctrine of jihad, there are also mystical interpretations, specifically those called by the Mahdi and battlefield success ascribed post-facto as the

*baraka* of God and the Prophet. Second, although a doctrine for offensive jihad exists, most jihads have been defensive in nature; they have been in response to perceived or actual threats to Muslim land, communities, and the faith. This is true of the first wave of jihad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the current wave of jihads around the globe.

Third, this chapter has argued that the interpretations of the faith generated by 19<sup>th</sup> century jihad movements and jihad organizations today have been largely similar. Both have called for *organized defensive jihad*—similar to the form of jihad used by Nur al-Din and Saleh ed-Din against the Crusaders—to mobilize soldiers to defend land, community and faith. Both waves have solicited the support of the Ulama for their actions, including the use of fatwas. Both movements have used the doctrine of martyrization and called those who died in battle martyrs. Both also have benefited from connections made through the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj. The first wave of jihads in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had many claiming to be the Mahdi, while this wave of jihad appears to benefit from the belief in the *baraka* of God and Prophet on the battlefield.

Fourth, this chapter has argued that resources such as strong leaders, resilient and efficient organizations, networks, means of communication and money are critical for the scope and success of jihad movements. This current wave of jihads, in comparison to its 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessors, has far greater resources to commit to its causes. This is evident not only in financial resources available to these jihadist groups, but also in their access to—and manipulation of—communications technology, the mass media, banking systems and informal networks. These resources have facilitated international organizations aimed, in part, at striking the United States and its interests.

Fifth, the 19<sup>th</sup> century wave of jihad reveals that most of these holy battles were fought in opposition to both political and trained religious elites. In most cases, the Ulama attempted to work within their new political circumstances brought on by colonialism, not oppose their new leaders. Therefore, most of the leaders of these jihads were not from within the trained clerisy but rather were either Mahdis or recognized as leaders through their battlefield success. In the current wave of two-front jihads, most movements are fighting against the leaders of the state, particularly states that are imposing ideologies perceived to be threatening to the vitality of Islam. This is true in Egypt, Palestine, Algeria, the Philippines, Indonesia, and in Kashmir. However, the international jihad against the US has received considerable support from various political leaders including funding, safe-havens, and permissive environments in which to propagate the call for jihad to defend the *dar al Islam*. Therefore, the current wave of jihads demonstrates that the separation of religious and political leaders has helped to fuel jihadist movements, particularly in reactions to threats to the social order. This wave also demonstrates that the mixture of political and religious leaders—such as in Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia—have also aided the worldwide jihad. These findings are summarized in Table 4.1.

Lastly, the way in which the 19<sup>th</sup> century wave of jihads ended—by long, drawn out, low intensity conflicts with colonial forces—suggests that these movements do not die easily. Movements that operated out of rugged terrain, such as in northern India and the hinterlands of Algeria, appeared to benefit from this difficult battle space. This suggests that jihad movements in hard to reach and hard to monitor terrain will be more difficult to rout out. Also, in several cases, these movements continued despite the death

of their leaders. This is true of Sayyid Ahmad of Barelewi, who was killed in 1831 but whose movement persisted for roughly 60 more years. This suggests that charismatic leaders may be important for organizing movements and mobilizing fighters, but that they may not be essential for their survival.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century jihads may have also ended because they were not trans-nationally linked and orchestrated, which limited their resources and ability to wear down colonial forces. Perhaps had these movements been better coordinated, they could have been a more formidable obstacle to colonial rule, particularly for the British, who were in several Muslim regions around the globe. This last point suggest that the global networking of this current wave of jihad movements is another important dimension that sets it apart from its 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts.

#### 4.1 Jihads of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Today

	<b>Threat Perception</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Religious/ Political Leaders</b>
19 <sup>th</sup> Century Jihads <i>Goals: Repel Colonialism, Purify dar al Islam</i>	International— ▪ Colonialism Domestic— ▪ Corrupt Muslim Leaders	Social— ▪ Mahdi, manpower Material— ▪ Few Techno— ▪ Few	Mostly at odds
Jihads Today <i>Goals: Repel Western Presence, Purify dar al Islam</i>	International— ▪ Globalization, USFP, western/secularism Domestic— ▪ Corrupt Governments, secular regimes	Social— ▪ Educated leaders, resilient orgs. Material— ▪ Transnational and state funding Techno— ▪ IT, transportation	State funding of jihad movements (outside borders). State target of most jihad movements.

# **II.**

# **Sacred Spaces**



## Overview of Battles Over Sacred Space

All religions have sacred space, specific sites recognized as important to the beliefs and practices of a tradition. Historian Karen Armstrong notes: “The devotion to a holy place or city is a near-universal phenomenon. Historians of religion believe that it is one of the earliest manifestations of faith in all cultures.”<sup>1</sup> Sacred spaces may be a site where God is believed to have entered the earth such as Bethlehem—the celebrated birthplace of Jesus the Christ—and Ayodhya, the place Hinduism recognizes as the birth site of Vishnu’s *avatar*, Ram. A sacred site may also be a place where it is believed that God and humans can interact, such as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—the historic place of ritual sacrifice in Judaism. Sacred space may also be the burial site of humans believed to have a special connection with the divine, such as saints’ tombs, which exist in Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Finally, sacred objects—articles believed to have come into contact with the divine—and the buildings that house them are important sacred spaces in religious traditions. These various types of sacred sites, therefore, are spaces where it is believed that humans and the divine meet and interact.

As religious artifacts, sacred spaces are important sites of pilgrimage and veneration. In many traditions, the process of traveling to, visiting, and returning from a sacred site is a central component in the faith. In Islam, the *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is a religious mandate that all Muslims should perform at least once in their lives, health and finances permitting. In Judaism, the hope of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the historic site of the Jewish Temple, is remembered in the annual Passover ritual: “Next year in Jerusalem.” Pilgrimage is also important for Christians, Hindus and Buddhists who

venerate the places where it is believed that the divine has chosen to intervene in history and provide a place of transcendence between the earthly and spiritual worlds.

This section considers two sacred sites that have come to have religious importance for several religions: the northern Indian city of Ayodhya, the Hindu celebrated birthplace of Ram and historic site of a Muslim mosque built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; and Jerusalem, which is venerated by Jews, Christians and Muslims. As the case studies will show, these religions have cohabitated and shared these cities at certain points in history but they also have fought for exclusive rights to these sacred spaces at other times. Currently both cities are the source of conflict and violence for Hindus and Muslims in South Asia and Muslims and Jews in the Middle East. Why have these groups been able to live together and share these sites at some points in time but not at others? What has caused this current explosion of violence over both of these cities?

This section offers insights into these questions by tracing the rise and fall of several waves of religious violence in Ayodhya and Jerusalem. The case study on Ayodhya considers three major incidents of Hindu and Muslim violence over its sites: Sunni Muslim attempts to seize a Hindu temple in 1853-1855, which are the first recorded incidents of religious violence in Ayodhya; the appearance of Hindu idols in Ayodhya's Babri Mosque in 1949 and the riots they sparked; and a federal court's decision to open the site to all in 1986, igniting riots and leading to the destruction of the mosque by a mob of militant Hindus in 1992. It argues that the current wave of violence over Ayodhya has become the focal point of Hindu nationalists, who aim to make India into *Hindutva*, a homeland of Hindu culture and religion. Hindu nationalist organizations—particularly the RSS, the VHP, and the BJP—have made inroads in India

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), pg. xv-xvi



by coordinating political, social and financial resources aimed at realizing *Hindutva* in general, and “liberating” Ayodhya from “foreign”—namely Muslim—elements in particular.

The second case considers three waves of religious violence over Jerusalem: the Christian Crusades to “liberate” Christ’s tomb in Jerusalem from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries; Muslim holy wars aimed at repelling crusaders from the region and retaking Jerusalem; and Israel’s seizure of Jerusalem in 1967 and the religious reactions it produced within militant Jewish and Muslim movements. It argues that these incidents of violence represent Christian, Muslim and Jewish efforts to seize Jerusalem in reaction to threats imposed to sacred sites by the policies of the governing group. This includes the current “al-Aqsa Intifada,” which is largely in response to threatening policies enacted by the Israeli government over Jerusalem and the occupied territories since 1967, and was sparked by the controversial visit of right-wing politician Ariel Sharon (now Israel’s prime minister) to the *Haram al-Sharif*/Temple Mount on September 28, 2000.

These two cases share important similarities, particularly in the current wave of violence surrounding these holy cities. Both India and Israel experienced a major political shift in their governments in the late 1970s. In 1977, India’s Congress Party was defeated for the first time in the country’s history, paving the way for the rise of Hindu nationalist parties within the government, most notably the BJP. Likewise, Israel’s Labor Party was also defeated for the first time in the country’s history, supplanted by the Zionist nationalist Likud Party in 1977. Both the BJP and Likud formed alliances with religious-nationalist organizations—such as the RSS and VHP in India and *Gush Emunim* in Israel—to secure votes in exchange for political support of these groups’ agendas. In

Israel, religious-nationalist groups have embarked on a campaign to absorb the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights into *Eretz Yisrael*, “greater Israel,” with the financial and political backing of various Likud governments. In India, Hindu nationalist groups have aimed to realize *Hindutva*, seizing on the controversy of the Ayodhya conflict to mobilize Hindus against the perceived threat of “foreign elements” to the vitality of Hindu culture and identity. In both cases, these political-religious unions have produced violent confrontations between nationalists and those outside their circles.

The case studies on Ayodhya and Israel demonstrate that battles over sacred space have domestic repercussions. In the modern era, the management of religious sites has become an obligation of the state. This includes policies and actions aimed at providing security, access, and maintenance of these sites. Moreover, in the cases of Ayodhya and Jerusalem, both states have become responsible for managing disputes over religious groups’ ownership to these sites. Finally, as the case studies demonstrate, religious battles over sites in Ayodhya and Jerusalem have often sparked nation-wide violence, which has cost these countries lives, money and resources.

In addition to domestic consequences, religious battles over sacred space also impact international relations. Ayodhya and Jerusalem are sacred sites of importance not only to Indians, Israelis and Palestinians but, more broadly, to Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Christians throughout the world. The 1992 destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya touched off riots in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh. Likewise, the September 2000 visit of right-wing Israeli to the *Haram al-Sharif*/Temple Mount sparked street demonstrations from Egypt to Indonesia. Therefore, the policies and actions of the states currently governing these sacred sites are not only of importance for domestic

peace and stability but also for regional and even global relations between religious groups and countries.



## Chapter 5 Hindu and Muslim Battles Over Ayodhya

On December 6, 1992, an estimated 300,000 Hindu activists gathered in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya, stormed a 350-year-old mosque and demolished it with shovels, axes and their bare hands. In its place, they assembled a makeshift temple to the *avatar* Ram on the site where they believed he was born.<sup>1</sup> The incident sparked the worst riots in India since Partition in addition to touching off violence in Pakistan and Bangladesh. An estimated 1,700 to 3,000 died in the riots, with more than 5,500 injured.<sup>2</sup> Again, in February of 2002, Hindu activists traveling on a train from Ayodhya through the state of Gujarat were attacked by an angry mob; their train was set on fire and all 57 passengers died. This incident ignited riots in Gujarat, where at least 2,000 died, mostly Muslims.<sup>3</sup> Why has Ayodhya—a site shared by Hindus and Muslims for hundreds of years—become the flashpoint for religious violence in current day India?

This chapter aims to provide insights into this question by considering three waves of Hindu and Muslim violence over sacred space in Ayodhya: Sunni Muslim attempts to seize a Hindu temple in 1853-1855, the first recorded violence at the site; the appearance of Hindu idols in Ayodhya's Babri Mosque in 1949 and the riots it produced; and a federal court's decision to open the mosque to the public in 1986, which provoked regional riots and two major incidents of violence, in 1992 and 2002. Drawing from the

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<sup>1</sup> Ramesh Thakur, "Ayodhya and the Politics of India's Secularism," pp. 645-664, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 7 (July, 1993), pg. 645

<sup>2</sup> The BBC places the number around 3,000. See, "Ayodhya Defeat for Vajpayee," *BBC News*, December 19, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, downloaded on 7/30/03

<sup>3</sup> Burhan Wazir cites 2,000 killed and 100,000 made homeless from the unrest, "Militants Seek Muslim-Free India," *The Guardian*, July 21, 2002. Zahir Janmohamed cites estimates of over 5,000 killed, "The Unbearable Burden of Belief," *Literate World Online*, (July 2002), <http://littworld.com/english/2002/soulshelf/july/saug22.html>, downloaded on 10/8/2002.

causal argument presented in chapter two, this chapter will focus on three variables as possible explanations for violence over the sacred city: the role of threat perception in influencing actions of leaders and their groups; the amount of material, social and technological resources available to groups initiating the violence; and the relationship between religious and political leaders as a possible explanation for the rise of violence over Ayodhya. This chapter will test three empirical predictions from the causal argument. First, religious leaders will call for violence to defend Ayodhya if they believe their site is under imminent threat. Second, the group initiating the violence has greater resources than does the other group. And third, religious violence will be more likely if political and religious authority is intertwined, allowing religious leaders to use the resources of the state for its goals.

This chapter argues that groups initiating the violence over Ayodhya have acted largely under conditions of perceived or actual threat to their religious sites. Furthermore, the initiating group has had considerable resources at its disposal the most valuable of which have been well-structured organizations that coordinate their efforts for common goals. Finally, religious and political leaders alike have used Ayodhya to mobilize the masses for political and religious ends, namely for elections and the bid to make India into *Hindutva*, a homeland based on Hindu beliefs and culture.

The first section of this chapter offers a brief summary of Hindu and Muslim beliefs, practices, texts and forms of authority, which are necessary for understanding the religious dynamics of the Ayodhya controversy. The second section provides a chronology of Ayodhya, beginning with the Babri Mosque's construction in 1528 to the present controversies surrounding the site. The third section considers three major waves

of violence over the site: in 1853-1855, in 1949, and from 1986 to the present. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks.

## **Hinduism and Islam**

The religious beliefs and practices of Hinduism and Islam are essential for understanding certain dynamics of the Ayodhya conflict. Therefore, before describing the history of Ayodhya and its episodes of Hindu and Muslim violence, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of each religious tradition. Hinduism and Islam are rich and complex religions with much internal diversity. However, for the purpose of understanding the Ayodhya controversy, this section will touch briefly on four areas within Hinduism and Islam: their core beliefs, their practices, their texts, and religious authority.

### *Hinduism*

The core beliefs in Hinduism, as a religion, are concerned with the liberation (*moksha*) of humans from their earthly circumstances. Hinduism subscribes that humans are trapped in a cycle of life, death and rebirth, *samsara*. *Samsara* is the result of *karma*, good and bad actions that accumulate over time. Actions that produce good karma include moral deeds like caring for others, ritualistic practices such as animal or plant sacrifice, and praise to deities. Humans are rewarded or punished by their *karma*, which determines birth into different social strata, *jatis*. These different levels of birth, in turn, define earthly occupation. These occupations, based on ritual cleanliness, create *varna*, a social hierarchy or caste system within Hindu society: the Brahmins (priests), the Rajanyas/Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), the Vaishyas (farmers and traders)—which comprise the upper castes—and the Sudras (laborers), which is the lower caste. In

addition, there are those who are not part of this system; they are formerly known as “untouchables” and are currently called *Dalits*, or, as Gandhi called them, *Harijan*, “children of God.”<sup>4</sup> Although Varna remains an important ritual distinction within Hinduism, it is important to note that, socially and politically, the separation between upper and lower castes is less clear and varies across region and jatis. Therefore caste, while an important dimension of Hindu society, is not completely fixed.

Humans are not alone in their quest for liberation, but rather have the aid of The Absolute, *Brahman*, which is attained through knowledge. There are also earthly incarnations of the Divine, *avatars*, who come to earth to help humans in their path to salvation. Vishnu, Shiva, Brahman, and the Goddess Shakti all have earthly avatars. Avatars of Vishnu include Krishna and Rama, the latter of which is believed to have been born in Ayodhya.

Hinduism has several practices aimed at attaining liberation and drawing closer to The Absolute. There are formal rituals, such as animal and plant sacrifice, which are performed by Hindu priests. Sacrifice is less common in Hinduism today but still exists in the *Tantric* form of the faith. Practices for sacrifices are laid out in Hinduism’s oldest texts, the Vedas, which are compilations of rituals surrounding gods of the ancient Aryans, believed by some to be the origins of today’s Indians.<sup>5</sup> There is also *Vedanta*, the path to knowledge of The Absolute, which is liberation. The path to knowledge consists of four stages in life: the student, the married householder, the forest dweller,

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<sup>4</sup> For more details on Hindu beliefs, see Chapter 3: “The Earliest Forms of Hinduism,” pp. 83-101; Chapter 4: “Classical Hinduism: The Way of Action,” pp. 102-114; Chapter 5: “Classical Hinduism: The Way of Knowledge,” pp. 115-127; Chapter 6: “Classical Hinduism: The Way of Devotion,” pp. 128-142; Chapter 7: “Modern Hinduism,” 143-149; *Religions of the World*, Third Edition, edited by Robert K. C. Forman, et al, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993)

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 3: “The Earliest Forms of Hinduism,” *Religions of the World*, Third Edition, pp. 83-101



and the renouncer or *sannyasin*. This path is usually only open to those in the upper castes.<sup>6</sup> Finally, there is the practice of devotion to a deity, *bhakti*, which is open to all castes. This involves acts such as pilgrimage to sites related to deities—*tirthas*, places where the sacred and the profane meet—and by offering sacrifices of flowers and incense, *puja*, in the home or at temples. Most Hindus today practice *bhakti* in one form or another.<sup>7</sup> Ayodhya, as the celebrated birthplace of the *avatar* Ram, is a popular pilgrimage *tirtha*.

Hinduism has numerous sacred texts, which are not codified into a cohesive canon. The most common scriptures include, first, texts concerning ritual and sacrifice: the *Vedas*—the Rig Veda (the oldest), the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda; the *Brahmanas*; and the *Upanishads*. Sacred texts also include religious epics: the *Mahabharata*, which contains the *Bhagavad Ghita*; and the *Ramayana*, which involves Ayodhya. There are also the *Puranas*—six to Brahma, six to Vishnu, and six to Shiva; the *Tantras* (64 books in total); and the *Laws of Manu*. Lastly there are the works of medieval philosophers, *Shankara* and the *Ramanuja* (*bhakti*), which inform devotional practices. In addition, more recent works, such as the 20<sup>th</sup> century writings of Gandhi, are considered by some to be sacred texts.<sup>8</sup>

Hinduism has several different types of religious leaders. As mentioned above, there are priests within the Brahmin caste. These priests require training and are tasked with performing marriage and death rituals in addition to sacrifice in the Tantric tradition.

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<sup>6</sup> Chapter 4: “Classical Hinduism: The Way of Action,” *Religions of the World*, Third Edition, pp. 102-114

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 6: “Classical Hinduism: The Way of Devotion,” *Religions of the World*, Third Edition, pp. 128-142

<sup>8</sup> For more on Hindu scriptures see Gavin Flood, “Hinduism,” *Sacred Writings*, edited by Jean Holm with John Boker, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1994), pp. 71-100; and *Sacred Texts of the World*, edited by Ninian Smart and Richard D. Hecht, (New York: Crossroads, 1982), pp. 179-213.

Hinduism also has monastic orders affiliated with Shiva and Vishnu, which keep temples associated with their deities.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Hinduism has *gurus*, or teachers, who guide disciples, *shishya*, in the path towards liberation.

### *Islam*

The core beliefs of Islam are also concerned with human liberation or salvation. The path to salvation in Islam, however, differs in many ways from Hinduism. First, Islam takes very seriously the oneness of God, or *tawhid*, which is its central belief. The path to salvation in Islam involves submitting to the will of God, which is the meaning of the word *Islam*. In order to understand God's will for humanity, God has provided revelations through prophets, *nabi* and *rasul*. Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad transmitted the final and complete revelation from God in the seventh century CE, recorded in the *Qur'an*. Thus the oneness of God and the Prophet Muhammad as his messenger form the *shahaddah*, the first of five Pillars of Islam, which is the proclamation of faith; one who proclaims the *shahaddah* is a Muslim. The other four pillars include ritual prayer said five times a day facing towards Mecca (*salat*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm*); almsgiving to the poor (*zakat*); and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), which should be taken by every Muslim at least once in his or her life, finances and health permitting. Along with the Pillars, Islam emphasizes the unity of the worldwide Muslim community, the *ummah*, which, in principle, is not divided by gender, race, class or any other human distinction.<sup>10</sup> However, in practice,

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) pp. 45-46

<sup>10</sup> For more details on key beliefs in Islam, see John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Islam has several internal divisions, the most important being the Sunni/Shia split, which arose from different understanding in leadership.

In addition to the Pillars, one way in which Muslims apply their faith is through religious law, *Shari'a*. The formation of Shari'a differs according to time, region, and school of jurisprudence.<sup>11</sup> Another key practice in Islam is ritual prayer, *salat*, mentioned above. Muslims can say the *salat* anywhere, but mosques are buildings designed especially for Muslims to gather in and pray. For this purpose, mosques are considered sacred places where humans interact with God; thus the maintenance and preservation of these spaces are important to the faith. This is a critical point concerning the Ayodhya conflict.

Islam, unlike Hinduism, has two main bodies of scriptures. The first is the Qur'an, which—as the literal word of God—is immutable. The second set of scriptures, the *Sunnah*, contains recordings of the Prophet Muhammad's sayings, the *Hadith*, and the actions of the Prophet and his companions, who are believed to be guides for living in submission to God's will. These two texts, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, provide the scriptural foundation for Shari'a law. In addition, there are volumes of commentaries on Islamic law compiled by historic scholars and judges. These texts are secondary but often consulted by scholars and judges when applying the law.

Similar to Hinduism, Islam has more than one type of religious leader. First, Islam recognizes leaders that govern the ummah. In Sunni Islam, this leader is known as the *Khalifa* (Caliph), the “rightly guided one,” which is chosen by the community. In Shia

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<sup>11</sup> In Sunni Islam there are four major schools of law, *al-Sharia; Maiki, Hanafi, Shaifi, and Hanbali*. In addition, Shia Islam has its own interpretations of the law, of which there is diversity between Twelver and Ishmaili Shiism. See David S. Pearl *A Textbook on Muslim Law*, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), especially chapter 1, “The Historical Development of Islamic Law.”

Islam, this leader is called the *Imam*, and is determined by bloodline to the Prophet and familial descent.<sup>12</sup> Second, there are trained scholars, the *Ulama*, who receive schooling in history, philosophy, language, law, and art. Within the *Ulama* are *qadis* and *muftis*, judges responsible for applying Shari'a law. In addition, Islam has mystical leaders, *Sufis* or *Pirs*, often given the title of *Sheikh*. Sufism is a particularly important dimension of Islam in South Asia, as will be described. Finally, there are individuals who attain status as religious leaders either through their charisma or success, but are neither *Sufis* nor members of the *Ulama*. They also receive the title *Sheikh* or *Mullah*, another title denoting a religious leader.

These core beliefs, practices, texts, and leaders within Hinduism and Islam play a key role in the Ayodhya conflict. The following sections will explore the conditions under which religious and political leaders have interpreted texts and beliefs to call for violent action in defense of Ayodhya at certain points in history.

### **Historical Overview of Ayodhya**

There is little disagreement that the Sunni Muslim Emperor Babur, the second ruler of the Mughal Empire, commissioned the building of a mosque in Ayodhya in 1528 and that he chose Ayodhya because of its reputation as a holy city.<sup>13</sup> Prior to the construction of the mosque—known as the *Babri Masjid* or Babur's Mosque—archaeological and ethnographic evidence shows that Ayodhya was not only a city sacred to Hindus but that it also had Jain and Buddhist temples, the latter extending back to

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<sup>12</sup> *Imams* also lead the formal prayer, *salat*, in Sunni Islam. *Imams* can be from the *Ulama*, but are not exclusively so.

<sup>13</sup> K.N. Panikkar notes that the mosque was actually constructed under the supervision of Mir Baqi, who was a member of Babur's court. Although Baqi inscribed Babur's name on the completed mosque, there is no direct evidence that Babur ordered the construction. See "A Historical Overview," pp. 22-37 *Anatomy of*

around the fifth century BCE.<sup>14</sup> For Hinduism, the city is celebrated as the birthplace of Ram, an earthly *avatar* of the deity Vishnu. And, as previously mentioned, the story of Ram's birth and life on earth is told in the *Ramayana*, a text that is regarded as one of the sacred scriptures in Hinduism. The city hosts several holy sites relating to Ram including the *Hanumangarhi*, the temple-fortress of the monkey-god Hanuman; the *Kanakbhavan*, the palace of Ram and his wife Sita; and the celebrated birthplace of Ram, which is believed to be near or on the same site as the Babri Mosque.

A popular belief held by many Hindus is that Babur destroyed a Hindu temple devoted to Ram and used the pillars from the temple to build the Babri Mosque, which was constructed over the actual birthplace of Ram. Muslim narratives disagree with this story, asserting that Babur did not destroy a Hindu temple; moreover, Babur and a later emperor Akbar were known for their tolerance towards other religions, especially Hinduism.<sup>15</sup> Archaeological evidence surrounding the contested sites have been interpreted both by Hindu activists and Muslim groups to assert their side of the story, offering no concrete evidence to resolve the disputed narratives.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, during the time of the mosque's construction and for three hundred years that followed, there is

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*a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabumi Issue*, edited by Sarvepalli Gopal, (Delhi: Viking Press, 1991), pp. 27

<sup>14</sup> K.N. Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," pp. 25-26

<sup>15</sup> Akbar in particular was known for his tolerance towards other faiths. Two examples of his tolerance are his abolition of the pilgrims' tax and the poll-tax for non-Muslims during his reign, see Thakur, pg. 646.

<sup>16</sup> When the Ayodhya conflict flared up in the 1980s, the key questions being asked were: Was a temple destroyed to build a mosque? Was the Babri Mosque built with pieces of a ruined temple? And, is the site of the Babri Mosque the same as the celebrated birthplace of Ram? Archaeological evidence from excavated sites around Ayodhya has been interpreted by different parties both in the negative and the affirmative to these questions. However, there is little if no evidence that can answer each of these questions definitively in the affirmative. Moreover, there is no written evidence from the time of the mosque's construction, either in Muslim or Hindu documents that affirm the destruction of a temple preceding the erection of the mosque. See K.N. Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," pp. 27-30; and Reinhard Bernbeck and Susan Pollock, "Ayodhya, Archaeology, and Identity," *Current Archaeology*, Vol. 37, (February, 1996), pp. S138-S142.

no evidence to suggest that violence between Hindus and Muslims in the city or the region occurred as a result of the presence of the mosque in Ayodhya.

In 1722, Nawabs, Shia Muslim kings, succeeded Mughal rule of Awadh, a region that included the cities of Ayodhya, Faizabad, and Lucknow. The capital of Awadh was moved first from Ayodhya to Faizabad in the 1730s, and then to Lucknow at the end of the century.<sup>17</sup> Under the rule of the Nawabs, there is little evidence of Hindu-Muslim conflict in Ayodhya. Rather, the era was marked by political cooperation between the Shia rulers and various Hindu elites, including the patronage of each other's sacred sites.<sup>18</sup> It was during this time that the presence of different Hindu monastic orders flourished and, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, Ayodhya became an important pilgrimage site for Hindus.<sup>19</sup>

The first recorded violence between Hindus and Muslims over sacred sites in Ayodhya occurred between 1853 and 1855. The kingdom of Awadh was under the rule of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who reigned from 1847 until British annexation in 1856.<sup>20</sup> In 1853, Sunni Muslims in the region, headed by Ghulam Husain, rose up against the Shia ruler and marched on Ayodhya, claiming that Hindus had destroyed a mosque in order to build the Hanumangarhi Temple. The Sunnis were defeated by an order of *Naga Sadhus*, Hindu warrior monks; around 70 Muslims were killed and buried in the graveyard next to the Babri Mosque.<sup>21</sup> In 1855, a second Sunni leader, Amir 'Ali, called for a *jihad* to

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<sup>17</sup> Koenraad Elst, *Ramjanmabhoomi vs. Babri Masjid: A Case Study in Hindu-Muslim Conflict*, (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1990), pg. 140

<sup>18</sup> Peter Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated! A Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya," pp. 283-301, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1987), pg. 287-288

<sup>19</sup> Peter Van der Veer, *Gods on Earth: The Management of Religious Experience and Identity in a Northern Indian Pilgrimage Center*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1988); and Hans Bakker, *Ayodhya*, (Gronigen: Egbert Forsten, 1986)

<sup>20</sup> Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated," pg. 288

<sup>21</sup> Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated," pg. 288; and Elst, pg. 141

liberate the land from non-Muslim occupation. British troops subdued the uprising with the aid of the Hindu Nagas and Shia Nawab troops. The British then officially annexed the kingdom in February of 1856.<sup>22</sup> They erected a fence around the Babri Mosque, allowing Muslims to pray inside and Hindus to worship on a raised platform outside the structure.

Ayodhya settled into a tense calm under British rule. In 1885, a Hindu religious leader named Raghubar Ram made an appeal to the British judge of Faizabad to allow for the construction of a Hindu temple at the site of the Babri Mosque; the bid was rejected that same year.<sup>23</sup> In 1912 and 1934, Hindu activists attacked the Babri Mosque on *Bakr-Id*, the Muslim festival celebrating Isaac's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael. The attack was part of a larger Hindu uprising known as the Cow Protection Movement, which will be discussed further below.<sup>24</sup> In the 1934 episode, there were considerable Muslim casualties—believed to be in the hundreds to thousands—and the British army was forced to intervene to restore order. The British imposed a punitive tax on the Hindu inhabitants of Ayodhya as retribution for the violence.<sup>25</sup>

The next big conflict over the status of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya came just after independence and Partition, in 1949. On the night of December 22-23, idols of Ram and his wife Sita appeared inside the mosque. Many Hindus believed this to be a miracle, while Muslims and the federal courts declared it to be the work of Hindu activists bent on claiming the mosque for themselves. The federal courts ordered that the idols be removed

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<sup>22</sup> Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated," pp. 289, 296

<sup>23</sup> Elst, pg. 142

<sup>24</sup> Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated," pg. 289

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

but the local courts refused to comply.<sup>26</sup> In 1950, the federal courts locked the mosque without removing the idols and placed guards around the building. Both Hindus and Muslims formed their own action committees to assert their claims over the site. Hindus formed the Ram Janmabhoomi Seva Committee and the Ram Janmabhoomi Mukti Yajna Samiti (Committee for the Ram Birthplace Liberation Ritual). Muslims formed the Babri Masjid Co-ordination Committee and the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee.<sup>27</sup> These groups continued to present their cases to the courts following the mosque's closure.

The present day conflict over the sacred sites at Ayodhya began in full force in 1986, when a district court ruled that the mosque should be unlocked and opened to the public. Prior to this decision, the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP)—an umbrella organization of religious Hindu leaders—together with the *Rastriya Swayamsewak Sangh* (RSS)—a group committed to promoting Hindu culture—organized a *Dharm Sanda*, or “Liberation Movement” in 1984, aimed at cleansing key religious Hindu sites of non-Hindu elements, most notably neighboring mosques. This included a site devoted to Krishna in Mathura, a site to Shiva in Benares, and Ram's celebrated birthplace in Ayodhya.<sup>28</sup> In October of 1984, a Hindu procession—aimed at mobilizing support for “reclaiming” Ram's birthplace—made its way through several northern Indian states.<sup>29</sup> The procession was interrupted *en route* to Delhi, however, when a Sikh bodyguard assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in retaliation for Operation Blue Star, a federal

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<sup>26</sup> Van der Veer, “God Must Be Liberated,” pg. 290

<sup>27</sup> Elst, pp. 145-154

<sup>28</sup> Elst, pg. 151; Van der Veer, “God Must Be Liberated,” pg. 292

<sup>29</sup> Van der Veer, “God Must Be Liberated,” pg. 290



raid on the Sikh Golden Temple in Amristar.<sup>30</sup> In 1985, the VHP organized another procession across northern India, this time carrying life-sized depictions of Ram and Sita behind bars.<sup>31</sup> Amidst these campaigns, the district court of Faizabad ruled in favor of a Hindu-sponsored petition to allow the Babri Mosque to be unlocked and opened to the public, triggering riots throughout the country.<sup>32</sup>

In 1989, during the *Kumbha Mela*, a Hindu religious festival, several groups formed a plan to build a Hindu temple at the site of the Babri Mosque.<sup>33</sup> Towards this end, the VHP initiated a *Ramshilla*, the gathering of sacred bricks from all over India with which to build the new temple. In addition to gathering bricks from across the country, bricks were also brought from as far as the US, Canada, and the Caribbean.<sup>34</sup> An estimated 300 people were killed in riots connected with the procession of bricks to Ayodhya.<sup>35</sup> On November 9<sup>th</sup>, the procession reached Ayodhya and *kar sevaks*, Hindu “volunteers” or activists, were allowed to lay the corner stone in the ritual of *shilanyas*.<sup>36</sup> Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during his election campaign, backed the procession and even laid a stone himself.<sup>37</sup>

In 1990, Hindu activists called for a chariot procession through ten states with the goal of raising support for the construction of a Hindu temple at the site of the Babri Mosque. The military blocked the procession on the outskirts of Ayodhya and Lal Krishna Advani, the leader of the Hindu nationalist political party the *Bharatiya Janata*

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<sup>30</sup> Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., “India in 1984: Confrontation, Assassination, and Succession,” pp. 131-144, *Asia Survey*, Vol. 25, No. 2, (February, 1985), pg. 133

<sup>31</sup> Elst, pg. 152

<sup>32</sup> Thakur, pg. 655; Peter Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 3

<sup>33</sup> Elst, pg. 154

<sup>34</sup> Elst, pg. 155

<sup>35</sup> Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 4; Elst, pp. 156-157

<sup>36</sup> Elst, pp. 158-159

<sup>37</sup> Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 3; Thakur, pg. 655

Party (BJP), was arrested.<sup>38</sup> An estimated 30 Hindus were killed in clashes with the military, later to be called martyrs for Ayodhya.<sup>39</sup> Despite the involvement of BJP leaders in the controversial procession, the party won 119 seats in the 1991 national elections and nearly 20% of the overall vote. Moreover, the BJP won state elections in Uttar Pradesh (Ayodhya's state), Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.<sup>40</sup>

On December 6, 1992, an estimated 300,000 Hindu activists gathered in Ayodhya for a rally. The activists stormed the Babri Mosque, destroying it in a matter of hours. The incident ignited nation-wide riots that left 1,700 to 3,000 killed and over 5,500 injured.<sup>41</sup> Neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh also experienced riots in reaction to the mosque's destruction; Hindu temples were attacked in both countries.<sup>42</sup> In response to the Ayodhya incident, the Indian federal government restricted Hindus from entering the mosque, dismissed the BJP-led governments in their four ruling states, banned three Hindu activists groups—the VHP, the Bajrang Dal, and the RSS—in addition to two Muslim group, and called for the reconstruction of the mosque.<sup>43</sup> In 1993, however, district courts allowed Hindus to resume their worship of Ram on the site of the demolished mosque. The mosque has yet to be rebuilt and the status of the site remains contested with Hindu activists vowing to build a temple on the ruins of where the Babri Mosque once stood.

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<sup>38</sup> Barbara Stoler Miller, "Presidential Address: Contending Narratives—The Political Life of the Indian Epics," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, pp. 783-792, vol. 50, no. 4 (November, 1991), pg. 789; Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 5

<sup>39</sup> Thakur, pg. 653

<sup>40</sup> Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 1; Thakur, pg. 653

<sup>41</sup> Thakur, pg. 645; The BBC placed the number around 3,000. See, "Ayodhya Defeat for Vajpayee," *BBC News*, December 19, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, downloaded on 7/30/03

<sup>42</sup> Mahmood Monshipouri, "Backlash to the Destruction at Ayodhya," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 7, (July, 1993), pp. 711-721; Partha S. Ghosh, "Bangladesh at the Crossroads," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 7, (July, 1993), pp. 697-710

In December 2000, on the eighth anniversary of the mosque's destruction, India's parliament censured Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, a member of the BJP, after he stated that a Hindu temple should be built on the ruins of the Babri Mosque and that this was an "expression of national sentiment."<sup>44</sup> In March 2002, prior to the tenth anniversary of the mosque's destruction, Hindu kar sevaks traveling from a rally in Ayodhya through the state of Gujarat were attacked by an angry mob. Their train was set on fire, killing all of the passengers. In retaliation, riots broke out in Gujarat, leading to the deaths of at least 2,000, mostly Muslims.<sup>45</sup> Finally, in March 2003, the government announced plans to excavate the site at Ayodhya with the intent of answering if a temple had once stood where the ruins of the mosque now lay. The preliminary findings show that there is no evidence to support the claim of a temple on the mosque's site.<sup>46</sup>

### **Explaining the Variations of Violence and Peace Over Ayodhya**

This chronology reveals that violence over the contested sites in Ayodhya has not been constant but, rather, has gone through several waves of peace and unrest. In particular, there are three prominent incidents of Hindu-Muslim violence surrounding Ayodhya. The first episode was the Sunni-led charge against Ayodhya's Hanumangarhi Temple in 1853 and 1855, the first recorded Hindu-Muslim violence at the site. The second incident occurred just after Partition, in 1949. And the third wave of violence began in 1986 and has continued to the present. In contrast, the Ayodhya chronology

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<sup>43</sup> Manju Parikh, "The Debacle at Ayodhya: Why Militant Hinduism Met with a Weak Response," pp. 673-684, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 7, (July, 1993), pg. 674; Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 7

<sup>44</sup> "Ayodhya Defeat for Vajpayee;" and "Row Over Vajpayee Remarks," *BBC News*, December 7, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, downloaded on 7/30/03

<sup>45</sup> Wazir; and Janmohamed

<sup>46</sup> Sanjeev Srivastava, "Digging for Truth at Ayodhya," *BBC News Online*, March 11, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>; Adam Mynott, "'No Sign' of Ayodhya Temple," *BBC News Online*, June 11, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, downloaded on 8/3/2003

reveals three periods of relative calm: first, from the time of the mosque's construction in 1528 to 1853; second, from 1856 until 1949; and third, from 1950 until 1986. Drawing on the causal argument from chapter two, this section will ask the following questions surrounding these episodes of violence: Is there an identifiable threat or the perception of a threat to which the violent parties are responding? What are the material resources available to the involved religious groups? And what is the relationship between political and religious leaders?

*The peace of 1528-1853. The violence of 1853-1855.*

This section considers the absence of Hindu-Muslim violence over Ayodhya from the time of the mosque's construction in 1528 until the first recorded outbreak of violence over sacred sites in 1853-1855. It argues, first, that the initial period of calm was marked by Hindu-Muslim elite cooperation, including shared religious holidays and cross-patronage to religious sites. The outbreak of violence in 1853 is best explained by the decline of Sunni political authority in the region in general, coupled with the rise of Sunni revivalist movements in the region calling for internal reform and holy war against "infidels." The end of violence in 1856 came with British political and military annexation of the region.

The absence of recorded violence from the time of the Babri Mosque's construction in 1528 until 1853 reflects a period of relative calm and cooperation between Hindus and Muslims throughout the region. As mentioned in the chronology, the reign of Sunni Mughal Emperors Babur (1526-1530) but particularly the rule of Akbar (1556-1605), Jahanjir (1605-1627), and Sha Jahan (1627-1657) are recorded as periods of religious cohabitation and cultural prosperity. It was during this time that poetry, music,

architecture and art flourished in India, drawing from both Islamic and Hindu motifs.<sup>47</sup> In this era Islamic and Hindu religious feasts were co-celebrated, Muslim Sufi saints' tombs were patroned by Muslims and Hindus alike, the emperors upheld Hindu tenets such as bans on cow slaughter and employed numerous Hindu elites in their courts.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, these emperors chose to abolish religious taxes on non-Muslims, the *jizya* tax, and relaxed the scope of Shari'a law to family and personal matters, fostering a more peaceful coexistence between Sunni and Shia Muslims.<sup>49</sup> It is important to note, however, that there were groups that criticized this religious cooperation during this era. In particular, Muslim religious clerics, the Ulama, called for the imposition of Shari'a law and more "orthodox" Islamic practices. In addition, the Naqshbandiyah Sufi order, formed in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, opposed shared rituals and Sufi tomb worship.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the era was marked by religious accommodation and coexistence between Hindus and Muslims.

This era of religious cohabitation and cooperation came to an end with the ascendancy of Aurangzeb (1657-1707) to the Mughal throne. Aurangzeb—who rose to power by killing two of his brothers and imprisoning his father Shah Jahan until his death in 1666—formed an alliance with the Ulama to consolidate power.<sup>51</sup> Together they sought to restore "orthodox" Islam to the empire. Aurangzeb re-imposed the *jizya* tax on non-Muslims, reinstated Shari'a penal laws, and encouraged conversion to Islam.<sup>52</sup> He executed the Sikh leader Guru Govind Singh, which, in turn, fueled the creation of a

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<sup>47</sup> Paul Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) pp. 17-18

<sup>48</sup> Hardy, pp. 19-25

<sup>49</sup> Hardy, pg. 24. Sunni and Shia Muslims adhere to different schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which can lead to conflicts on religious, social and political matters. See Pearl, Chapter 1: "The Historical Development of Islamic Law."

<sup>50</sup> Hardy, pp. 27-28

<sup>51</sup> Hardy, pg. 26

religious warrior order, the Sikh Khalsa.<sup>53</sup> In addition, he embarked on numerous unsuccessful military campaigns, which drained the financial and military power of the empire. Battles against the Hindu Marathas were particularly destructive to the empire. These battles created stories of Hindu warrior monks who defeated the Mughal armies, tales that would reemerge in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Hindu Nationalist rhetoric as examples of Hindu power and strength.<sup>54</sup> The weakened state of the empire led to an internal power struggle for succession after Aurangzeb's death and allowed for other rulers to take regions that the empire could no longer defend. This included Shia Muslim Nawabs' capture of Awadh in 1722.

The decline of the Mughal Empire sparked several Islamic revivalist movements on the subcontinent aimed at both explaining the cause of the empire's decline and the path to its redemption. Two Islamic revivalist leaders in particular are important for understanding the milieu in which Sunni Muslims of Awadh rose to challenge the Hindu presence at Ayodhya. First, Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (1702-1762) argued that the Mughal Empire had fallen into decline because its leaders had turned away from the true nature of Islam.<sup>55</sup> The path to restoration lay in reviving "pure" Islam modeled after the example of the Prophet and his companions. Specifically, restoration required a return to Shari'a law formulated by freshly applying the words and deeds of the Prophet as

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid*

<sup>53</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Chapter 3: "The Khalsa and its Rahit", pp. 23-61

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Gold, "Organized Hinduism: From Vedic Truth to Hindu Nation," *Fundamentalism Observed*, pp. 531-595, edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) pg. 539, 542

<sup>55</sup> Also transliterated as Shah Wali-Ullah. For more details on Wali Allah, see Azia Ahmad, "Political and Religious Ideals of Shah Wali-Ullah of Delhi," *Muslim World*, Vol. 52, (1962), pp. 23-30

recorded in the Sunnah.<sup>56</sup> As a member of the Naqshbandiyah Sufi order, he argued that revival also required reforming Sufi practices to exclude the worship of saints' tombs and rituals that incorporated Hindu elements. Wali Allah further stressed the importance of an elected caliphate for governing the ummah, in opposition to Shia practices of leadership through bloodline from the Prophet. Finally, he called for jihad against threats to the faith.<sup>57</sup>

Wali Allah's reformist agenda paved the way for the creation of a jihadist movement of Sunni Muslims under the leadership of Saiyid Ahmad of Bareilly (1786-1831).<sup>58</sup> Like Wali Allah, Saiyid Ahmad was a member of the Naqshbandiyah order, in addition to two other prominent Sufi orders, the Chisti and Qadiri.<sup>59</sup> Prior to forming his jihad movement, Saiyid Ahmad was a trooper under the Pindari Chieftain Ahir Khan, which was defeated by the British in 1818.<sup>60</sup> In that same year, he founded a revivalist movement called "the Path of Muhammad," and asserted that "true" Muslims should form a new polity.<sup>61</sup> In 1826, after organizing a band of *mujihideen*, soldiers of God, he declared war against Sikhs in the Northwest Frontier with the aim of capturing their land and establishing a Muslim stronghold; this offensive, however, ended in failure. In 1830, Saiyid Ahmad defeated the Shia ruler of Peshawar, Yar Muhammad Khan, and declared himself the new Muslim Caliph. In 1831, with an army of around 600, Saiyid Ahmad

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<sup>56</sup> The debate over how to formulate and apply *Shari'a* law created a schism in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. One camp believed in relying on the commentaries produced by key Islamic jurists in each of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence—the *Maliki*, *Hanafi*, *Shaa'fi*, and *Hanbali* in Sunni Islam, and the *Jafari* school in Twelver Shia Islam. The other camp believed that fresh interpretations, *ijtihad*, by Islamic scholars and jurists should be applied to formulate *Shari'a*. This latter camp was usually in opposition to the established *Ulama* and *qadis* of their day. See Esposito, pp. 122-123

<sup>57</sup> Hardy, pp. 29-30; Esposito, pp. 120-123

<sup>58</sup> Also called Shayyid Ahmad Shahid. For more details on Saiyid Ahmad, see Freeland Abbott, "The Jihad of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid," pp. 216-222; and Freeland Abbott, "The Transformation of the Jihad Movement," pp. 285-295, *Muslim World*, Vol. 52, No. 3-4, (1962)

<sup>59</sup> Hardy, pg. 51

tried again to push the Sikhs out of Hazara and Kashmir, but was killed in battle.<sup>62</sup>

Surviving members of the Path of Muhammad continued to hide out in the Northwestern Territories and fought against the British in the Frontier Wars of 1897-1898, before finally being defeated.<sup>63</sup>

It was in this milieu that the Sunni leaders in Awadh attempted two attacks on a Hindu temple in Ayodhya. First, the Sunni Ghulam Husain rallied a band of Muslims around the battle cry that Hindus in Ayodhya had destroyed a mosque and built the Hanumanghari Temple on its site, an offense that required force to take back the space. The Muslims, numbering around 500, attempted to storm the temple but were repelled by Nagas, Hindu warrior monks. Around 70 Muslims were killed in the attack and their bodies were buried in the graveyard next to the Babri Mosque.<sup>64</sup>

The Shia Nawab King, together with the British, attempted to resolve the dispute by investigating Muslim claims of Hindu destruction of the mosque. They concluded that there had not been a mosque on that site.<sup>65</sup> This, however, did not placate the Sunni leader Maulvi Amir-ud-din, also known as Amir 'Ali, who declared jihad on the Hindus of Ayodhya in 1855 and mobilized a band of 2,000 Muslims to take the Hanumanghari Temple.<sup>66</sup> The band was stopped en route to Ayodhya by combined forces of British, Nawab, and Hindu troops; these forces suffered casualties estimated between 120 to 700

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid*

<sup>61</sup> Abbot, "Transformation," pg. 288

<sup>62</sup> Hardy, pp. 51-52

<sup>63</sup> Hardy, pg. 173-174

<sup>64</sup> Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated," pg. 288; Panikkar, pg. 31. Jaffrelot claims that *Bairagis* (Hindu ascetics) attacked the mosque. See Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s*, (London: Hurst and Company, 1996), pg. 92.

<sup>65</sup> Van der Veer, "God Must Be Liberated," pg. 288-289

<sup>66</sup> Sushil Srivastava, "How the British Saw the Issue," pp.38-57, *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi Issue*, edited by Sarvepalli Gopal, (Delhi: Viking Press, 1991), pg. 44



before finally defeating Amir ‘Ali’s troops.<sup>67</sup> Amir ‘Ali was assassinated shortly after the attack; his head was given as a gift to the Nawab King and his body was buried in the graveyard next to the Babri Mosque.<sup>68</sup> The British officially annexed Awadh shortly after this uprising, erected a fence around the Babri Mosque, and allowed Hindus to worship on a platform outside the fence.

Although the British were essentially ruling Awadh at the time of these attacks and thus recording events in the region, there is considerable debate over what happened between Hindus and Muslims. Several accounts state that the two attacks took place in 1855, although some argue that the first attack, led by Husain, occurred in 1853 and the second attack, headed by Amir ‘Ali, took place in 1855.<sup>69</sup> However, all sources agree that the violence over the sites in Ayodhya ended when the British formally annexed Awadh in February of 1856 and separated the religious groups’ sacred spaces. Furthermore, most sources agree that the Sunnis mobilized in response to a rumor that Hindus had destroyed a mosque in order to build a temple, but there does not appear to be a clear understanding on the origins or timing of this rumor. It is worth noting, however, that rumors of destroyed mosques and temples have fueled violence in all three of the disturbances over Ayodhya examined in this chapter, not just in 1853-1855. Therefore, these rumors appear to be powerful inspiration for mobilization and violent action.

The 1853-1855 episodes of violence have aspects both unique and typical to the overall Ayodhya dispute. This outbreak of Hindu-Muslim violence is unique, first, in that

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*

<sup>69</sup> For example, Sushil Srivastava, looking at several accounts of the events made by British officers, argues that the two battles occurred in 1853 and 1855, pg. 42. Van der Veer, “God Must be Liberated,” pp. 288-289; and Panikkar, pp. 30-31, on the other hand, argue that both events occurred in 1855.

Muslims were accusing Hindus of destroying a mosque in order to build a temple. In other words, the accusation is reversed from later claims in which Hindus argue that Muslims destroyed a temple in order to build the mosque. Second, the disputed site is not the Babri Mosque in this outbreak; rather, it is a neighboring temple. During the first round of clashes, it is recorded that Hindu fighters captured and occupied the Babri Mosque but then vacated the space when the conflict ended.<sup>70</sup> This suggests that taking the Babri Mosque was not on the agenda of Hindus in Ayodhya at this time. Third, this episode of violence involved tensions between Shia Muslim leaders, who were the custodians of Ayodhya, and Sunni Muslim rebels. Therefore, in addition to the Sunni attack challenging the presence of Hindus in Ayodhya, these attacks also involved fighting within Islam's factions. In contrast, Sunni and Shia tensions are not visible in subsequent clashes over the site. Fourth, this particular episode is unique in that it was a localized outbreak; violence over the disputed space did not lead to violence in other regions in South Asia. This is not the case in future clashes over Ayodhya.

The 1853-1855 violence over sacred space in Ayodhya, however, does have elements that conform to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, the aggressors—Sunni religious leaders in and around Ayodhya—organized groups in response to general and specific threats. As part of a larger movement of Islamic revival occurring on the subcontinent, these groups were reacting to the general threat of decline in Sunni political power and the perceived threats imposed by rulers such as the Shia Nawabs, the British, and Hindu groups. Ayodhya was no exception to this trend. Historians note that Hindu monastic orders in Ayodhya flourished under Nawab rule,

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<sup>70</sup> Panikkar, pg. 32

becoming numerous and wealthy by the 1800s.<sup>71</sup> Coupled with the rise of British influence in the region, the Sunni elites of Awadh, once in a position of power, could see their decline relative to their neighbors.

Moreover, this violent challenge to the status quo in Ayodhya occurred within the greater milieu of radical Islamic revivalism on the Subcontinent. It came in the midst of Saiyid Ahmad of Bareilly's call for jihad to defend the faith, as previously described. This era also saw violent Islamic uprisings in Bengal including the Muslim leader Titu Mir, who fought against British occupation.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, calls for jihad and violent Muslim uprisings were not unique at this time. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the 1853-1855 uprisings occurred around the time of the last attempt of Mughal political elites to shake off the British and restore power, manifested in the 1857 uprising. This, like the attacks on the Hanumangarhi Temple, ended in defeat and the mass annexation of the subcontinent to British rule.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, both religious and political elites were reacting to a general sense of threat to their power, their land, and their faith.

Within these general perceptions of threat, there was a specific threat that helps explain why violence occurred at this time, namely the rumor that a mosque had been destroyed to build the Hanumangarhi Temple. Although it is not clear who started the rumor, it does appear that it was a power force for mobilizing men to fight a jihad both against Hindus at the site and against Nawab leaders, whom the Sunnis accused of not protecting the city's Muslim sites.

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<sup>71</sup> See for example, Van der Veer, *Gods on Earth*; and Bakker, *Ayodhya*

<sup>72</sup> For more details on Titu Mir, see Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History*, (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), pp.44-53

<sup>73</sup> For a summary of the 1857 uprising, see Hardy, Chapter 3: "1857 and its Aftermath," pp. 61-91

Second, the Sunni leaders' call for jihad succeeded in mobilizing a modest force of Sunni Muslims in the area, which was their greatest asset. As previously mentioned, Ghulam Husain is reported to have rallied a band of around 500 men and Amir 'Ali, a force of around 2,000. While both of these movements proved unsuccessful in taking the Hanumangarhi Temple, they did succeed in disrupting the peace, forcing the intervention of Hindu, Nawab, and British troops, and accruing considerable bloodshed. Amir 'Ali's attack in particular is reported to have caused hundreds of casualties within their own ranks in addition to the near destruction of the British First Regiment of the Avadh [sic] Irregular Infantry.<sup>74</sup> These two attacks also provided the occasion for Britain's official annexation of the area. Therefore, these leaders' succeeded in mobilizing forces for religious action that posed a threat to the status quo.

However, the relationship between religious and political leaders does not conform to the predictions stated at the beginning of the chapter. Religious and political elites were not collaborating on these attacks but, rather, were at odds. Moreover, not only were religious and political leaders at odds but religious leaders targeted political leaders in their campaign. After the successful defeat of Amir 'Ali, his head was brought to the Nawab King as vindication for the trouble the uprising had caused within his domain. Therefore, religious leaders did not have the resources of the state to help achieve their aims.

Finally, it is important to state that the 1853-1855 attacks on the Hanumangarhi Temple were not exclusively religious. The attacks involved underlying social and political factors, such as the loss of status, demographic changes, and reduction in political clout. However, the actions taken in attempts to reverse these social and political

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<sup>74</sup> Srivastava, pg. 44

factors were saliently religious. They involved the use of religious logic for the cause of decline and religious action to restore that loss. The actions were not against military outposts, governmental offices, or economic centers but rather against religious institutions and property. Therefore, religion was not just an opportunity to vent social and political frustrations; rather the grievances were saliently religious.

*The troubled peace of 1856-1948. The violence of 1949.*

This section explores the troubled peace of Ayodhya under British rule, from 1856 until Partition in 1947, followed by the appearance of Hindu idols in the Babri Mosque on the night of December 22-23, 1949, which sparked riots throughout India and prompted the federal government to lock the mosque and place military guards at its doors. It argues that the troubled peace—disrupted by several minor clashes—is best explained by British attempts to manage the Ayodhya dispute through a combination of separating religious space between Hindus and Muslims and by driving the dispute into the courts and away from the streets. The 1949 disturbance at Ayodhya, instigated by Hindus, is the result of mobilized Hindu activists seizing on a window of opportunity presented by post-Partition India—particularly the transfer of Muslim organizations and groups to Pakistan, which left Ayodhya and other Muslim sites vulnerable—rather than action prompted by threat. Violence over the mosque ended with the government intervening and closing the site to all.

The end of open hostilities over Ayodhya from 1856-1949 is best explained by two factors. First, British annexation of Awadh took the dispute over sacred space out of the Nawab's hands and made it a concern of the colonial authorities. The British had far greater resources to control the problem including a strong and well organized military

and a legal process aimed at solving disputes through litigation. The combination of military and legal presence drove the Ayodhya conflict into the courts. In 1885, a Hindu *Mahant*, religious leader, filed a petition with the Secretary of State for India in Council asking permission for Hindus to build a temple on the platform next to the mosque; the plea was rejected on the grounds that altering the status quo could disrupt the peace.<sup>75</sup> In 1936, Sunni and Shia Muslim *Waqf* boards—religious leaders charged with maintenance of Muslim religious property—began litigation to determine whether the Babri Mosque was Sunni or Shia. The judge determined, inconclusively, that Sunnis built the mosque but that both sects had prayed there throughout its history. These legal battles, therefore, did little to resolve tensions of ownership, maintenance and visitation rights to these sacred sites in Ayodhya.

Second, Hindu and Muslim religious and political leaders lacked the social and material resources to challenge either British authority or each other over Ayodhya. This situation began to change towards the end of the 1800s, however, with the creation of Hindu and Muslim societies, religious movements and political organizations. These groups organized religious and political leaders, their demands, and their constituents, allowing for challenges to the status quo, which included a challenge to the status of Ayodhya in 1949. This point will be discussed further below.

The December 1949 Hindu attempt to take the Babri Mosque is the result of four major developments within Hindu-Muslim relations in South Asia: the construction and calcification of communal identities; the creation of separate Hindu and Muslim

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<sup>75</sup> For further details on litigation surrounding the sites in Ayodhya, see A.G. Noorani, “Legal Aspects to the Issue,” *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi Issue*, edited by Sarvepalli Gopal, (Delhi: Viking Press, 1991), pp. 64-66; and S.K. Tripathi, “One Hundred Years of Litigation,”

“societies;” the formation of political organizations and parties along communal lines; and the partition of the Subcontinent into Pakistan and India. The Partition, in particular, depleted Muslim resources in India and created a window of opportunity for Hindu activists bent on challenging the status quo in Ayodhya.

The emergence of communalism in India—individual and group identity based on religious affiliation—has received great attention from academia. Most scholars agree that communalism is a modern phenomenon and is largely the product of British influence on the Subcontinent. Historian Aditya Mukherjee identifies six conditions that he argues led to the formation of communal identities: the uneven development between Hindu and Muslim middle and upper classes; the British administration’s decision to replace the language used by the Mughal Empire, Persian, with English as the language of the government; uneven opportunities for English language and higher education favoring Hindus; British suppression of Muslim elites due to the 1857 uprising; overall economic stagnation; and the emergence of competition between Hindu and Muslim elites for government posts in the British administration.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to these six factors, communal identity sharpened with British census taking in India, which began in 1871. The census measured populations according to religious affiliation, thus strengthening emerging communal consciousness. Censuses demonstrated to both Hindus and Muslims their relative numbers in certain regions. For example, Muslims became painfully aware of their minority status in the North, where

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*Babri-Masjid Ramjanambhoomi Controversy*, edited by Ali Engineer, (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1990), pp. 16-27.

<sup>76</sup> Aditya Mukherjee, “Colonialism and Communalism,” *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Barbri Masjid-Ramjanabhumi Issue*, edited by Sarvepalli Gopal, (Delhi: Viking Press, 1991), pp. 164-178

they used to rule over most of the Subcontinent.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, Hindus in Punjab became aware of their declining numbers relative to Muslims, fueling a sense of threat among Hindus, particularly elites in this region.<sup>78</sup> The emergence of communalism, therefore, divided Hindus and Muslims in 19<sup>th</sup> century India along religious lines, reorganizing society in a way that would affect relations between the two groups and the struggle over Ayodhya.

Growing communal awareness prompted the creation of professional associations and societies, usually with the aim of strengthening identity and society *within* religiously defined groups, not *across* groups. One of the earliest societies formed along communal lines was the Brahmo Samaj, “the society of Brahma,” which began among Hindu elites in Calcutta. This society, which aimed to create Hindu identity based on the authority of the Vedic scriptures, lasted only briefly then dissolved over ideological disputes.<sup>79</sup>

In 1875, Hindu religious leaders in Punjab formed the Arya Samaj, which flourished under the leadership of Swami Dayanada Sarasvati (1824-1883) and was headquartered in Lahore (now in Pakistan).<sup>80</sup> As with the Bramho Samaj, the Arya Samaj attempted to use the Vedic texts as the cornerstone for Hindu national identity. While important to Brahmans, these texts were not part of the religious beliefs and practices of the masses. Therefore, this approach was only moderately successful in mobilizing Hindus for national cohesion.

The Arya Samaj did succeed, however, in asserting protective measures around a commonly held Hindu belief—the sacredness of the cow. Their efforts to impose policies

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pg. 121

<sup>78</sup> Gold, pg. 539

<sup>79</sup> Gold, pg. 543



aimed at preventing cow slaughter cut right along communal lines. In particular, Muslims were accustomed to slaughtering cows on the feast of Bakr-Id, the day commemorating Isaac's willingness to slaughter his son Ishmael in obedience to God. God spared Ishmael by providing an animal to be slaughtered in his place. Thus Muslims slaughter an animal in commemoration of God's mercy in sparing Ishmael.<sup>81</sup> Dayananda, the head of the Arya Samaj, formed the *Gaurakhshini Sabha* in 1882, or the Society for the Protection of the Cow.<sup>82</sup> The following year, cow related riots occurred in Lahore, Aballa District, Firuzpur, and Delhi.<sup>83</sup> Cow related rioting occurred again in 1886, 1889, and 1912, the last of which included Ayodhya among other places. In 1932, cow related riots caused the deaths of hundreds to thousands of Muslims in Ayodhya. Therefore, although the Arya Samaj was not successful in creating a unified movement of Hinduism formed around the Vedas, it did succeed in stirring violent passions over the issue of cow slaughter.

Another organization that is important for understanding Hindu mobilization is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), formed in 1925 by K.B. Hedgewar, a physician by training. Hedgewar founded the RSS as neither a religious organization nor as a political party, but rather as a Hindu cultural movement designed to provide "discipline and revitalization" to its members.<sup>84</sup> Hedgewar argued that Hindus had fallen into a state of personal and national weakness, allowing their land and people to be occupied by foreign forces, first by Muslims for 1,200 years and then by Britain. Hindu weakness, therefore, had to be overcome in order to assert independence. The RSS

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<sup>80</sup> Jaffrelot, pp. 11-18, 22-32; Gold, pg. 555; Hardy cites the founding date as 1883, pg. 139.

<sup>81</sup> This story is similar to the account found in Genesis 22, except that in the Genesis account, which is revered in Judaism and Christianity, Abraham's son Jacob is named as the potential sacrifice, not Ismael. Jacob is recognized as the son through which the Israelites descended. Ismael is recognized as the line through which other Semitic peoples descended, including today's Arabs.

<sup>82</sup> Hardy, pg 140

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*

lionized Hindu warrior monks of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, who defended the community against Aurengzeb's forces, as examples of Hindu might necessary for transforming the nation.

Hedgewar argued that actions, not beliefs, are what makes one a Hindu. The movement's practices, therefore, stressed physical training, strength and discipline. As a fraternity, it targeted boys between the ages of 11 to 15.<sup>85</sup> Although Hedgewar rejected Hindu texts as the basis for national identity, the RSS drew heavily on religious festivals, beliefs and symbols for mobilization.<sup>86</sup> Despite this, it is important to note that the RSS was formed not as an organization exclusive to Hindus but, rather, made a distinction between "indigenous" religions of India—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism—and "foreign" religions such as Islam, Christianity (the religions of India's occupiers) and Judaism. The RSS advocated that Indians who practiced these religions were the product of foreign occupation; they, therefore, needed to return to their true religious beliefs, most likely Hinduism, in order to be *bona fide* Indians. Thus, although a cultural organization, their identity boundaries were drawn by religious distinctions. The RSS has become one of the most important societies connected to the rise of Hindu nationalism and, as will be described, has played a major role in events relating to the violent contestation of Ayodhya.

Muslim elites also formed institutions and societies around this time; however they were divided over how to organize and for what ends. This division led to the creation of two broad political movements. The first group, inspired by the jihads of

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<sup>84</sup> Gold, pg. 540; Jaffrelot, pp. 33-79

<sup>85</sup> Ainslie T. Embree, "The Function of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: To Define the Hindu Nation," *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, pp. 617-652, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pg. 628

<sup>86</sup> Gold, pg. 548

Bareilly and Titu Mir, called for Muslims to return to the “true” path of Islam, including adherence to the Five Pillars and maintenance of Shari’a law. Furthermore, they argued that British rule should be resisted and Muslims should work to end their occupation of India. In 1867, this group founded the Deobandi College with the aim of educating Indian Muslims in orthodox practices of Islam. Proponents of this path remained small, but still exist on the subcontinent today.<sup>87</sup>

Second, a larger group of Muslim intellectuals headed by Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan—perhaps the most prominent Muslim elite of this era—aimed to gain resources for Muslims by working within the British system rather than opposing it. In 1875, they founded Aligarh University, a school of higher learning for Muslims that taught skills important for attaining governmental jobs, such as English.<sup>88</sup> In 1877, another prominent Muslim, Saiyid Amir ‘Ali, founded the National Mahomedan Association with the aim of encouraging the British to promote Muslims in governmental posts.<sup>89</sup> Also in the 1880s, Muslim associations were formed in Amristar, Bareilly, Lucknow, Bombay, and Lahore.<sup>90</sup> In 1888, Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan founded the Muhammadan Educational Conference in order to push for greater British resources for Muslim education.<sup>91</sup> In 1906, the Muhammadan Educational Conference became the All-India Muslim League, which aimed to establish greater Muslims representation in the political sphere.<sup>92</sup> Their efforts resulted in the creation of Muslim quotas within the government in 1909.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Peters, pg. 53

<sup>88</sup> Fazlur Rahman, “Muslim Modernism in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, No. 21, (1958), pp. 82-99

<sup>89</sup> Hardy, pg. 126

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*

<sup>91</sup> Hardy, pg. 138

<sup>92</sup> Hardy, pg. 164

<sup>93</sup> Hardy, pg. 147

Alongside the formation of societies, both Hindus and Muslims also created newspapers and other forms of print media aimed at informing and strengthening identity within their groups. Sir Sayid Ahmad Khan began the *Tahzib al-Akhlaq* in 1872, followed by similar publications in Lucknow and Lahore, including *The Pioneer*, which was widely circulated among Muslim elites.<sup>94</sup> Several Hindu books published around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were also critical for the development of a separate Hindu consciousness. In particular, Savarakar's book *Hinduvta*, which he wrote in 1910 while imprisoned for anti-British rhetoric, became important for Hindu Nationalism.<sup>95</sup> In the 1920s, the RSS founded *The Organiser*, which continues to have a wide circulation today.

Also during this time, Hindus and Muslims attempted to gain greater political power through the creation of a unified movement. In 1885, Hindu elites in Bombay called the first meeting of the Indian National Congress.<sup>96</sup> The Indian National Congress aimed to unify all elites of India, not just Hindus, with the aim of ending British rule; this bid, however, was soon rejected by Saiyid Amir 'Ali and the National Mahommedan Association.<sup>97</sup> Both Amir 'Ali and Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan believed that British rule could not be dislodged from the Subcontinent and, therefore, Muslims should work towards improving their status and resources within the British system. They argued that agitating for total independence was futile and would only weaken the chances of improving the Muslims' status with the British.<sup>98</sup> Although there were Muslim elites

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<sup>94</sup> Hardy, pg. 126

<sup>95</sup> Gold, pg. 547

<sup>96</sup> Hardy, pg. 127

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*

<sup>98</sup> Hardy, pp. 127-139

who participated in Indian National Congress meetings, it suffered without the support of Amir ‘Ali and Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan.<sup>99</sup>

Again in 1920, under the leadership of Gandhi, the Indian National Congress attempted to unify Hindus and Muslims and oppose British rule through acts of civil disobedience in the “Non-cooperation Movement.” Gandhi joined forces with the *Khalifat* movement—a pan-Muslim effort to preserve the office of the Caliphate and protect Muslim religious sites—in order to mobilize the masses across the Hindu-Muslim divide.<sup>100</sup> Gandhi, however, drew heavily on Hindu resources—symbols, texts, and practices—which alienated Muslims from the movement. The Non-cooperation Movement, therefore, while enjoying initial success, lasted only briefly and dissolved by 1925.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to these joint efforts at political mobilization, Hindus and Muslims also formed political organizations and parties that had expressly religious goals. These religious groups were formed largely in reaction to the secular nature of the more prominent Hindu and Muslim political organizations, such as Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. The Hindu religious society, the Arya Samaj, became more active in politics in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in reaction to the numerical and economic decline of Hindus in Punjab. These political concerns prompted the creation of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, which was particularly active in the 1920s.<sup>102</sup> This party died out, however, after it lost its headquarters in Lahore to Pakistan.

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<sup>99</sup> *ibid*

<sup>100</sup> Charles J. Adams, “The Ideology of Mawlana Mawdudi,” *South Asian Politics and Religion*, edited by D. E. Smith, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pg. 373

<sup>101</sup> Barbara W. Flynn, “Cows and Music: Hindu-Muslim Riots as an Instrument of Political Mobilization,” pp. 39-54, *Language and Society in Modern India*, edited by R. Crane and B. Spangenberg, (New Delhi: Heritage, 1981), pp. 40-43

<sup>102</sup> Gold, pg. 539

Muslim political movements and parties also began to assert their agendas during this time. In 1919, the trans-national Muslim *Khalifat* movement took root in South Asia, which was effective in mobilizing Muslim elites and making their presence felt in South Asia.<sup>103</sup> The *Khalifat* movement was short lived, however, and died out in 1925. In 1941, keeping with the Deobandi tradition, Mawlana Mawdudi founded the *Jamaat-i-Islami* party, largely in reaction to the secular agenda of the Muslim League and its leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Jinnah argued for the creation of an independent state in South Asia in which Muslims, as an ethnic category, would be the majority, thus ensuring their survival. Mawdudi argued that the creation of a state was not enough; the government and its people needed to affirm and uphold the tenets of Islam, particularly Shari'a law, in order to ensure the survival of "real" Muslims.<sup>104</sup> However, from the 1937 elections in India until the time of Partition, the majority of Muslims backed the agenda of the Muslim League, not *Jamaat-i-Islami*.<sup>105</sup>

Partition, however, was the critical event that changed the political and religious status quo in India and provided the opportunity for Hindu action against the Babri Mosque. The Partition of the subcontinent into the Muslim state of Pakistan and India, which was overwhelmingly Hindu, institutionalized the communalist divide. Most of the Indian Muslim groups formed prior to Partition moved to Pakistan, including Jinnah's Muslim League, which was to form the first government in Pakistan, and Mawdudi's

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<sup>103</sup> Brass, pg. 127

<sup>104</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Communalism and Fundamentalism: A Reexamination of the Origins of Islamic Fundamentalism," pp. 121-139, *Contention*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (1995), pg. 126

<sup>105</sup> Adams, pg. 374. This is, however, with the notable exception of the Sunni association of Ulama, the *Jam'iyyat-i Ulama-i Hind*, which backed the Indian National Congress' bid for independence from British rule. See Yohanan Friedman, "The Attitude of the *Jami'yyat-i Ulama-i Hind* to the Indian National Movement and the Establishment of Pakistan," *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 7, (1971), pp. 157-180

*Jaamat-i-Islami* party. This left Muslims within the borders of India and their interests vulnerable, including the status of Ayodhya.

In this social and political environment, Hindu activists attempted to take the Babri Mosque via the *fait accompli* of placing Hindu idols in the mosque on the night of December 22-23, 1949. Hindu activists argued that the presence of idols required worship, which in turn demanded access to the mosque. The appearance of idols, therefore, succeeded in gaining Hindu activists a foothold into the Muslim site. However, despite the federal government's proclamation and order to remove the idols, many Hindus believed that the idols appeared in the mosque by their own accord; it was a miraculous sign that Ram had taken back his own birthplace. For Muslims, this was an act of desecration. Idol worship—devotion to any human or animal figures—is strictly forbidden and is regarded as a breach of *tawhid*, the oneness of God. Therefore, the presence of the idols was an egregious violation to their faith. The resolution to lock the building, with the idols inside, did not end this religious offense, although it did quell the riots provoked by the incident.

The 1949 outbreak of violence between Hindus and Muslims over the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya has characteristics that conform to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. Most importantly, Hindus had considerable resources at their disposal in 1949. Hindu nationalist organizations were still intact in post-Partition India, unlike Muslim organizations which had, by in large, moved to Pakistan. The RSS in particular was viewed as an influential force in Hindu nationalism and communalist rhetoric. Prior to the 1949 attack on the mosque, the RSS was blamed for inspiring Gandhi's

assassination, although never proven to be directly connected to the perpetrator.<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, the RSS was banned from February 1948 to July 1949.<sup>107</sup> At the time of its censure, the RSS was estimated to have a core of 200,000 active members with a wider circle of 5 million sympathizers.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, the RSS had the resources to mobilize large numbers of Hindus sympathetic to the Hindu nationalist agenda and was fingered as the most likely organization connected with the placement of idols inside the Babri Mosque and the riots that followed.

However, the 1949 attack on the mosque diverges from the causal argument proposed in this chapter in three ways. First, the 1949 attempt to change the status quo is better understood as Hindu activists seizing upon opportunity rather than responding to threat. Muslims in India were politically and socially vulnerable after Partition. The majority of resources devoted to protecting and promoting Muslim rights on the subcontinent were invested in the creation of Pakistan.<sup>109</sup> Although portions of some groups remained, the Muslim community was at a disadvantage; they lacked the necessary resources to deter and protect Hindu advances on the mosque.<sup>110</sup> Hindu activist seized on this opportunity of Muslim vulnerability and attempted to take the mosque in the absence of strong Muslim mobilization.

Second, as with the first outbreak of Hindu-Muslim violence in 1853-1855, religious and political elites were not aligned on the attempt to take the Babri Mosque. In fact, Nehru's government was hostile to Hindu actions at Ayodhya and took measures

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<sup>106</sup> Gold, pg. 559

<sup>107</sup> Gold, pg. 541

<sup>108</sup> Gold, pp. 559-600.

<sup>109</sup> Mushirul Haq, "Religion and Muslim Politics in Modern India," *The Muslim Situation in India*, edited by Iqbal Ansari, (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1989), pp. 60-73

<sup>110</sup> The remnants formed the Indian Union Muslim's League, which, in 1948, decided not to form a Muslim political party. See Haq, pp. 66-67



aimed at returning the site to the status quo. Thus, Hindu activists did not have the resources of the state to aid in their agenda at Ayodhya. The government's hostility towards the Hindu nationalist agenda was successful in ending the 1949 communal riots, but only partially successful in returning Ayodhya to the pre-1949 status quo. Therefore, although the federal government condemned the act, Hindu activists were partially successful in gaining a foothold into the mosque.

Third, unlike the first disturbances in 1853-1855, controversy over Ayodhya resulted in nation-wide riots. One possible explanation for the scope and intensity of the riots is the persisting tensions surrounding Partition, which flared up with any issue involving communalism. Another possible explanation is that increases in media technology spread the news of events in Ayodhya more quickly and broadly than in the past, evoking emotions throughout the country. Nevertheless, the nation-wide sensitivity over Ayodhya in 1949 has persisted and become the norm.

*The peace of 1950-1986. The violence of 1986 to 2002.*

This section covers the relative calm over Ayodhya from the time of mosque's closure in 1950 until a district court ordered the mosque to be unlocked and open to the public in 1986, from which time there has been a constant stream of minor clashes between Hindus and Muslims over the site and two major outbreaks of violence, in December of 1992 and in March-July of 2002. This section argues that the erosion of the Congress party's dominance and legitimacy, beginning in the 1970s, opened the door for other parties to enter mainstream politics in India, most notably Hindu nationalist parties, which have used Hinduism to mobilize mass support at the national level. In particular, Hindu nationalist groups have capitalized on the popularity of the Ramayana epic,

placing Ayodhya at the epicenter of the struggle to create *Hindutva*, a Hindu nation in India.

As described in the previous section, the 1949 Hindu attempt to claim the Babri Mosque by placing idols inside the building ended with the federal government locking the mosque to all. This decision succeeded in quieting riots sparked by the events in Ayodhya but did not end the dispute over rights to its sacred spaces. The relative calm in Ayodhya of 1950-1986 is best explained by two connected factors: the dominance of the Congress party in Indian politics from 1947-1984; and the promotion of their version of Indian nationalism, which was predominantly areligious and attempted to be non-communal. This brand of Indian nationalism took shape under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, beginning in the 1920s, and became the dominant ideology after India's independence.<sup>111</sup> Nehru stressed industrialization and economic reform in his agenda for India, arguing that social classes—brought on by development—would supplant communalism. He further argued that popular participation in the democratic process together with liberal institutions and education would erode religious and ethnic identities. In its place would emerge a new Indian identity, one based on the democratic and economic values of the country, not on religion.<sup>112</sup>

Nehru's vision, however, did not fully materialize. Instead of the democratic process supplanting religious, regional and caste identities, voting blocs emerged along these cleavages, reinforcing communalism.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, organizations and political parties formed in opposition to Nehru's secular India, stressing that Hindu culture and

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<sup>111</sup> Yogendra Malik and V.B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), pg. 5; Jaffrelot, pp. 80-90

<sup>112</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 5-6

<sup>113</sup> Malik and Singh, pg. 6

values should not be left out of the political process. Religious-nationalist political parties, however, remained on the fringe of political life until the advent of Indira Gandhi's Emergency Rule of 1975-1977.<sup>114</sup> When Emergency Rule was lifted, several parties opposed to the Congress party—including a Hindu nationalist party—joined forces to form the Janata Party. In the 1977 elections, the Janata Party won seats in the legislative assembly and received cabinet posts, bringing the Hindu nationalist agenda into the mainstream.<sup>115</sup> From this time, Hindu nationalism has grown in India, paving the way for Hindu activist support within the government, including the campaign to destroy the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya and erect a Hindu temple in its place. This shift in politics, therefore, helped to bring an end to the relative calm over Ayodhya.

The success of the Hindu nationalist agenda in general, and the campaign to “liberate” Ayodhya from Muslim influence in particular, is primarily the result of three organizations in India: the Hindu cultural organization mentioned in the previous section, the RSS; the creation of Hindu nationalist political parties, first the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and its successor the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); and, most importantly, the founding of an organization dominated by Hindu religious leaders, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). All of these organizations have used religious beliefs and practices for their own particular goals. All three groups have joined forces to work on the Ayodhya campaign.

The RSS is perhaps the most important Hindu nationalist organization to survive Partition. Although banned from February 1948 until July of 1949 under suspicion of

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<sup>114</sup> Malik and Singh, pg. 34

<sup>115</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 33-34

aiding Gandhi's assassin, the RSS has endured and, since the 1980s, flourished.<sup>116</sup> The RSS has aided the Hindu nationalist bid in two important ways. First, it has exposed large numbers of Indians to its ideology and agenda. The organization runs camps, athletic events, and after school programs, targeting boys between the ages of eleven to fifteen. Attrition is high but many pass through the organization and are exposed to their worldview.<sup>117</sup> In addition, the RSS's goals and ideology—strengthening Hindu society and culture—is broad enough to support a family of affiliate organizations with similar goals. This includes very loose ties to other organizations via individuals who have been affiliated with the RSS at some point, to groups that have RSS members working in the upper echelons—such as the BJP and VHP—to organizations that the RSS has created, such as the woman's group Rashtra Sevika Samiti, university groups, and labor unions.<sup>118</sup> The RSS has also fostered international ties with Hindus in the diaspora.<sup>119</sup> These ties have helped to spread Hindu nationalism across the worldwide Hindu population.

Second, the RSS has influenced the Hindu nationalist agenda by throwing its support behind political parties sympathetic to its goals. The RSS stresses that it is not a political party but it also asserts that it participates in the political process and encourages its ranks to vote.<sup>120</sup> In 1984, the Congress party, under Rajiv Gandhi, claimed to support RSS goals, earning RSS backing and the Congress party's subsequent success in that year's elections.<sup>121</sup> In 1991, the RSS threw its weight behind the BJP, which supported the bid to build a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. The BJP did

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<sup>116</sup> Gold, pg. 559

<sup>117</sup> Gold, pg. 561

<sup>118</sup> Embree, pp. 639-641; Kiran Saxena, "The Hindu Trade Union Movement in India: The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 7, (July 1993), pp. 685-672

<sup>119</sup> Embree, pg. 642

<sup>120</sup> Embree, pg. 617

<sup>121</sup> *ibid*

exceedingly well, winning 119 seats in national elections and nearly 20% of the vote.<sup>122</sup>

In addition, the BJP won state elections in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populated state and the location of Ayodhya, in addition to Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, although not a political party, the RSS has demonstrated its ability to mobilize its supporters to affect the electoral process.

The second set of organizations that is critical for understanding the rise of Hindu nationalism and battles over Ayodhya are Hindu nationalist political parties, particularly the BJS and its successor the BJP. The BJS was founded on October 21, 1951 by Dr. Prashad Mookerjee, a former member of the Hindu Mahasabha party.<sup>124</sup> The party argued that Nehru's government favored minorities, particularly Muslims, and that this was detrimental to the Hindu majority; a party was needed, therefore, to counter this trend. After creating the BJS, Dr. Mookerjee sought the backing of the RSS, which it believed would provide the party with mass support.<sup>125</sup> In 1952, the BJS received 3.06% of the vote for the Lok Sabha (the lower house). By 1967, it had received 9.41% of the vote.<sup>126</sup> In the face of rising corruption in the Congress party during the 1970s, the BJS stressed "value based politics," rallying anti-Congress, anti-corruption groups throughout the country. In 1977, Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency Rule, banning the BJS and RSS, and imprisoning their members. With the end of Emergency Rule in 1977, the BJS joined the Janata Party, a coalition of political parties and movements, which enjoyed initial success in the 1977 elections.<sup>127</sup> After weak election results in 1980, the BJS broke with

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<sup>122</sup> Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 1; Thakur, pg. 653

<sup>123</sup> *ibid*

<sup>124</sup> B.D. Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics: The Origins and Development of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Malik and Singh, pp. 29-30

<sup>125</sup> Malik and Singh, pg. 30

<sup>126</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 30-31

<sup>127</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 33-34

the Janata Party and formed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as its founding president.<sup>128</sup>

The BJP has followed on the rhetoric of the BJS to stress value-based politics, arguing that the crises facing India are due to moral decay. The party uses Gandhi's philosophy as the cornerstone of its new political ideology, stressing the importance of Hindu culture and spirituality for creating a just society and government, what the party calls "humanistic liberalism."<sup>129</sup> The BJP argues that secularism, as expressed by the Congress party, is both alien and corrupt to the true nature of India and Indian people. The BJP capitalizes on two terms in particular, *Hindutva*, which means the Hindu nation, and *Bharat*, which they cite as the ancient name for India. The BJP's platform, therefore, calls for India to return to its pre-conquered, organic state and to base its government on justice inspired by Hindu culture and spirituality.

It is important to note that the majority of key members in the BJP have ties to the RSS. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the BJP's first president and current prime minister of India, was a former regional leader in the RSS. Lal Krishnan Advani, who has been president of the BJP since 1986, was a journalist for the RSS publication *The Organiser*.<sup>130</sup> In addition to their ties with the RSS, most members of the BJP come from the upper or middle castes, are highly educated (many of whom hold post-graduate degrees), and over 60% of current members' fathers were active in the BJS.<sup>131</sup> As previously mentioned, the RSS has also been critical for BJP electoral success, endorsing their campaigns in 1989 and 1991.

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<sup>128</sup> Jaffrelot, pp. 314-325

<sup>129</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 36-37

<sup>130</sup> Malk and Singh note that of the 12 top members in the BJP, only two were never part of the RSS, pp. 39-52.

The third organization, the VHP, is perhaps the most important organization for explaining why Ayodhya has become the epicenter of Hindu nationalism and the target of Hindu violence. The VHP was created at a conference of 150 Hindu religious leaders on August 29, 1964, in Bombay, on the birthday of the *avatar* Krishna.<sup>132</sup> The overall goal of the VHP is to create a unified and organized version of Hinduism.<sup>133</sup> The VHP aims to make this unified version of Hinduism the national religion and defining element of India. The VHP has sought to implement this goal, first, by shoring up differences between the Vaishnava and Shaiva strains within Hinduism and to minimize competition within orders.<sup>134</sup> Second, the VHP has aimed to work within tribal and backward caste areas and bring them formally into the fold of Hinduism. Third, the VHP has sought to incorporate Hindus around the globe into its movement, opening up chapters in countries such as Trinidad, the US and Canada.<sup>135</sup> In this last aim, the VHP has also encouraged Hindus in the diaspora to fund projects in India and abroad, which is believed to be a considerable source of revenue for the movement.<sup>136</sup>

The VHP has links with both the RSS and BJP, which strengthens these organizations' efforts to realize Hindutva. The RSS always supplies the general secretary for the VHP and, more generally, the upper ranks of the VHP usually have historic ties to the RSS, similar to the BJP-RSS relationship.<sup>137</sup> However, the VHP does not allow any

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<sup>131</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 52-53

<sup>132</sup> Peter Van der Veer, "Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity: The Vishva Hindu Parishad," *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, pp. 653-668 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pg. 653; Jaffrelot, pp. 345-368

<sup>133</sup> Van der Veer, "Hindu Nationalism," pg. 655

<sup>134</sup> Van der Veer, "Hindu Nationalism," pg. 654

<sup>135</sup> Van der Veer, "Hindu Nationalism," pg. 658

<sup>136</sup> One source suggests that the VHP and RSS helped to remit over \$62.5 million dollars in 1991, see Zahir Sajad Janmohamed, "The Sangh Parivar in Our Backyard," unpublished manuscript, 2002.

<sup>137</sup> Van der Veer, "Hindu Nationalism," pg. 655

active politician to be in its executive body.<sup>138</sup> Despite this, the BJP has voiced its support for VHP objectives, most notably its bid to build a temple on the site of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. Likewise, the VHP has endorsed the BJP in its electoral campaigns.<sup>139</sup> In addition, it is important to note that the VHP, like the RSS and BJP, have sought to bring other “Indian” religions into its fold. It has invited Sikhs to participate in its meetings and events,<sup>140</sup> and the Dalai Lama attended its second meeting in 1966.<sup>141</sup> However, Islam and Christianity are considered “foreign” religions and not welcomed within the VHP’s ranks.

Unlike previous attempts to create a unified version of Hinduism, the VHP has chosen to focus not on the ancient Hindu scriptures, such as the Vedas, but rather on religious practices, most notably the bhakti tradition of devotion to avatars and gods and texts surrounding these deities. In doing so, the VHP has emphasized popular Hinduism, not the Hinduism of elite Brahmins; this in turn has made the religious agenda of the VHP more resonate with the masses. Initially, the VHP followed on Gandhi’s use of the Mahabharata and the epic of the Bhagavad Gita as popular texts that exemplify Hindu spirituality and practices.<sup>142</sup> However, as Hindu activists began to aggressively agitate for the “liberation” of Ayodhya in the 1980s—the celebrated birthplace of Ram—the VHP upheld the Ramayana and its epic tale of good versus evil as the exemplary text of Hinduism.<sup>143</sup> The tale of Ram and Sita’s battle against the “foreign” demons of *Lanka* is well known throughout India. The popularity of the epic was strengthened by the 1987

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<sup>138</sup> Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths*, (Oxford and New York: Berg Press, 2001) pg. 181

<sup>139</sup> Malik and Singh, pp. 128-129

<sup>140</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pg. 660; Bhatt, pg. 180

<sup>141</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pg. 654

<sup>142</sup> Bhatt, pg. 185

<sup>143</sup> *ibid*



airing of the Ramayana story as a yearlong TV miniseries; it was enormously popular and dubbed “The [TV series] Dallas of India.”<sup>144</sup> Therefore, Ayodhya, as Ram’s celebrated birthplace, has become a powerful and useful religious tool to mobilize popular sentiment towards the Hindu nationalist agenda.

The VHP’s biggest success in mobilization has been in its organization of mass processions, *yatras*, drawing on popular bhakti traditions. In 1983, the VHP organized an *Ekatmatayajna Yatra* for national unity. Three main envoys of activists carried giant water pots from the Ganges River—which is believed to be a Hindu deity and has the power to cleanse and grant salvation—throughout India, following traditional pilgrimage routes.<sup>145</sup> The procession used the Ganges as a symbol of Hindu unity, literally carrying the river to the people and binding them together. The yatra was enormously successful; the VHP estimated that around 60 million people participated in the event and it helped to create local VHP chapters throughout the country.<sup>146</sup>

The VHP embarked on another yatra in 1984, this time as “a sacrifice to liberate the birthplace of Lord Ram.”<sup>147</sup> The procession began in Sitamarhi, the celebrated birthplace of Ram’s wife Sita, and progressed to Ayodhya, then onto Delhi, where it planned on demanding that the Babri Mosque be unlocked and Hindus be allowed to worship there.<sup>148</sup> However, this procession was interrupted short of Delhi by the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in October of 1984. The third procession, arguably its most successful, the *Ramshilla Yatra*, aimed to collect bricks from throughout the Hindu world for the creation of a temple in Ayodhya. Bricks not only

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<sup>144</sup> Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 8

<sup>145</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pp. 661-662

<sup>146</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pg. 653

<sup>147</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pg. 662

came from the kilns of villages and cities throughout India, but also from as far away as the Caribbean, US, Canada and South Africa.<sup>149</sup> Again in 1990, the VHP helped to organize a yatra through ten states in India, along with the BJP and RSS. Lal Krishnan Advani, the president of the BJP, was arrested just outside Ayodhya after the procession clashed with the Indian military.<sup>150</sup> Following this yatra, Advani appeared on the cover of *India Today* dressed as Ram and behind bars.<sup>151</sup> It was during a VHP organized rally in Ayodhya in December 1992, that the 300,000-strong mass of Hindu activists attacked the Babri Mosque and reduced it to rubble.

The rise of Ayodhya as the epicenter of Hindu nationalism, and the violent conflicts it has created, conforms to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, Hindu nationalist rhetoric is saturated with the perception of threat both to Ayodhya and to Hindutva, the Hindu nation. The RSS, the BJP, and the VHP have all defined Hindutva as a nation that is weak, vulnerable, and under attack from foreign threat—most notably Islam and Muslim nations. Although Hindus make up 85% of India, these groups claim that Hindutva is under duress from the religious “other.” They cite, first, India’s occupation by Muslim rulers followed by British (Christian) occupation until 1947. More recent examples of threats to Hindutva include the 1981 conversion of an untouchable village to Islam, believed to be funded by money from Gulf States.<sup>152</sup> They also name cyclical flare-ups in the Kashmir as a source of threat to Hindutva, particularly Pakistan’s actions in the region and the presence of *mujahideen*, Islamic holy warriors, in that

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<sup>148</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pp. 662-663

<sup>149</sup> Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pp. 663-664

<sup>150</sup> Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, pg. 4; Thakur, pg. 653

<sup>151</sup> May 15, 1991 edition of *India Today*

<sup>152</sup> Embree, pp. 632-633; Van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism,” pg. 660; Michael T. Kaufman, “Lowly Hindus in India See Islam as Their Salvation,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 1981

conflict.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, neighboring Bangladesh's declaration that it was an Islamic state in 1988 is yet another example cited by Hindu nationalists of the Muslim threat to the Hindu religion and culture. Thus, despite being the majority, these organizations have built a case around the threats posed to Hindutva by foreign forces, primarily Islam. The Ayodhya controversy has become an example of the greater threat posed to Hindutva by Islam.

Second, Hindus have considerable resources with which to mobilize people for their agendas. All three of these organizations have used religious resources to mobilize the masses. These groups have drawn on Hinduism's militant past, most notably Hindu *Sadhu* warriors' battles to defend land and faith against the Muslim Mughal leader Aurangzeb in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They have also conjured up the more aggressive side of Hinduism, calling on deities like *durga*, the goddess of power, to emphasize Hindu strength. These groups have identified the threat to Hindutva as foreign religions, specifically Islam and Christianity. In addition, these organizations have named secularism as a threat and have called for the end of secular governments based on "foreign ideas" such as western liberalism. In its place, they advocate for the return of Indian values and norms in politics, ideals based on Hindu spirituality and beliefs.

Ayodhya has become the epicenter of the Hindu nationalist agenda through the use of the Ramayana—a religious epic well known throughout India—to show India's current battle against the evil "other," in this case Islam, and the need to defend Hindu faith and culture from this threat. The celebrated birthplace of Ram, Ayodhya, has become a tangible point at which the religious epic and the here-and-now meet, binding the religious past with the national present. The struggle for Ayodhya today is the

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<sup>153</sup> Embree, pp. 618, 633

struggle of Ram and Sita against foreign demons. These organizations have strengthened this connection by using popular religious practices and symbols in Hinduism, such as pilgrimage, water from the Ganges, and chariots of the gods. The use of these religious resources has had a powerfully mobilizing effect, as is visible in the yatras surrounding Ayodhya.

Furthermore, these organizations have brought social resource to the cause. These groups are well organized and led by charismatic figures. These organizations have also fostered ties to communities in the diaspora, making them capable of reaching a large number of Indians through their activities and soliciting funds. Moreover, each group has a different target audience. The RSS aims to indoctrinate and mobilize Indian youth for their national agenda. The VHP seeks to coordinate religious leaders and plan religious events for the Hindu nationalist goal. And the BJP works within the Indian government, striving to attain seats of power at the state and union levels. Together these groups have been very successful in coordinating efforts for shared objectives. The success of the Hindu nationalist movement, therefore, lies in these groups' organization skills—their leadership and ability to mobilize the masses through common beliefs and practices of Hinduism—for Hindu nationalist ends.

Third, the Ayodhya controversy has gained national and regional salience through the mixing of religious and political elites. Since 1990, Hindu nationalists, through the BJP, have had a foothold in both the union government and several state governments in India. Arguably, this has allowed for the Hindu nationalist agenda in general, and goals for Ayodhya in particular, to prosper. The 1992 destruction of the Babri Mosque prompted the union government to dismiss the BJP-run governments in Ayodhya's state,

Uttar Pradesh, on the grounds that it provided a permissive environment for the mosque's destruction.<sup>154</sup> The BJP has since resumed authority in Uttar Pradesh, in addition to strengthening its presence in the central government. Furthermore, the close ties of the BJP to the RSS and VHP has created a link through which these organizations can draw on each other's resources. This has allowed the BJP to benefit from RSS and VHP election endorsements and, in return, the BJP has lent political support for the bid to build a temple on the site of the Babri Mosque. This is a new development from past episodes of violence over Ayodhya where religious and political elites were at odds, leading to political and military intervention in religious and national groups' campaigns to change the status quo.

The result of these organizational efforts is that large numbers of Indians have given active or tacit support to the Hindu nationalist agenda. This is visible in the numbers that have participated in yatras, and in the numbers that have voted for the BJP and its political and social agenda. It is important to stress that, although these groups claim to promote Hinduism as a culture and a civilization, they have defined "cultural Hinduism" using religion. Cultural Hindus are those Indians who are Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, or Sikh. Cultural Hindus are not Muslim, Christian, or Jewish; these are the religions and identities of foreign invaders. To become a true member of the Hindu nation, therefore, requires "returning" to authentic Indian religions. These identity boundaries are, therefore, at their core religious; religion is the salient distinction between who is part of the Hindu nation and who is not.

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<sup>154</sup> Paul Brass claims: "In December 1992 the chief minister of the entire state of Uttar Pradesh, who allowed the [Babri] mosque to be destroyed, indeed deliberately saw to it that the numerous police, paramilitary, and military forces stationed in the vicinity took no action to prevent its destruction, was a

Finally, it is important to note that while Hindu nationalist organizations have proliferated since Partition, Islamic organizations in India have not. Muslims elites that remained in India chose not to form a political party in India after Partition.<sup>155</sup> The Sunni Ulama in India maintained the pre-Partition *Jami'yyat-i Ulama-i Hind*, but its impact has been minimal relative to the VHP. Muslims did form their own action committees to push for protection of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya following the 1949 threat to the status quo, specifically the Babri Masjid Co-ordination Committee (BMCC) and the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC). However, relative to the Hindu activists, Muslims in India have not organized themselves effectively, which has benefited the Hindu agenda.

It is worth noting that Muslims in India did react to the 1992 destruction of the Babri Mosque. In March of 1993, more than 700,000 Muslims demonstrated in Delhi in protest to the incident, the largest Muslim demonstration since Partition. Also in March, twelve car bombs exploded simultaneously throughout Delhi, one of the biggest coordinated acts of terrorism to date; the motive for the terrorist act was retaliation for the destruction of the mosque.<sup>156</sup> However, both of these actions have paled in comparison to the organization of Hindu groups and the resources they have coordinated to realize their goals.

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man of the BJP, the then ruling party.” See Paul Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pg. 22

<sup>155</sup> Haq, pp. 66-67

<sup>156</sup> Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Militant Islam and the Future of America*, (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2002), pg. 43

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued, first, that Hindu-Muslim violence over Ayodhya has not been constant but rather has occurred in three distinct waves: in 1853-1855, in 1949, and from 1986 until the present. With the exception of the 1949 violence, these episodes have all occurred under the atmosphere of perceived or actual threat to the aggressing side; the 1949 Hindu attempt to change the status quo at Ayodhya, on the other hand, was more a reaction to opportunity than threat.

In each incident of violence, the aggressing side used religious resources to mobilize its constituents for action. In 1853-1855, Sunni leaders called for jihad against the rising Hindu presence in Ayodhya, most likely drawing on revivalist interpretations of Islam emerging in India during this time. In 1949, Hindu activists staged a two-week long *kirtan*, followed by the “miraculous” appearance of idols of Ram and Sita inside the mosque. And from 1986 until the present, Hindu activists have used the religious epic of the Ramayana and bhakti practices including pilgrimage and chariot processions to mobilize the masses with the aim of seizing sacred space in Ayodhya and building a temple to Ram.

Furthermore, in each episode of violence the aggressing group has been well organized, drawing not only on religious resources but also social and material resources. Sunni Muslim leaders mobilized between 500-2,000 well-armed Muslims willing to fight for sacred space in Ayodhya in 1853-1855; attacks that were difficult to put down and required British intervention. The Hindu attempt to change the status quo in 1949 came on the heels of Partition, an era when Hindu activists were well mobilized, particularly through the RSS. Muslim resources, however—including social, religious, and political

organizations—were few in India; they had largely been invested in the creation of Pakistan, presenting a window of opportunity for Hindu activists. And the current Hindu challenge to Ayodhya involves three well organized groups—the RSS, the BJP and the VHP—which offer a wide-reaching combination of social, political and religious resources capable of mobilizing support for the Ayodhya cause. Moreover, the current challenge to Ayodhya involves the mixing of religious and political leaders. This has, arguably, increased the amount of resources available to religious leaders has created a more permissive atmosphere in which Hindu activists have been able to challenge the status quo in Ayodhya, and has reduced the degree of governmental interference. These findings are summarized in Table 4.1.

#### 4. 1, Variables Summary: Battles over Ayodhya

Aggressor	Threat Perception	Religious and Political Leaders	Material Resources
1853-1855 <i>Sunni Muslims</i> -Ghulam Husain -Amir ‘Ali	General -Decline of Muslim power -Shia control of Mosque  Specific -Rumor of Mosque’s destruction by Hindus	-Aggressors and political leaders at odds. -Sunni challenge to Shia authority.	-Mobilized men to fight -Contemporary examples of jihadist movements in South Asia
1949 Hindu activists (Possibly RSS)	Opportunity -Muslims vulnerable post-Partition	-Aggressors and political leaders at odds. -Secular government	-Hindu organizations -Communal emotions high
1986-2002  Hindu Activists (RSS and VHP)	<b>General</b> -Historic examples of Muslim and British occupation -Converts to Islam, 1981-present -Pakistan declared Islamic, 1984 -Bangladesh declared Islamic, 1988	Religious and political leaders mixed. -Ties between BJP, RSS, VHP -BJP wins state elections in 1991 -Vajpayee becomes prime minister, 1997	-Organizations: the RSS, the VHP, the BJP -Ties to the government -Diasporic support



Finally, this conflict—although involving political, social and economic elements—is saliently religious. The VHP has focused on the Ayodhya controversy because the holy city has mobilized mass numbers of Hindus throughout the country and bound them together to defend Hindutva against the foreign threat posed by Islam and secularism. Ayodhya has become the epicenter of the social and political agendas of the RSS, BJP and VHP precisely because of its religious resonance with the masses. The Ramayana story with its tales of good conquering evil is well known throughout India. Devotion to Ram, as a bhakti practice, is also popular. Moreover, pilgrimage is a common form of piety for many Hindus. All of these beliefs and practices have contributed to the success of the RSS, BJP and VHP, who have interpreted these religious resources with the specific aim of mobilizing the masses to “defend” Ayodhya and the wider goal of realizing Hindutva, the Hindu nation.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Christian, Jewish and Muslim Battles Over Jerusalem**

Jerusalem is recognized as one of the most holy cities in the world. It hosts sacred sites that are of critical importance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, earning it titles like “The City of Peace,” “The City of God,” and the “*omphalos*,” the navel of the universe. Perhaps, then, it is surprising to most that Jerusalem has been the occasion for numerous religious confrontations throughout its several millennia of history, including the current “al-Aqsa Intifada” that has dragged Israelis and Palestinians into a spiral of bloodshed and animosity. How has the “City of Peace” fueled such violence and hatred?

This chapter aims to provide insights into this question by considering three waves of violence surrounding Jerusalem: Christian Crusades aimed at liberating Jerusalem, beginning in the eleventh century; Muslim holy wars to counter the Christian presence in the region and recapture Jerusalem; and Israel’s seizure of Jerusalem in 1967 and the religiously-motivated reactions it has produced within militant Jewish and Muslim groups.

Drawing from the causal argument presented in chapter two, this chapter will focus on three variables as possible explanations for violence over Jerusalem: the role of threat perception in influencing actions of groups and nations, the amount of material, social and technological resources available to groups initiating violence over the sacred site, and the relationship between religious and political leaders. This chapter will test three empirical predictions from the causal argument. First, violent campaigns over Jerusalem will be initiated in response to perceived or actual threat to a religion’s holy site. Second, the group initiating the violence will have greater resources than does the

other group. And third, religious violence will be more likely if political and religious leaders' authorities are intertwined, allowing religious leaders the opportunity to use state resources to further their agendas.

This chapter argues that these three waves of violence represent Christian, Muslim and Jewish efforts to seize Jerusalem's sacred space, often with the goal of excluding other religious groups from access to their sites. The desire to capture and control Jerusalem has primarily been in response to perceived or actual threats to the preservation of certain group's religious sites, inspired by the actions and policies of the governing group.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief introduction to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, outlining their core beliefs, doctrine and the importance of Jerusalem to each tradition. The second section offers an overview of Jerusalem's history, outlining major battles for the city. The third section traces three battles over Jerusalem: the Christian Crusades of the 11<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, Muslim jihads against the crusaders, and battles over Jerusalem since its 1967 capture and occupation by Israel. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks.

### **Overview of Judaism, Christianity and Islam**

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all diverse, complex, and rich religious traditions with lengthy histories involving numerous cultures and regions. For the sake of understanding the importance of Jerusalem to each of these faiths, this section will provide a very brief outline of each religion's core beliefs, doctrine and relationship to the holy city.

## *Judaism*

The religion that is now known as Judaism began well before the Common Era. Throughout its history, the origins of its beliefs underwent a complex process of development that is still debated by religious scholars and historians today.<sup>1</sup> In addition to disagreements on its origins and development, there is also considerable debate over the “right” practice of the faith today, producing many interpretations of the religion. However, despite this diversity, there are a set of core beliefs within Judaism that define the faith across time and interpretation.

First, Judaism, as a monotheistic faith, believes in one God, which is articulated in the Jewish Bible’s book of Exodus: “I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: You shall have no other gods besides Me;” which is the first of the Ten Commandments.<sup>2</sup> This belief is further stated in the *Shem Yisrael*, the statement of faith found in Deuteronomy: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”<sup>3</sup>

Second, Judaism contains beliefs relating to “redemption” or “salvation.” This belief is articulated in the Triple Hope: the expectation of ultimate deliverance of the Jewish people; the belief in the salvation of individuals; and the hope that society or creation as a whole will be redeemed.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Judaism contains notions of earthly and eternal salvation, both of which inspire actions in the here-and-now. Salvation is

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of scholarship that trace the development of Judaism include Armstrong, pp. 22-102; Jonathan Levison, *Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); E.A. Speiser, *Genesis*, (New York: Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1962)

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 20:2, *The Tanakh*, (Philadelphia and Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), pg. 115

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4, *The Tanakh*, pg. 284

<sup>4</sup> Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, inc., 1947), pg. 159

important for a discussion on battles over Jerusalem because interpretations of earthly and eternal redemption have prompted some Jews to demand full sovereignty of Jerusalem for salvific ends, as will be described below.

Judaism also possesses the concept of a savior, the *Messiah*, which is an individual that will come to restore the earth to its intended state of pristine righteousness. The coming of the *Messiah* is depicted in Isaiah 11:

The spirit of the Lord shall alight upon him...Justice shall be the girdle of his loins, And faithfulness the girdle of his waist. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid...Nothing evil or vile shall be done; for the land shall be filled with devotion to the Lord, As water covers the sea.<sup>5</sup>

There have been numerous individuals throughout history that have claimed to be the *Messiah*, including Jesus of Nazareth; however, most Jews believe that this individual has not appeared on earth yet.<sup>6</sup>

Third, Judaism is also defined as a distinct group, often articulated as a people “chosen” by God. This concept of “chosenness” is recorded in Genesis, where it describes the origins of the Israelites, the ancient Jews. Genesis chapter 17 depicts the creation of a covenant between God and Abraham:

As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you and kings shall come forth from you. I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 11:2, 5, 6, 9, *The Tanakh*, pp. 640-641

<sup>6</sup> Another example of an individual claiming to be the *Messiah* is Shabbatai Zevi, who created such a disturbance within Palestine and the Ottoman Empire during the 17<sup>th</sup> century that the Sultan had him imprisoned, where he chose conversion to Islam over death, see Ian S. Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988), pp. 24-25; and Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, (New York; Ballantine Books, 1996), pp. 338-339.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 17:5-7, *The Tanakh*, pg. 23

Judaism holds that God fulfilled this covenant through Abraham's wife, Sarah, who miraculously gave birth to a son, Isaac, despite being barren and well beyond childbearing years.<sup>8</sup> From this notion of chosenness through progeny, Judaism has come to represent both a faith and an ethnic group. Therefore, there are Jews who do not practice the religious dimensions of the faith but still consider themselves and are considered to be Jewish through the link of ancestry.

The Jewish faith also has doctrines that shape the religion, most notably a legal code, which is subject to debate and interpretation. The Jewish Bible describes the origins of the law in Exodus chapters 19 through 25.<sup>9</sup> God revealed the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, which was the *Torah*, the first five books of the *Tanakh*: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The legal code covers a variety of issues including family, criminal, trade and dietary laws in addition to relations with non-Jews. It also contains detailed descriptions for sacrifices and other religious practices in the Temple. Codification of the law did not begin until the fifth century BCE, and particularly not until after the destruction of the second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, at which time scholars shaped a body of laws, which became known as the *Mishnah*, along with interpretations and debates on the *Mishnah*, which is the *Talmud*. Study and debate of the Talmud remains a vital part of the Jewish faith today.<sup>10</sup>

Jerusalem is important to Judaism for a number of reasons. It is generally believed that God put Abraham to the test through his call to sacrifice his son Isaac on a hill later

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis, chapter 18, pg. 25; Genesis, chapter 21, pp. 29-30

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 19-25, *The Tanakh*, pp.114-124

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, pg. 156

identified as Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> After their freedom from slavery in Egypt, the Jewish Bible reports that the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan, which was promised to them, first, in Leviticus 20: “You shall possess their land, for I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey,” and later in Joshua:

Every spot on which your foot treads I give you, as I promised Moses. Your territory shall extend from the wilderness and the Lebanon to the Great River, the River Euphrates [on the east]—the whole Hittite country—and up to the Mediterranean Sea on the west.<sup>12</sup>

The Jewish Bible reports that Jerusalem was later captured and became the religious and political capitol of United Israel under its second king, David, particularly after David moved the Ark of the Covenant—which contained the tablets on which God inscribed the laws and commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai—to Jerusalem and began to construct a permanent temple where sacrifices to God could be performed. The Temple, completed by David’s successor Solomon, became the place where humans and God came into contact. Although it is believed that several Israelite Temples existed in the ancient Near East, Jerusalem became the most important site to perform ritual sacrifice.<sup>13</sup>

Babylonian forces destroyed the First Temple in 587 BCE, and the Second Temple, completed in 60 CE, was razed by Roman forces in 70 CE. Since the destruction of the Second Temple, Jerusalem has continued to play an important role in Jewish

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<sup>11</sup> God spared Isaac after Abraham showed his obedience and devotion to God’s commandment. The biblical account of the binding of Isaac is found in Genesis, Chapter 22. The association of the place where Abraham was called to sacrifice Isaac is described in Armstrong, pg. 28. It is also worth noting that Islam also has the story of God’s call for Abraham to sacrifice his son. However, in the Muslim account, instead of Isaac being offered, Abraham’s other son, Ismael—which he had through his second wife Hagar—is the potential sacrifice. Ismael is commonly believed to be the one through which the Arab people descended. See *The Holy Qur’an*, Sura 37: 83-113, taken from Kenneth Cragg, *Readings in the Qur’an*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), pg. 120; and John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pg. 7

<sup>12</sup> Leviticus 20: 24, *The Tanakh*, pg. 188; and Joshua 1:4-5, *The Tanakh*, pg. 337

<sup>13</sup> Specifically temples in Arad and Beer-Sheba. See Zeev Herzog, “Israelite Sanctuaries at Arad and Beer-Sheba,” *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times*, edited by Avraham Biran, (Jerusalem: Hebrew Union



spiritual and political life. It has remained a site of pilgrimage throughout time and, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Western Wall of the Temple in particular has been venerated by pilgrims. In 1948, Jerusalem became the *de facto* capitol of Israel after the city's partition between Israel and Jordan. And in 1967, Israel effectively annexed the Old City after its capture in the Six-Day war, making it both its spiritual and national capital.

### *Christianity*

The religion now known as Christianity began as a movement within Judaism. It was based on the belief that a man named Jesus of the house of David was the *Messiah*, the one that the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah had foretold would come to restore justice and harmony to the earth. Judaism's religious leaders of the time, however, rejected the belief that Jesus was the *Messiah* and persecuted its followers as heretics. The movement eventually broke away from Judaism after it took on non-Jewish followers and stopped adhering to Jewish law. Christianity grew in prevalence after it was made one of the official religions of the Roman Empire under Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>14</sup> It continued to spread, particularly in Western Europe and the Near East, eventually establishing four distinct branches: Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Traditions such as the Coptic and Ethiopian Christians. Each of these branches has further subdivisions, making Christianity very diverse in practice.

Despite its diversity, Christianity still contains core beliefs that unite its many practitioners. First, Jesus the *Messiah* or *Christ*, the Greek word approximating *Messiah*, is central to Christianity. Christians believe that Jesus was not only the one to bring

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College and Jewish Institute of Religion, 1977), pp. 120-122; and Beth Alpert Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, (Boston: American School of Oriental Research, 2001), pp. 186-187

<sup>14</sup> For a summary of early Christianity, see Armstrong, pp. 142-149

justice and salvation to the world, foretold by Jewish prophets, but also that Jesus was in fact God *incarnate*, God in human form. This belief is expressed in many different ways—that Jesus was God’s son, born through the virgin Mary; that Jesus was the *Logos*, the word of God made human; and that Jesus was, paradoxically, both fully human and fully God. Regardless of the language used to describe Jesus, Christians believe that Jesus came to earth to bring a new social order, one in which all people would be equal: “...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith...there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Jesus is understood as the one to bring equity to the earth.

Another core belief in Christianity is the understanding of Jesus as the savior of the world. Christians believe that, in addition to providing a path to save the world in the here-and-now by calling for social justice and equality, Jesus also brought salvation in life after death.<sup>16</sup> Christians believe that Jesus died via crucifixion—a Roman execution of death by hanging on a cross—but that he rose from the dead, which established a new path to eternal salvation. This path is open to all who believe in the saving power of Jesus the Christ. Therefore, Christianity contains beliefs for earthly salvation—the imperative to work for a more just and equitable world—and for eternal salvation through belief in the power of the divine Christ who overcame death to provide a new path for eternal salvation.

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<sup>15</sup> Galatians 3:26, 28, 29, *Holy [Christian] Bible*, New Revised Standard Version, (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), pg. 185

<sup>16</sup> For biblical accounts of Jesus’ death and resurrection, see *Holy [Christian] Bible*, Matthew 26-28, pp. 29-33; Mark 14-16, pp.50-54; Luke 22-24, pp.84-89; John 18-20, pp. 110-112

Christianity has doctrines that apply these beliefs as guides for religious life and practices. Of particular importance for this chapter is the doctrine of sin. Most Christians believe that humans are imperfect and separated from God through Adam and Eve's disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden; an event known as the Fall of Humanity or Original Sin.<sup>17</sup> Humans, therefore, cannot save themselves from their own sinful nature; salvation requires God's intervention. Within certain branches of Christianity, there are rituals individuals can do as repentance or remittance to sins, such as saying prayers or performing certain tasks. In medieval Christianity, these tasks came to include going on pilgrimages to distant holy sites, such as saints' tombs, relics relating to Christ, and Christ's tomb in Jerusalem. Also at this time, crusading—armed pilgrimages aimed at liberating the holy land—became a practice that was believed to remit sins, as will be described below.

Jerusalem is important to Christianity because it is the city in which Jesus was executed and resurrected from the dead. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a city roughly 15 miles south of Jerusalem, to parents that lived in Nazareth, a city north of Jerusalem, where he grew up.<sup>18</sup> Most of Jesus' ministry—his preaching, healings and other miracles—occurred around the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Tiberias.<sup>19</sup> However, the *Passion*—the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem followed by his arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection—all occurred in Jerusalem. In the fourth century CE excavators uncovered the site now celebrated as place where Christ was

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<sup>17</sup> For the biblical account of the Original Sin, see Genesis 3, *Holy Christian Bible*, pp. 2-3

<sup>18</sup> For biblical accounts of Jesus' birth and childhood, see Luke, chapter 2, pp. 57-58; Matthew, 1-2, pp. 1-2

<sup>19</sup> Some biblical accounts of Jesus' ministry include the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:1-11 and Luke 6:20-23; the feeding of the five thousand, Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, and Luke, 9:10-17; driving spirits from a man into a herd of pigs, Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, and Luke 8:26-39; Jesus walking on water, Matthew 14:22-33 and Mark 6:45-52; to name a few.

crucified and buried, a site initially called the *Anastasis* but now known as the Holy Sepulcher.<sup>20</sup> Sites in Jerusalem expanded to include the “Stations of the Cross,” the path that Jesus took from his arrest to his crucifixion; the “Upper Room” where Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover the night before his execution; the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed before his arrest; the site of Mary’s tomb; and places associated with Jesus’ disciples.<sup>21</sup> Christians from all over the world have made pilgrimages to the holy land throughout time and Jerusalem—along with Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the Galilee—are important sacred sites of Christian veneration.

### *Islam*

Islam, as one of the monotheistic faiths, contains core beliefs that both unite and differentiate it from Judaism and Christianity. First, Islam takes very seriously the oneness of God, or *tawhid*, which is one of its core beliefs. The path to salvation in Islam involves submission to the will of God, which is the meaning of the word *Islam*. Similar to Judaism and Christianity, God has provided revelations to humans of God’s will through prophets. Muslims believe, however, that the Prophet Muhammad transmitted the final revelation from God in the seventh century CE, recorded in the *Qur’an*, or recitation. The oneness of God and the Prophet Muhammed as his messenger form the first of the Five Pillars of Islam, and makes up the *shahaddah*, or the proclamation of faith; one who proclaims the *shahaddah* is a Muslim. The other four pillars include ritual prayer said five times a day facing towards Mecca (*salat*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, the month the Prophet first received revelations from God (*sawm*);

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<sup>20</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a British archaeologist claimed that a second site, known as the Garden Tomb, was the actual tomb of Christ, see Armstrong, pg. 365

<sup>21</sup> Armstrong, pp.180-192

almsgiving to the poor (*zakat*); and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), which should be taken by every Muslims at least once in his or her life, finances and health permitting. Along with the Pillars, Islam emphasizes the unity of the worldwide Muslim community, the *ummah*, which, in principle, is not divided by gender, race, class or any other human distinction.<sup>22</sup> However, in practice, Islam has several different branches, particularly the Sunni and Shii branches, which emerged from different understanding in secession of leadership.

Like Judaism, Islam also has a religious legal code, *Shari'a* law. The formation of Shari'a differs according to time, region, and school of jurisprudence.<sup>23</sup> Another key practice in Islam is ritual prayer, *salat*, which is one of the Five Pillars. Muslims can say the *salat* anywhere, but mosques are buildings designed especially to gather in and pray. For this purpose, mosques are considered sacred places where humans interact with God; the maintenance and preservation of these spaces is important to the faith. This is a critical point concerning the status of Jerusalem, which houses several important mosques and shrines.

As with Judaism and Christianity, Jerusalem is an important sacred space to Islam. Jerusalem is the site of the first *Qiblah*, the direction in which Muslims' face when performing the *Salat*.<sup>24</sup> While the Prophet and his companions were in Medina, the direction of prayer was initially towards Jerusalem, reflecting the connection of the new revelations to the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism and Christianity. However, when the Jews

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<sup>22</sup> For more details on key beliefs in Islam, see Esposito, chapter 3: "Religious Beliefs and Practice," pp. 69-113

<sup>23</sup> In Sunni Islam there are four major schools of the law, *al-Sharia; Maiki, Hanafi, Shaifi, and Hanbali*. In addition, Shia Islam has its own particular interpretation of the law, of which there is diversity between Twelver and Ishmaili Shiism. See David S. Pearl *A Textbook on Muslim Law* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), especially chapter 1, "The Historical Development of Islamic Law."

of Medina refused to accept the Prophet's recitations, a new revelation called for prayer to be directed towards the *Kaba* in Mecca, a stone structure that Muslims believe Abraham and his son Ismael built.<sup>25</sup> Jerusalem is also important because it is the destination of the *Isra*—the Prophet's midnight journey from Mecca to Jerusalem where he prayed with all God's Prophets throughout time—and the *Miraj*, the Prophet's mystical ascension to heaven.<sup>26</sup> Later narratives of the *Miraj* claim that the stone protruding from the platform of the *Haram al-Sharif*/Temple Mount bears the footprint of the Prophet and *buraq*, a winged horse that carried him to heaven. When Muslim forces, captured Jerusalem in the seventh century CE, they built the al-Aqsa mosque to commemorate the holiness of the city and later constructed the Dome of the Rock shrine to mark the site of the *Miraj*.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam all hold Jerusalem as an important city for the history and practice of their faiths. Likewise, each tradition contains beliefs and doctrine that provide a foundation for taking action to defend the holiness of the city. The following section will outline major battles over Jerusalem throughout its history.

### **Overview of Jerusalem's History**

Jerusalem's history spans across millennia and includes the rise and fall of dozens of empires professing more than half-a dozen-different religious beliefs. The city itself has undergone several name changes corresponding to different occupiers and their beliefs. This section seeks to provide a very brief overview of Jerusalem's history,

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<sup>24</sup> Abdul Aziz Duri, "Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period, 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD," pp. 105-129, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pg. 105

<sup>25</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam: An Introduction*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), pg. 16; Esposito, pp. 16-17. The *Kaba* is also the destination of the *Hajj*, the Pillar of pilgrimage mentioned above.

<sup>26</sup> Duri, pg. 105

touching on the major conquests of the city and its religious developments, particularly its evolution as a city of central importance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Earliest evidence of human habitation around Jerusalem dates back to around 3200 BCE; however, it was not until the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE that consistent occupation is evident.<sup>27</sup> It is believed that people settled in the area not because the land was rich in material assets—such as water, minerals, or other natural resources—or because the area marked a critical junction for transportation or trade but, rather, because the site was identified as having divine or supernatural properties. Historian Karen Armstrong argues that Jerusalem’s earliest inhabitants probably chose to settle in the region because of a unique hill that protruded from the surrounding landscape in a way that suggested the presence of the divine.<sup>28</sup> This hypothesis is bolstered by the religious beliefs of the ancient Babylonians, who introduced the concept of a holy city, a city believed to be established by a god to maintain order over the world and dispel the forces of chaos.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the name *Rushalimum*, which is most likely the root-word for Jerusalem, is believed to come from a Syrian god *hsalem* and means “shalem has founded the city,” also suggesting the connection between divinity and the city.<sup>30</sup>

The story of Jerusalem’s origins in the *Tanakh*, the Jewish Bible, is connected to Abraham, the father of “a multitude of nations,” as previously mentioned.<sup>31</sup> It is believed that God called Abraham to sacrifice his son on a hill later identified as Mt. Zion in

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<sup>27</sup> H.J. Franken, “Jerusalem in the Bronze Age: 3000-1000 BC,” pp. 11-41, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pp. 17, 36-37; Armstrong, pp. 3, 11

<sup>28</sup> Armstrong, pg. 8

<sup>29</sup> Armstrong, pp. 16-20

<sup>30</sup> Armstrong, pg. 7; Franken transliterates the word as *Urusalim*, pg. 18

<sup>31</sup> Genesis 17:4, *The Tanakh*, pg. 23

Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> Interpretations of the Jewish Bible further claim that the city Salem, mentioned in Genesis and the Psalms, is Jerusalem. It is further believed that King Melchizedek, also mentioned in the Jewish Bible, founded the city; he became the king through which subsequent kings of Israel traced their lineage.<sup>33</sup>

The Biblical story further describes the migration of the Israelites to Egypt during a time of famine and their enslavement under the Pharaoh. After a series of powerful and terrifying miracles, the Pharaoh let the Israelites go. They returned from exile and conquered Canaan through a divine mandate, the *herem*, which called for the destruction of all living things.<sup>34</sup> The Israelites also retook Jerusalem and established its patriarchs there, first Saul then David—who united the kingdoms of Judah and Israel and brought the Ark of the Covenant to the city—followed by Solomon, who built the first Temple.<sup>35</sup>

It is important to note that these biblical accounts, while important as stories of faith and identity, do not correspond with archaeological evidence, throwing their historical accuracy into question. Armstrong suggests that these stories are legends that say more about how the Israelites understood themselves in relation to the land, its inhabitation and the quest for establishing a unique identity than accounts of historical happenings.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, religious studies scholar Keith W. Whitlam argues that these biblical accounts, which are fractured and historically incomplete, reflect the dominant cultures' political and social agendas and silences those on the periphery; they therefore

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<sup>32</sup> The biblical account of the binding of Isaac is found in Genesis, Chapter 22; for the story's connection to Jerusalem, see Armstrong, pg. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Franken, pg. 18; Armstrong, pg. 30

<sup>34</sup> For the Jewish Bible accounts of the *Herem*, see Joshua, chapters 1-7; I Samuel, chapter 14:47. For more on the *Herem*, see Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in Ethics and Violence*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

<sup>35</sup> For the Jewish Bible accounts of these kings, see I Samuel, chapters 9-31; II Samuel; and I Kings, Chapters 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> Armstrong, pp. 24-25



should be understood as politically driven and not created with the aim of recording history.<sup>37</sup> These debates about the historical accuracy of sacred texts are important because these texts form the foundation upon which future claims to Jerusalem have been generated, including the state of Israel's claim to the city, which will be discussed further below.

Following the death of Solomon and the breakup of the Israelite Kingdom, Jerusalem suffered a series of attacks and conquests, which impacted religious practices in the city. In 587 BCE, Babylonians attacked Jerusalem, sacked the Temple and deported its inhabitants into exile. At this time the Ark disappeared, never to be recovered. The Israelites settled in Babylon, where they began codifying laws and practices central to the faith such as rituals surrounding sacrifice, circumcision and dietary restrictions.<sup>38</sup> In 539 BCE, the Persian King Cyrus defeated the Babylonians, driving them out of Jerusalem. The king ordered the rebuilding of the Temple and allowed for the Jews to return from exile.<sup>39</sup> Religious life in Jerusalem resumed, despite the absence of the Ark, until the arrival of Alexander the Great in 333 BCE, who conquered the Persians and introduced Hellenistic culture and religious beliefs to the region.

In 175 BCE, King Antiochus Epiphanes imposed policies that forbade Temple rites and Jewish practices. Those who disobeyed were publicly executed, later to be described as the first martyrs of the faith.<sup>40</sup> Also at this time Jerusalem was renamed

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<sup>37</sup> Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History*, (London: Routledge, 1996), Chapter One: "Partial Texts and Fractured Histories," pp. 11-36

<sup>38</sup> Armstrong, pp. 89-90

<sup>39</sup> George E. Mendenhall, "Jerusalem from 1000-63 BC," pp. 42-74, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pp. 66-67

<sup>40</sup> Armstrong, pp. 113-114

“Antioch in Judea” and the Temple was desanctified and made into a Greek shrine. These actions prompted the Maccabeus revolt, which consisted of guerilla-type attacks on Greek and Syrian forces in addition to forced conversions and the slaughter of non-Jews in the region.<sup>41</sup> The revolt compelled Antiochus to rescind his orders and return the Temple to the Jews.

In 63 BCE, Roman troops—under the leadership of Pompey—entered the Temple to put down riots caused by intra-Jewish tensions. A reported 12,000 Jews were killed in the operation, the city’s walls were razed, and Roman troops permanently occupied the area, which they called *Palestrina*.<sup>42</sup> Mark Anthony appointed Herod, a local Jew, as governor of the region, who was later elevated to king in 40 BCE. Herod implemented major building projects in and around Jerusalem including new walls around the city and plans to build a new Temple, begun in 19 BCE, the raised platform and western wall of which still exist today.<sup>43</sup>

Religious and political tensions continued, however, under Herod’s rule. In 4BCE, as Herod was lying on his deathbed, a group of devout Jews revolted over the presence of Greek symbols on the Temple. Roman troops crucified the protesters, sparking riots that killed a reported 5,000 Jews. After Herod’s death, a Roman government was established, headed by Pontius Pilate and backed by the chief priest Caiaphas. It was during this time that Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew from the lineage of David, began to preach messages of reform that challenged the religious, social and political order of the time. It is believed that he and his followers briefly occupied the Temple

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Goldenberg, *The Nations That Know Thee Not*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), especially chapter four, pp. 33-42

<sup>42</sup> Goldenberg, pp. 42-45; Armstrong, pp. 124-125

compound—chasing moneylenders and other “unclean” elements off of the platform—when the city was filled with pilgrims for the Passover holiday.<sup>44</sup> This event, coupled with Jesus’ radical teachings, prompted Jewish Priests to have him arrested and handed over to the Roman authorities, who executed him by crucifixion. In 36 CE, one of Jesus’ followers, Stephen, created another disturbance at the Temple by preaching the message of Jesus and criticizing the Jewish leaders for not heeding the words of God’s prophets.<sup>45</sup> Angry Jews dragged him outside the Temple area and stoned him to death, the Jewish method of execution. The Jesus movement continued to grow despite persecution, particularly in the city of Antioch, where both Jews and non-Jews became members of this new movement called “The Way.”<sup>46</sup>

Tensions in Jerusalem reached a boiling point shortly after the Temple’s completion in 60 CE. Militant Jewish groups, particularly the Iscari Zealots, began assassinating Roman officers with the hope of ousting Rome’s presence in the region.<sup>47</sup> A military confrontation with the Zealots resulted in the death of 5,000 Roman soldiers. This prompted Rome to take harsher measures and, in 67 CE, General Vespian was dispatched to the region and began uprooting the militant resistance movements.<sup>48</sup> The Romans fought their way into the Temple on August 28, 70 CE, and killed an estimated

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<sup>43</sup> John Wilkinson, “Jerusalem Under Rome and Byzantium,” pp. 75-104, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999) pp. 80-83

<sup>44</sup> The cleansing of the Temple area is reported in all Three of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; and Luke 19:45-48. However, only in Mark is there a brief allusion to the occupation of the Temple, “Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; *and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.*” (Italics denote unique passage.) See *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*, edited by Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), pp. 200-201

<sup>45</sup> For a biblical account of the stoning of Stephen, see Acts, Chapter 7.

<sup>46</sup> Armstrong, pp. 145-148

<sup>47</sup> For more on the Zealots, see David C. Rapoport, “Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78 (1984), pp. 658-677, especially pp. 668-672

<sup>48</sup> Wilkinson, pp. 85-86; Armstrong, pg. 151

6,000 militants defending the site.<sup>49</sup> The Roman offense ended with the total devastation of the Temple.

In 118 CE, the Roman Emperor Hadrian announced his intentions to rebuild Jerusalem. Many Jews saw his efforts as the final destruction of the city and the eradication of its holiness. Militants, headed by Simon Bar Koseba, organized violent uprisings that became known as the Bar Kokhba revolt. The revolt succeeded in recapturing Jerusalem, which it held for three years until the death of Bar Koseba in 135 CE. The Romans killed a reported 580,000 Jews and razed 985 villages before taking the city and draining it of all remaining Jews.<sup>50</sup> After defeating the revolt, Hadrian renamed the city *Aelia Capitolina*.

In 313 CE, Constantine became emperor of Rome and declared Christianity to be one of the empire's official religions. In addition to building churches and shrines for Christianity, he ordered the destruction of Greek temples in Jerusalem. The demolition of a temple to Aphrodite unearthed what was believed to be the tomb of Christ and his place of death, *Golgotha*. Constantine commissioned the building of a church to denote the holy site, which became known as the *Anastasis*, or site of the resurrection. In the mid-fourth century, Constantine's mother, Helena, visited the city and discovered what came to be celebrated as the True Cross on which Jesus was crucified.<sup>51</sup> These findings inspired Christian pilgrims to come to Jerusalem in search of the places where Jesus ministered, died and was resurrected.

The Christian aspects of Jerusalem flourished under the Roman and Byzantine Empires until the city's invasion in 610 CE by the Persian King Khosrow II. In his

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<sup>49</sup> Wilkinson, pg. 86; Armstrong, pg. 152

<sup>50</sup> Armstrong, pp. 162-163; Goldenberg, pp. 48-49

offensive, he killed a reported 66,555 Christians in the city.<sup>52</sup> Twelve years later, Byzantine forces defeated the Persians and retook the city.<sup>53</sup> Around this time, the Prophet Muhammad began receiving divine revelations, which he transmitted to citizens of Mecca and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula. These revelations, the Qur'an or recitation, created a new religious, social and political force known as Islam.

In 638, Jerusalem fell to Muslim forces moving through the region. Omar, the second Caliph of the Muslim *ummah*, took charge of the city, calling it *Bayt al-Maqdis*.<sup>54</sup> Omar was remembered as a tolerant leader; he did not kill the existing population and allowed Jews and Christians to live in the city as *dhimmi*s, protected religious minorities.<sup>55</sup> He left Christian sites as they were and concentrated his attention on the platform where the Jewish Temple had once stood. It is recorded that both Jews and Muslims worked together to clean the site, which had been used as a refuse dump under Byzantine rule.<sup>56</sup> Once cleared, Omar built a simple wooded mosque, which became known as the al-Aqsa mosque. Later, in 688, the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik commissioned the building of a magnificent shrine over a rock that protruded from the platform, later to be identified as the place where the Prophet ascended in the *miraj*, the mystical journey to heaven.<sup>57</sup> The Dome of the Rock shrine, completed in 691, became the archetype for all Muslim shrines and remains one of the most revered pieces of Islamic architecture today.

In 868, the region was stormed by bands of Turkish forces taking advantage of the weakened state of the Muslim Abbasid Dynasty. Soon after, in 983, the newly formed

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<sup>51</sup> Armstrong, pp. 184-188

<sup>52</sup> Armstrong, pp. 214-216; Wilkinson dates the invasion at 614 and the number killed at 33,887, pg. 628

<sup>53</sup> Armstrong, pp. 214-216

<sup>54</sup> The dates of conquest range from 636 to 638, Duri, pg. 106

<sup>55</sup> Duri, pg. 107; *Dhimmi*s were also required to pay a special tax, the *jizyah*, see Armstrong, pg. 231

<sup>56</sup> Armstrong, pg. 230

<sup>57</sup> Armstrong, pp. 237-242

Ismaili Shii Fatimid Dynasty seized the city, now called *al-Quds*, making it a Shia-dominant city. In the tenth century, Turkish *Seljuks* began to conquer cities in the region, clashing with the Fatimids for control over areas in the eastern Mediterranean. The Seljuks, also expanding West, succeeded in defeating Byzantine forces in the battle of Manzikert in 1071, placing the bulk of Asia Minor under their control. Chronic fighting between the Fatimid and Seljuk empires weakened both forces and paved the way for a Christian conquest in the First Crusade of 1096-1099. The crusaders had two objectives in their military expedition: to free Christians that had fallen under Muslim control, and to liberate Jerusalem—particularly the *Anastasis*, which western European Christians called the Holy Sepulcher—and make it a Christian city again. Crusading forces succeeded in capturing Jerusalem in June of 1099 and made it one of three Crusader Principalities along with Edessa and Antioch.

The arrival of crusaders prompted Muslim scholars and leaders to call for *jihad*, or holy war, to defend the people and places of Islam, particularly Jerusalem, which had become the third holiest city to the faith. The Seljuk leaders Zangi, Nur-al Din, and Salah-ed Din (Saladin) engaged in a series of battles that eventually succeeded in pushing back the crusader forces and placing Jerusalem in Muslim hands in 1187. The city was forfeited briefly to crusaders from 1229 until 1244, at which time it returned to Muslim leadership once again.

In 1250, the Mamluk Empire, headquartered in Cairo, seized Jerusalem, followed by the capture of Acre in 1291, the last crusader stronghold in Palestine. The city flourished under Mamluk control and became a center of Islamic scholarship and

mysticism, or Sufism.<sup>58</sup> In the fifteenth century, the rising Ottoman Empire expanded East as the Mamluk Empire declined, taking al-Quds in 1516. The Ottomans introduced a centralized bureaucracy to the city and initiated several development projects including rebuilding the city's walls, creating a potable water supply, and establishing a sewage system. Under these improved services the city's population tripled.<sup>59</sup> The Ottoman's also repaired religious sites in the city including both the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque. It was at this time that the Western Wall of the Temple mount became recognized as a site of pilgrimage for Jews.<sup>60</sup>

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the West began to renew its interests in the Near and Middle East. Napoleon seized Egypt in 1798 and sent forces into Palestine in 1799.<sup>61</sup> From 1831 to 1840, Jerusalem was briefly occupied by the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha. Muhammad Ali, inspired by French ideals, instituted policies aimed at making the government in Palestine more secular, including reducing the power of Muslim Shari'a courts and abolishing restrictions on *dhimmis*. These policies sparked a region-wide revolt in 1834 that required the bulk of Egypt's army to quell.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the liberated status of the *dhimmis* in Palestine remained, allowing Christians and Jews to build and expand their influence in Jerusalem.

In 1840, a joint British-Prussian offensive defeated the Egyptians. This military operation piqued western interests in the region, particularly in the holy sites of Jerusalem. The two kingdoms began a joint Protestant mission to Jerusalem in 1841,

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<sup>58</sup> Donald P. Little, "Jerusalem Under the Ayyubids and Mamluks," pp. 177-199, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pp. 186-194

<sup>59</sup> Armstrong, pp. 324-325; K.J. Asali, "Jerusalem Under the Ottomans: 1516-1831 AD," *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pp. 200-204

<sup>60</sup> Armstrong, pp. 327-330; Wilkinson argues that Jews made pilgrimages to the Western Wall as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, pp. 94-95.

<sup>61</sup> Armstrong, pg. 346

which introduced Anglican and Lutheran Protestantism to the region. These denominations opened ministries for local Christians, such as schools, hospitals and orphanages, often “converting” local Christians to Protestantism and creating tensions among the different denominations in the city.<sup>63</sup>

Judaism was also affected by the arrival of European influences. Jews from Europe began coming in larger and larger numbers to Palestine during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some came to the region with the desire of being closer to the site of the Temple while others came with the aim of building ideal societies inspired by Marxism, constructing *kibbutzim* first around Galilee and later in the Negev. In 1899, the first Zionist Council was called in Basal, Switzerland, with the purpose of discussing the fate of European Jews in the face of rising anti-Semitism. Although its spokesperson, Theodor Herzl, suggested immigration to Uganda as a possible homeland, certain members at the conference insisted on Palestine. The idea of a modern-day homeland for Jews increased migration to Palestine in the following decades.

At the outbreak of World War I, the declining Ottoman Empire sided with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which led to the Empire’s dissolution at the end of the war and its partition between the British and French in the secretly negotiated Skyes-Picot Agreement. Under the agreement, Britain received Palestine, Jordan and Jerusalem; France gained control of Lebanon and Syria. British occupation of Palestine was seldom peaceful, particularly in Jerusalem. Riots broke out between Arabs and Jews

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<sup>62</sup> Armstrong, pg. 350

<sup>63</sup> Alexander Schoelch, “Jerusalem in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: 1831-1917 AD,” pp. 228-248, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pp. 229-230; Armstrong, pp. 353-354



in 1920, 1929 and again in 1936, followed by the Arab revolt of 1936-1938.<sup>64</sup> Both Arabs and Jews formed their own militant groups aimed at ousting the British from the region. In 1937, Britain proposed a plan for partitioning Palestine between Jews and Arabs, the Peel Commission, which aimed to make Jerusalem a *corpus separatum* and international protectorate. The Zionists agreed to the idea with some modifications but the Arabs flatly rejected the proposition. The outbreak of World War II, however, interrupted talks of partition.

Despite the atrocities of the Jewish Genocide and the overtures of Jerusalem's Grand Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husaini to Hitler during World War II, Britain chose to restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine during and after the war. In retaliation, a militant Zionist group, the Irgun, blew up a wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in July of 1946, which housed part of the British military administration. The blast killed 91 and wounded 45, the most fatal bombing of a building in terrorism history prior to Oklahoma City in 1995.<sup>65</sup> In the face of growing unrest in the region, the British turned to the newly formed United Nations to solve the problem in Palestine. The UN proposed a new partition plan, which the General Assembly approved through vote in 1947. The Zionists accepted the plan—which also called for Jerusalem to be a *corpus separatum*, and for Jerusalem and Bethlehem to be put under international jurisdiction—but the Arabs refused to agree to partition, driving both sides into war. After a year-and-a-half, Israel and Jordan signed an armistice ending hostilities in 1949. The war left Israel with more land than delineated in

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<sup>64</sup> Michael C. Hudson, "The Transformation of Jerusalem: 1917-1987 AD," pp. 249-278, *Jerusalem in History*, edited by K.J. Asali, (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1999), pp. 254-256; Armstrong, pp. 374-383

<sup>65</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1998), pg. 51

the UN partition plan, made around 700,000 to one million Palestinian refugees, and divided Jerusalem with Jordan controlling the Old City and its religious sites.<sup>66</sup>

Jordan and Israel immediately took steps aimed at solidifying control over their portions of Jerusalem. The Jordanian authority forbade Jews from visiting the Old City and imposed restrictions on non-Jews wishing to visit Christian and Muslim sites.<sup>67</sup> Both sides moved governmental offices to Jerusalem despite international criticism. The Israelis named Jerusalem as its capitol in 1949 and opened its parliament, the Knesset, in Jerusalem on January 23, 1950.

In 1967, tensions mounted between Israel and its neighbors—particularly Egypt and Syria—over rumors of an Arab invasion of Israel. Israel responded to this threat by preemptively launching air strikes against airbases in Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq, followed by a rapid ground offensive. In six days, from June 5 through 10, the Israelis captured all of the West Bank from Jordan including the Old City and East Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and roughly three million Arabs living in these areas. The UN condemned the occupation of these lands in Resolution 242, calling for Israel's withdrawal. Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in 1979 in exchange for peace with that country, but has continued to occupy the West Bank, Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.

Although opening the Old City to all people and ensuring the safety of all three faith's religious sites, Israel has initiated a series of controversial policies including expanding the city's borders, building massive apartment complexes in Palestinian

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<sup>66</sup> Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), pp. 252-258

<sup>67</sup> Armstrong, pg. 389

## 2.1, Major Battles Over Jerusalem

Date	Between	Results
~1000 BCE	Israelites and Jebusites	Israelites gained Jerusalem, making it the capital of United Israel
587 BCE	Israelites and Babylonians	Babylonians sacked the city, destroyed the Temple, deported Israelites
539 BCE	Persia and Babylonians	Persia defeated Babylonians, captured Jerusalem, allowed Jews to return and re-sanctify the Temple
333/2 BCE	Alexander the Great and Persians	Introduction of Hellenist culture and political ideas
175 BCE	King Antiochus and Maccabeus	Forbade Jewish practices, desecrated the Temple. Maccabeus revolt attacked soldiers and non-Jews in the region, Antiochus rescinded orders
63 BCE	Roman Troops and Jews	Romans put down intra-Jewish fighting, razed city walls, imposed military occupation
~60-70CE	Roman Troops and Zealots	Mass slaughter of Jews, complete destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple
118-135	Hadrian and Bar Kokhba	Hadrian attempted to rebuild the city, Bar Kokhba revolt recaptured Jerusalem for three years, around 580,000 Jews killed to put down the revolt
610	Persian and Byzantine Empires	Persian King Khosrow sacked Jerusalem and killed a reported 66,555 Christians in the city. Byzantines retook the city twelve years later
638	Byzantines and Muslims	Muslims capture city peacefully, allowed Jews and Christians to stay as <i>dhimmi</i> s, built mosques and Muslim shrines
983	Turkish forces and Shii Fatimid Dynasty	Fatimids took the city and made it a Shii center of learning and arts
1099	Crusaders and Fatimids	Christian crusaders took the city, slaughtered a reported 30,000 inhabitants, established Crusader Kingdom
1187	Saladin and Crusaders	Muslim Saladin takes the city via negotiation, does not slaughter Christians in the city, allows Jews to return
1516	Ottoman and Mamluk Empires	Ottomans take the city without a fight, introduce centralize government, improved infrastructure, rebuilt walls
1917	British and Ottomans	British take the city at the end of World War I, impose Mandate Rule until 1947
1948	Jordan and Israel	Israel and Jordan sign an armistice partitioning the city, with Jordan possessing the Old City and its holy sites
1967	Israel and Jordan	Israel captures Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, effectively annexing the city
2000	Israel and Palestine	Right-wing politician Ariel Sharon visits the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, sparking the "al-Aqsa Intifada"

neighborhoods, and confiscating Muslim and Christian land in and around the Old City.<sup>68</sup>

These policies, coupled with aggressive actions of local and international Jewish

<sup>68</sup> For the expansion of Jerusalem's city limits and development of residential blocs, see Armstrong, pp. 403-409; for confiscation of Muslim and Christian land in and around the Old City, see Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem Since 1967*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 174-176, 191-195

organizations to “Judaize” Jerusalem, have helped create an insecure environment for the religious and ethnic status of the city. These insecurities have been reflected in social and political violence around Jerusalem, particularly in the September 2000 outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian violence—the “al-Aqsa Intifada”—which will be discussed further in the following section.

### **Christian, Muslim and Jewish Battles for Jerusalem**

The previous chronology reveals that Jerusalem has experienced scores of violent conflicts throughout its more than three millennia of history; the major battles are highlighted in Table 2.1. Numerous nations and empires have attempted to seize the city and claim rights to its sacred places. This section focuses specifically on three major waves of violence over Jerusalem: the Christians Crusades of the 11<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Muslim call for jihad as a means of countering the Christian crusader threat; and Israel’s seizure of Jerusalem in 1967 and the Jewish and Muslim violence its governorship has sparked. Drawing on the causal argument from chapter two, this section will ask the following questions surrounding these episodes of violence: Is there an identifiable threat or the perception of a threat to which the violent parties are responding? What are the material, social and technological resources available to the involved religious groups? And what is the relationship between political and religious leaders?

#### *The Christian Crusades to liberate Jerusalem*

This section considers the antecedent conditions that fueled Pope Urban II’s call for a Holy War in 1095CE. Specifically it outlines the emergence of crusading, external and internal threats to Christian Europe at the time of the crusades, the call and response

of the First Crusade, the resources available to crusaders, the various goals of crusading, and religious and political leaders' motives for calling crusades. It argues that threats from Muslim Seljuks in Asia Minor coupled with the Almoravid's advance into the Iberian Peninsula prompted a military reaction from the pope and several European kings. The pope's call for military action against Muslim forces received popular backing, however, because it included liberating Jerusalem and the tomb of Christ, which was an important symbol of popular Christian piety at the time. Furthermore, the initial crusade succeeded in capturing Jerusalem not because of superior material, social or technological resources, but because Muslim forces were weakened through infighting, leaving the area vulnerable to invasion.

Most scholars agree that the crusades had their roots in the rise of European pilgrimages to the Holy Land, which began as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century and took on increasing importance as the first Christian millennium drew near.<sup>69</sup> European pilgrims aimed to travel—usually via land on foot or by horseback—to the cities in the Holy Land connected with the life, ministry, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. This included Bethlehem (Jesus' birthplace), Nazareth (the city where he grew up), the Galilee (where Jesus performed the bulk of his ministry and miracles) and, most importantly, Jerusalem where he died, was buried and rose from the dead.

Christian pilgrims, although not part of the clerisy, held a special status in the eyes of the Church. Most notably, they took vows to the Church to perform and complete the pilgrimage, making them separate from ordinary citizens and like clergy for the

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<sup>69</sup> For early Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, see Armstrong, pp. 202-212, 266-267. For debates on early crusading and its similarities to pilgrimage at this time, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), pp. 23-25; C.J. Tyerman, "Were There Any Crusades in the Twelfth Century?" *English Historical Review*, (June 1995), pp. 553-577

duration of their trip.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, pilgrims were also unique in that they often took up arms or to hire knights as protection on their journey, making them not unlike small armies.<sup>71</sup> These two facets of pilgrims to the Holy Land—unique status in the eyes of the Church and the presence of defensive forces—paved the way for the concept of crusading, which began in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The early crusaders were similar in many ways to pilgrims and, prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the two groups were virtually indistinguishable.<sup>72</sup> Like pilgrims, the early crusaders took religious vows that bound them to the performance and completion of their task. They were given special status in the eyes of the church and their local rulers.<sup>73</sup> Crusaders were accompanied by members of the clergy, as were the pilgrims, and both kept similar liturgical practices and religious rites.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, the crusaders followed the same routes to the Holy Land used by pilgrims.<sup>75</sup> Many early crusaders also brought their families on the journey, not unlike pilgrims.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, crusaders also resembled military forces of their times. Prior to 1095, several popes had assembled bands of knights with the aim of defending the Church and its interests. For example, in 1049 Pope Leo IX employed a militia to fight Normans in Southern Italy.<sup>77</sup> From 1059 to 1073, Popes Nicholas II and Alexander II also employed militias to defend papal land and interests including an offense against advancing Muslim forces in Spain.<sup>78</sup> In 1085, Frankish forces captured the Spanish city of Toledo followed

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<sup>70</sup> Tyerman, pg. 555

<sup>71</sup> Armstrong, pg. 267; Tyerman, pg. 567

<sup>72</sup> Riley-Smith, pg. 23

<sup>73</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), pg. 56

<sup>74</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 24

<sup>75</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 43

<sup>76</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 24

<sup>77</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 5

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*

by the capture of Tarragona.<sup>79</sup> These soldiers were often granted religious indulgences—specifically the remission of sins for their services—and those that died in battle were called martyrs.<sup>80</sup>

However, crusaders differed from pilgrims and papal forces in that, first, the forces called and sent out by the pope in 1095 had the goal of “liberating” Jerusalem and claiming territory believed to be inherently Christian. Pilgrims, on the other hand, sought merely to visit Jerusalem and its holy sites, not occupy them. Second, the pope was the person responsible for calling crusades and also had the authority to grant indulgences for those who participated.<sup>81</sup> Pilgrimages, on the other hand, were organized by both religious and secular leaders. Third, after the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century, crusaders had their own unique vow that was distinct from a pilgrim’s vow.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, crusaders also wore a unique cross on their clothes and armor; the word Crusade in fact comes from the Latin word for cross, *cruci*.<sup>83</sup> Lastly, crusaders also formed their own unique military orders—Templars and Hospitalers—associated with maintaining Crusader Kingdoms in the Holy Land.<sup>84</sup> Crusaders, therefore, eventually became a distinct force of the Church and had their own vows, their own military orders, and the unique goal of liberating Christian land in defense of the faith.

Prior to the call for Holy War to liberate Jerusalem in 1095, domestic and international political circumstances created the conditions under which the Church began to sanction violence for religious ends. Following the end of the Carolingian wars

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<sup>79</sup> Robert Irwin, “Islam and the Crusades: 1096-1699,” *The Oxford History of the Crusades*, edited by Jonathan Riley-Smith, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pg. 243; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 18-19

<sup>80</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 5

<sup>81</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 34

<sup>82</sup> Tyerman, pp. 569-570

<sup>83</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pp. 54-55; Tyerman, pp. 568, 575

in the tenth century, France suffered from protracted insecurity caused by pillaging knights. Gradually, emerging local lords, *Castellans*, hired these free-lance knights to defend their interests, which often included defending bishops, monasteries, and religious land.<sup>85</sup> In 1031, at the Council of Limoges, the Church reinforced a recent call for the “Peace of God,” which attempted to restore order to the region by compelling knights to swear an oath to respect the peace. Alongside this oath, the Church began to employ knights as defensive forces aimed at keeping the peace.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, the Church soon possessed a force of knights who were bound by oath to defend the Church’s interests and keep the peace.

Also around this time, Pope Gregory VII called on scholars to delineate the religious and legal conditions under which the church could use force. The scholar Anselm drew from the works of fourth century bishop St. Augustine of Hippo to distinguish between two types of holy war: those commanded by God and those approved by God.<sup>87</sup> He differentiated this from Augustine’s concept of the Just War, which, although containing similarities, required the sanction of force by a king, not the pope. The 13<sup>th</sup> century scholar Thomas of Aquinas further defined the conditions under which the Church could sanction military action and the limits of force against non-Christians.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to these domestic concerns, the era leading up to the First Crusade also had several important international developments, particularly vis-à-vis Muslim Empires. In the mid-eleventh century, the Seljuk Sultans of the Abbasid Empire began to push north and west through Asia Minor. In 1071, the Seljuks defeated the Byzantine Empire

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<sup>84</sup> Tyerman, pg. 566

<sup>85</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 3

<sup>86</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 4

<sup>87</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 6



in the battle of Manzikert, placing most of region under Muslim control.<sup>89</sup> This loss was compounded by the Seljuk's capture of Antioch in 1084, which was a Christian-majority city.<sup>90</sup> Pope Gregory VII proposed raising an army that would push east to liberate Greek Christians and free the Tomb of Christ from Muslim rule.<sup>91</sup> This proposal, however, was not heeded until Gregory's successor, Urban II, officially called for holy war in 1095.

Also around this time, Muslim Almoravids moved into North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. The Almoravids imposed a strict interpretation of Muslim law and practices, threatening Christians in the region.<sup>92</sup> In response, Gregory VII dispatched troops to the region in 1078 with the aim of pushing back this new Muslim force. Papal troops took Toledo in 1085 followed by the capture of Tarragona. In these military expeditions, knights were granted papal indulgences and those that died in battle were called martyrs, as previously mentioned.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to these domestic and international developments, religious reforms at this time also helped fuel the call for a holy war against Muslim forces. In the post-Carolingian war era, clerics began to organize greater lay participation in the Church. They built more local parishes with the aim of reaching out to the common person.<sup>94</sup> They also sought to apply monastic values in the world and to instill a new level of piety within the laity. These efforts inspired a popular religious zeal—aided by the millennium—visible in increased participation in pilgrimage and, later, the willingness to answer the call for holy war against the threat of Muslim forces.

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<sup>88</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades*, pp. 16-19

<sup>89</sup> Armstrong, pg. 271

<sup>90</sup> Irwin, pg. 217

<sup>91</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 21

<sup>92</sup> Irwin, pg. 243

<sup>93</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 5-6

<sup>94</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 4

This new piety was supplemented by popularly held beliefs about God's interaction with humanity. It was commonly believed that God spoke through natural forces. In the decades leading up to the First Crusade and particularly in the year that Urban II called for holy war, numerous natural wonders occurred including solar and lunar eclipses, auras in the sky, meteor showers, and mysterious red glowing horizons; these phenomena were interpreted as God's call for Christians to liberate Jerusalem.<sup>95</sup> This message was compounded by a drought throughout France, which was interpreted as God's disfavor, and which ended in the year the holy war was proclaimed.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, these natural phenomenon added to the sense of growing popular piety and enthusiasm for taking action against Muslim forces.

Lastly, increased pilgrimages around the time of the millennium fueled popular imaginings of the Holy Land in general and Jerusalem in particular. Historian Jonathan Riley-Smith argues that "the attitude of eleventh-century Christians towards Jerusalem and the Holy Land was obsessive. Jerusalem was the center of the world, the spot on which God Himself had focused when he chose to redeem mankind by intervening in history..."<sup>97</sup> Returning pilgrims brought miraculous tales of their journey to Christ's homeland that were spread through stories, songs and poems.<sup>98</sup> In addition, returning pilgrims often brought home relics—artifacts believed to be authentically connected with Christ and his ministry—which were displayed in Churches throughout Europe.<sup>99</sup> Of particular importance were pieces of the True Cross, found by Constantine's mother in

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<sup>95</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 33

<sup>96</sup> *ibid*

<sup>97</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 21

<sup>98</sup> Stephen G. Nichols, "Poetic Places and Real Spaces: Anthropology of Space in Crusade Literature," *Yale French Studies*, Vol. 0, No. 95 (1999), pp. 111-133

<sup>99</sup> Armstrong, pp. 202-212

the fourth century, and the Lance of Christ, the sword believed to have pierced Jesus' side while he hung on the cross. These relics were later carried into battle and believed to grant imminent victory for the crusaders.

With these domestic and international circumstances in mind, the pope called for a holy war at the Council of Claremont in November of 1095—to begin on the feast of the assumption of St. Mary, August 15, 1096—in order to liberate Greek Christians and Jerusalem. He proclaimed a holy war as the pope, speaking on Christ's behalf, naming it the *Via Dei*, the Way of God.<sup>100</sup> He called on young, able-bodied men to vow to defend the Church and don crosses on their clothes and armor as a sign of their holy mission. He forbade monks from participating, however, claiming that it violated their vows to renounce the world and to not take up arms.<sup>101</sup> The pope toured through France and Italy from December into the following year to raise support for the expedition and to recruit forces.

The popular response to the pope's declaration was overwhelming, inspiring average people to preach and gather their own recruits for the offense. One layperson in particular, Peter the Hermit, zealously proclaimed the need for holy war, calling on all Christians—old, young, male and female—to embark on the expedition.<sup>102</sup> His message stressed the need to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim oppression, reflecting the importance of the holy city to current-day Christians. He gathered a following so whipped-up by the

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<sup>100</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 15

<sup>101</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 26

<sup>102</sup> Thomas F. Madden, *A Concise History of the Crusades*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1999), pp. 17-18

proclaimed threat to Christianity that a mob stormed through the Rhineland in the spring of 1096, slaughtering Jews in what became known as the first holocaust.<sup>103</sup>

Peter the Hermit succeeded in mobilizing a force of around 60,000 that left for the East via the traditional pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land in March 1096, five months before Urban's stated start-date.<sup>104</sup> This mass, although considered to be part of the First Crusade, is also often referred to as the "Peasants'" or "People's Crusade." Without planning and proper provisions, the majority of these armed pilgrims either starved en route or were killed by a Turkish ambush in August.<sup>105</sup>

A second wave of crusaders set off on August 15, as scheduled. The force consisted of five armies of around 40,000 including castellans and their families, professional knights, lay knights, and other men sworn to protect the Church and its interests.<sup>106</sup> Several historians note that the motives of these early crusaders to engage in holy war were mixed. Historian Jonathan Riley-Smith argues that the salient motivation was religious piety. However, some went in search of adventure and glory, others went as a means of performing penances for crimes committed, and perhaps a few went in search of fortune, although there is virtually no evidence that crusaders returned wealthy from the expedition.<sup>107</sup> Unlike the first wave that left in the spring, this group was better prepared for the long journey ahead. Participants had solicited funds, sold property, and received donations from congregations to finance the trip.<sup>108</sup> Subsequent crusades were

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<sup>103</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pg. 34, 50-55

<sup>104</sup> Armstrong, pg. 272

<sup>105</sup> Madden, pp. 18-20

<sup>106</sup> Madden, pg. 12

<sup>107</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 38-41

<sup>108</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 36-37

even better organized and funded, often receiving financing from papal indulgences and regional taxes.<sup>109</sup>

It took the force nearly three years to reach Jerusalem. They arrived in Constantinople and crossed the Bosphorus in April of 1097. On June 19, the force took the city of Nicaea and established a principality in Edessa. Beginning in October 1097, the crusaders fought to regain the city of Antioch from the Seljuks, finally taking the fortress in June of 1098 and establishing a second principality. Throughout that winter in Antioch, one in seven knights died of starvation and half of the force deserted.<sup>110</sup>

In November 1098, a force of around 10,000 to 15,000 troops—including knights, foot soldier and citizens—set off for Jerusalem. On June 7, 1099, they reached the ramparts and began their siege on the city, finally defeating its forces on June 15. It is reported that the crusaders then entered the city and indiscriminately slaughtered an estimate 20,000 to 30,000 of the inhabitants inside. One witness observed that, “men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of unbelievers since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies.”<sup>111</sup> The capture of the Holy City and its establishment as a crusader principality was deemed a miracle, both by the forces that took the city and by those that heard the news of the victory back in Europe, particularly after crusaders began to return home in 1100.<sup>112</sup>

The miraculous success of the First Crusade spawned a series of subsequent holy wars stretching from the eleventh century to as late as the 1700s; the majority of

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<sup>109</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pp. 45-49

<sup>110</sup> Armstrong, pg. 272

<sup>111</sup> Armstrong, pp. 274

<sup>112</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 120-121

crusades, however, were concentrated from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>113</sup>

Although the First Crusade had as its goal the liberation of Greeks from Muslim occupation and the capture of Jerusalem, future crusades expanded to including other goals; all crusades, however, were perceived as necessary measures for the defense of the Church and its interests.<sup>114</sup> Historian Jonathan Riley-Smith argues that the crusades can be divided into four broad categories. First, crusades were taken to liberate land and, to a lesser extent, people believed to be the property of Christianity. This category includes the First Crusade but also contains *Reconquista* Crusades fought to “liberate” Spain from Muslim occupation, particularly the 13<sup>th</sup> century battles in Cordoba, Valencia, and Seville.<sup>115</sup> This category also includes subsequent crusades taken to defend and recapture Crusader Kingdoms established by the First Crusade, particularly to defend Jerusalem, which fell to Saladin in 1187, was regained by Frederick II in 1229, and lost to Turks in 1244.<sup>116</sup> This type further contains later crusades in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries undertaken by French and Hungarian forces to push back Ottoman advances into the Balkans.<sup>117</sup>

Second, crusades were fought in northeastern Europe with the aim of ridding the continent of paganism. This type of crusading includes the 12<sup>th</sup> century proclamations of St. Bernard of Germany, who encouraged the pope to sanction crusades against pagan Slavs. His request produced the papal encyclical *Divina Dispensatione*, which sanctioned the use of force for conversion and produced the Livonian Crusade in 1199 and a joint German and Danish Crusade in 1209.<sup>118</sup> Third, popes called for crusades to battle kings

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<sup>113</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 11

<sup>114</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 24-26

<sup>115</sup> Irwin, pg. 245

<sup>116</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 23

<sup>117</sup> Irwin, pp. 252-254

<sup>118</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 25

believed to be a threat to the Church. This includes crusades against Henry the VI, a 1240 attack against Frederick II, and a 1265 offensive against the English monarchy.<sup>119</sup>

Finally, crusades were taken to subvert heretics and schismatics within the Christian world. This form of crusading was called in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by the scholar Gratian and the Third Lateran Council.<sup>120</sup> It includes military action against the Greeks in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Albigensian Crusade against a pocket of Catharism—an ancient deviation of Christianity that claimed a special form of baptism could make people sin-free “Perfects”—in southern France.<sup>121</sup> Within the 12<sup>th</sup> century milieu of threats stemming from heresy in Europe, Emperor Frederick II called for the death penalty for those found guilty of heresy and, under Pope Gregory the IX, new codes were added to papal canon law to allow for heretics to be executed by means of hanging, burning, or drowning, thus paving the way for the Spanish Inquisition.<sup>122</sup>

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Gregory the IX created the office of the Inquisition to specifically combat heresy in Europe.<sup>123</sup> In 1478, a papal Bull founded the Holy Office in Spain, which became known as the Spanish Inquisition, an institution that lasted until 1834.<sup>124</sup> The Inquisition focused on weeding out what the Church believed to be heretics to the faith, of which converts—mostly Jews but also some Muslims—were the primary target. Jewish converts suspected of secretly continuing Jewish practices were called “*marranos*,” or pigs; it is estimated that over 300,000 were burned at the stake after being

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<sup>119</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 27-28

<sup>120</sup> Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 25

<sup>121</sup> For details on Catharism, see Madden, pp. 124-129; for details on the Albigensian Crusade, see Madden, pp. 129-133

<sup>122</sup> Clarence Gallagher, *Canon Law and the Christian Community: The Role of Law in the Church According to the Summa Aurea of Cardinal Hostiensis*, (Rome: Analetica Gregoriana, 1978), pg. 192

<sup>123</sup> Gallagher, pg. 193

<sup>124</sup> Henry Arthur Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pg. 137

declared heretics.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Jewish communities in general were often accused of blasphemy against Christ, providing legal grounds for destruction of religious property such as copies of the *Torah* or *Talmud*.<sup>126</sup> Thus, crusading to stamp out heresy within Europe became a bloody enterprise that cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

In addition to these four categories, several “popular crusades” occurred in and around Europe. These crusades were unique in that they were not sanctioned by the pope but, rather, called by laypeople believed to have a special connection to the divine. The first such offensive occurred prior to the First Crusade and was organized around the charismatic lay person Peter the Hermit, who called and led the “Peasants Crusade” until its demise against the Seljuks in 1097. In 1212, a young man named Nicolas from Cologne stirred up a force of thousands with a vision of Christian masses walking through the sea to liberate Jerusalem. This offense became known as the Children’s Crusade, despite the presence of men and women in its ranks.<sup>127</sup> In addition, Stephen of Cloyes, a layperson connected with the pilgrimage center of Chartres in France, had a vision of Christ that called for him to organize a mass to deliver divine letters calling for the liberation of Jerusalem to Philip Augustus, King of France.<sup>128</sup> Finally, a mass of poor believed to be mostly shepherds, rose up in support of Louis IX’s crusade against Egypt, which became known as the Shepherd’s Crusade.<sup>129</sup> The major crusades are summarized in Table 3.1.

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<sup>125</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion*, Werblowsky and Wigoder, editors-in-chief, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 351-352

<sup>126</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion*, pg. 672

<sup>127</sup> Madden, pp. 138-140

<sup>128</sup> Gary Dickson, “Stephen of Cloyes, Philip Augustus, and the Children’s Crusade of 1212,” *Journey Towards God: Pilgrimage and Crusade*, edited by Barbara N. Sargent-Bauer, (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 1992), pp. 83-105

<sup>129</sup> Dickson, pg. 86



### 3.1, Major Christian Crusades to the Holy Land

<i>Crusade Date</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Goal(s)</i>	<i>Result</i>
Peasant Crusade 1096-1097	Muslims	Liberate Jerusalem	Ambushed and defeated by Turks in 1097
First Crusade 1096-1109	Muslims	Liberate Greek Christians/ Jerusalem	Created Principalities Captured Jerusalem in 1099
Crusade of 1100	Muslims	Expand crusader lands	Defeated in Asia Minor
Venetian Crusade of 1122	Byzantines, Muslims	Take Corfu, expand crusader kingdoms	Defeated Fatimid armada, took Tyre in 1124
Second Crusade 1145/6-1148	Byzantines, Muslims	Take back Edessa, Free Iberian peninsula, defeat Byzantines	Helped free Lisbon, forces defeated in Asia Minor and battle over Damascus
Third Crusade 1187-1192	Muslims	Take back Jerusalem	Did not capture Jerusalem, battle ended in three year truce. Captured Cyprus
Fourth Crusade 1198-1198	Muslims, Greeks	Depose Byzantine king, take back Jerusalem	Sacked Zara and Constantinople.
“Children’s Crusade” 1212	Muslims	Retake Jerusalem	Thousands of men, women and children marched to Marseilles to walk through the water to Jerusalem, ended in failure and ridicule
Fifth Crusade 1218-1221	Egypt	Take back Jerusalem via Egypt	Besieged and captured Damietta in 1281, lost again in 1221. In 1229, Frederick II took Jerusalem by negotiation, lost in 1244
Sixth Crusade 1249-1250	Egypt	Retake Damietta	Took Damietta, marched to Mansurah, sultan imposed blockade, defeated crusaders
Crusade of 1261	Muslims	Retake Jerusalem	Captured Tunis, made it to Acre, returned home

These different categories of crusades reveal that several motives inspired the call to holy war. Overall, however, crusading was couched in terms of defense and liberation not expansion and conquest.<sup>130</sup> Religious and political leaders viewed Muslim advances towards Europe as a serious threat to the stability of Europe. However, these leaders also viewed heresy and paganism as threats to the faith, by some counts an even bigger threat

<sup>130</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 17, 18, 22

than the advance of Islam.<sup>131</sup> Likewise, disagreements between kings and popes also posed a threat to the Church. Therefore, although actions taken by crusaders resulted in conquest and expansion, their perception was one of defense, recapture and liberation of land and people believed to be Christian. Although crusading continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century against the Ottomans, Christian holy wars largely died out after Jerusalem and the other Crusader Kingdoms were lost to Muslim forces in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which will be discussed further in the following section.

The Christian call for holy war during the middle ages contains elements that conform and diverge from the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, the crusades conform to the causal argument through their saliently religious end-goals, particularly the goal of “liberating” Jerusalem. The bulk of major crusades throughout the middle ages were called either to capture or defend Jerusalem. Another early goal of crusades was the defense of Greek co-religionists although, ironically, those same co-religionists were attacked in subsequent crusades. Likewise, further crusades were called at home to purify the faith from heretics, pagans, and kings that did not defend interests of the Church. All of these goals, while containing social and political elements, were primarily religious.

Second, the saliency of threat perception as a motivation for holy war conforms to this dissertation’s causal argument. The primary threat to the Church at this time was advancing Muslim empires. This included the Seljuks and Fatimids in the Near and Middle East, the advances of the Almoravids in North Africa and the Iberian peninsula and, later, the rise of the Ottomans and their capture of the Balkans. In addition to Muslim empires, European Christians also crusaded in response to threats posed by

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<sup>131</sup> Madden, pg. 124; Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* pg. 26

heretics and kings that disagreed with papal authority. Of all the threats perceived by Christians during this time, the crusades against pagans in northeastern Europe appear the least compelling as a threat to the health of the Church. However, even these crusades received papal blessings and were couched in terms of threat to the faith.

The crusades, however, do not conform to two predictions inferred from the causal argument in the dissertation. First, the First Crusade succeeded in creating crusader kingdoms and capturing Jerusalem despite a severe lack of resources. The First Crusade, in particular, was plagued by lack of material resources and even social resources such as strong leadership and organization. Despite this, however, they succeeded in capturing the holy city and establishing four crusader principalities. Subsequent crusades were better organized and funded; however, this did not always result in success. Most of the later crusades failed to achieve their goals and ended in death and humiliation. This puzzling dynamic between resources and success is best explained by the resources and organization of the crusaders' opposition in the Near and Middle East, which will be examined in the following section.

Second, the crusades reveal that the relationship between religious and political leaders during this time is largely indeterminate for explaining the call to holy war and its successes or failures. The initial crusades to the Holy Land show a high degree of cooperation between the papacy and various kings, particularly the kings of France and England, but also Norway, Denmark and Germany. Kings were instrumental in providing men, materiel, and money for holy war and, in addition, they often provided the necessary leadership to organize troops for battle. However, despite this, papal and kingly crusades had only marginal successes. In addition to unified holy wars, the pope also

called for crusades *against* European kings. This demonstrates that the papacy had its own resources with which to make war and was not necessarily dependent on the assets of kings. Therefore, the call to crusade and its successes and failures were not dependent on a religious-political alliance.

### *Muslim jihad in response to the crusades*

This section describes the response of Muslim empires to Christian crusading from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It argues that Muslim empires' initial failures in defending their religious and political interests, including Jerusalem, were due largely to infighting between Muslim empires in the region, which consumed resources and weakened their defenses against the Christian offense. Beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim scholars called on their leaders to declare jihad. Jihad became a powerful means of unifying Muslims against the Christians, which concentrated their resources on this threat and succeeded in defeating the Crusader Kingdoms and recapture Jerusalem.

Political dynamics in the Near and Middle East at the end of the eleventh century directly contributed to the success of the First Crusaders. The region was divided between two main empires: the Abbasids, which were Sunni and controlled largely by the Turkish Seljuk sultans; and the Fatimid Dynasty, which was Shii Muslim. The Seljuks operated initially out of Damascus, later making Baghdad their capital in 1091, and controlled the majority of cities in the interior of Asia Minor and the Levant including Aleppo, Hama and Homs.<sup>132</sup> The Fatimid Dynasty, which originated in the 10<sup>th</sup> century as a littoral power, made Cairo its capital and grew to control most of the North African coastline,

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<sup>132</sup> Irwin, pg. 216

cities along the Red Sea including Mecca and Medina, and cities along the eastern Mediterranean including Beirut, Tyre, Acre, and Jerusalem.<sup>133</sup>

Both the Seljuks and the Fatimids were trying to create a unified Muslim polity with their respective branches of the faith predominating. These ambitions propelled both forces into confrontation beginning around 1070.<sup>134</sup> Seljuk influences increased after their defeat of Byzantine forces at Manzikert in 1071 and Antioch in 1084. Fatimid power, however, began to decline in the mid-eleventh century, particularly under the reign of al-Hakim, who most likely suffered from some form of mental illness.<sup>135</sup> In 1071, the Fatimids lost Sicily to the Franks and Tripoli to an internal rebellion.<sup>136</sup> The Seljuk and Fatimid Empires continued to fight one another throughout the rest of the century, in addition to combating the rising threat of Mongols in the North and advancing Christian forces from the West.

During this time, Jerusalem changed hands between several leaders. The Fatimids gained control of the city at the end of the tenth century. Under the leadership of al-Hakim, from 996 to his disappearance in 1021, the city's non-Muslim holy sites were desecrated or destroyed including synagogues and the Anastasis, the Church that housed the tomb of Christ.<sup>137</sup> Muslims sites also suffered under his rule, particularly the Dome of the Rock shrine, which partially collapsed in 1017.<sup>138</sup> In 1071, a Sunni Turk general

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<sup>133</sup> Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Volume II, The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pg. 24; Irwin, pg. 217

<sup>134</sup> Hodgson, pg. 21

<sup>135</sup> Hodgson, pp. 26-27; Armstrong, pp. 259-160

<sup>136</sup> Hodgson, pg. 28; Irwin, pg. 217

<sup>137</sup> Armstrong, pg. 259

<sup>138</sup> Armstrong, pg. 262

captured Jerusalem from the Fatimids and drove out all of the Shias, but the Fatimids soon recovered the city in 1098, the year before crusading forces arrived.<sup>139</sup>

Amidst these confrontations between Muslim empires, crusaders moved into Asia Minor, taking Edessa, Nicaea and Antioch from the Seljuks before moving down into the eastern Mediterranean and seizing Ramle—the Fatimid capital in Palestine—followed by Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.<sup>140</sup> Both empires initially did little to stop the advance of crusading forces. Turkish troops were dispatched during the siege of Antioch, but failed to push back the offense.<sup>141</sup> Jerusalem fell without reinforcements being issued from the Fatimids in Cairo. Neighboring Sunni Muslims saw the capitulation as divine disfavor for the Shias and their rule.<sup>142</sup> Crusading forces continued to capture cities in the following decades, taking Caesarrea in 1101, Acre in 1104, Tripoli in 1109, and Beirut and Sidon in 1110.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, the crusaders moved in relatively unopposed, capitalizing on the divided and weakened state of Muslim forces in the region.

The first call for jihad against the Christian presence in the region came from religious scholars and judges. In 1105, the scholar al-Sulami in Damascus argued in his book *Kitab al-Jihad*, the Book on Holy War, that the crusaders were not part of Byzantium but, rather, represented a new Christian offense aimed at taking Jerusalem from Muslim hands. Moreover, he interpreted their miraculous success as divine punishment for Sunni moral and political decay.<sup>144</sup> This argument was echoed by the Damascus scholar al-Rahim, who cited previous treaties and writings on jihad to

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<sup>139</sup> Irwin, pg. 217; Armstrong places the Turkish seizure at 1073, pg. 269

<sup>140</sup> Armstrong, pg. 273; Irwin, pg. 217; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp. 58-60

<sup>141</sup> Irwin, pg. 218

<sup>142</sup> *ibid*

<sup>143</sup> Jonathan Phillips, *The Crusades, 1095-1197*, (London: Longman Publishers, 2002), pg. xiv

<sup>144</sup> Irwin, pg. 220

encourage the Seljuks to call for holy war in order to defend the Muslim world against the new Christian threat.<sup>145</sup>

The first political authority to call for jihad was the Turkish tribal leader Ilghazi, who swore an oath to fight a holy war in defense of Aleppo against the new Crusader Kingdom of Antioch. He led Muslim forces in a major victory against the Crusaders in 1119, in a battle dubbed “The Field of Blood.”<sup>146</sup> The second Muslim leader to call for jihad was Imad al-Din Zangi, who created a semi-autonomous principality in northern Iraq and Syria in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Through the aid of religious scholars, he called for jihad not only against Christians but also against immoral and corrupt Muslim leadership in the region. He encouraged Muslims to return to more orthodox practices and welcomed volunteers to fight in his armies against infidels.<sup>147</sup> This proclamation prompted an alliance between his Muslim rival in Damascus, Mu’in al-Din Unur, and the Crusader Kingdom in Jerusalem.<sup>148</sup> Despite this Christian-Muslim alliance, Zangi still succeeded in capturing the Crusader Kingdom of Edessa in 1144. After his assassination in 1146, his son Nur ad-Din succeeded him as leader in Aleppo.

Nur ad-Din took Damascus in 1154, aided by pro-jihad factions in the area and an accidental Christian attack on the city led by Norman, German, and Flemish Crusaders.<sup>149</sup> To commemorate the victory, he commissioned the construction of a *minbar*, a Muslim pulpit, to be placed in Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa mosque after the city’s inevitable recapture by Muslim forces. However, Nur ad-Din was forced to commit the bulk of his troops to push back crusader ambitions in Egypt, blocking his goal of liberating Jerusalem. The troops

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<sup>145</sup> Irwin, pp. 220-222

<sup>146</sup> Phillips, pg. xiv; Irwin, pg. 225

<sup>147</sup> Irwin, pg. 226

<sup>148</sup> Irwin, pg. 227

succeeded in thwarting the crusaders and one of its generals, a Kurd later known by the name Salah-ed-Din (Saladin) took charge of Cairo.

Saladin converted Cairo from a Shia capital to a center of orthodox Sunni Islam. He founded Sunni *madrasas*, religious schools that teach theology and Islamic jurisprudence, and supported Sunni Sufis. With the death of Nur-ad Din in 1174, Saladin took control of Damascus and deposed ad-Din's son, effectively uniting the two centers of Muslim power in the region. After consolidating his authority in the neighboring cities of Aleppo, Mayyafariqin and Mosul, he responded to the pressures of his religious scholars and focused his resources on a jihad against the crusader presence in the region.<sup>150</sup>

Saladin had highly-trained, strongly led, and well equipped armies that succeeded in outmaneuvering crusader forces in the region. Saladin's armies were composed of Turkish and Kurdish professional soldiers along with slave soldiers (*Mamluks*), mercenaries, and volunteers mobilized for jihad.<sup>151</sup> His trained armies were particularly effective in their use of a unique longbow, which his forces could fire backwards while racing on horseback.<sup>152</sup> Saladin's troops made use of sieges, raids and ambushes, tactics that crusader forces were not accustomed to encountering.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, Saladin commissioned at least three military manuals aimed at making his large forces more efficient through organization and tactics.<sup>154</sup> In contrast, crusader forces were small, often poorly trained, and dispersed among several strong points. They were no match to

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<sup>149</sup> Armstrong, pg. 289; Irwin, pg. 227

<sup>150</sup> Irwin, pg. 234

<sup>151</sup> Irwin, pg. 229

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*

<sup>153</sup> Christopher Marshall, *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192-1291*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 145-147, 159



Saladin's forces, which numbered in the tens-of-thousands and were unified in one mass that moved from city to city.<sup>155</sup>

In June of 1187, Saladin led a force of around 30,000 troops into battle against the Crusader Kingdoms.<sup>156</sup> He took the crusader stronghold in Tiberias along the Sea of Galilee in the Battle of Hattin, followed by the capture of Ascalon in September and the capitulation of Jerusalem in October of that same year.<sup>157</sup> Unlike crusading forces a century earlier, Saladin negotiated the peaceful surrender of the city, allowing most of its inhabitants to leave with their possessions after paying a fee.<sup>158</sup>

Once in Jerusalem, Saladin is reported to have immediately set about cleaning the *Haram* and restoring the Dome of the Rock, which had been converted into a church, and the al-Aqsa mosque. The pulpit commissioned by Nur ad-Din was brought from Damascus and installed in the al-Aqsa mosque and Friday prayers resumed.<sup>159</sup> Saladin gave the Greek Christians control of the Christian sites in the city, punishing the western Latin Christians for their treatment of Muslim people and holy sites during the crusades.<sup>160</sup> In addition, Saladin allowed Jews back into the city and welcomed those fleeing Christian persecution in Spain and France.<sup>161</sup>

Saladin's capture of Jerusalem sparked the call for another crusade back in Europe. During his offensive in 1187, Saladin did not take the port city of Tyre, which

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<sup>154</sup> William J. Hamblin, "Saladin and Muslim Military Theory," *The Horns of Hattin*, edited by B.Z. Kedar, (London: Variorum, 1992), pp. 228-238, especially, pg. 229

<sup>155</sup> Marshall, pp. 147-155

<sup>156</sup> *ibid*

<sup>157</sup> For more on the Battle of Hattin, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Battle of Hattin Revisited," *The Horns of Hattin*, edited by B.Z. Kedar, (London: Variorum, 1992), pp. 190-207

<sup>158</sup> Geoffrey Hindley, *Saladin*, (London: Constable, 1976), pg. 7

<sup>159</sup> Armstrong, pg. 297

<sup>160</sup> Armstrong, pg. 298

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*

allowed the crusaders to keep a foothold in the region.<sup>162</sup> In 1190, Richard the Lionheart of England and Philip II of France set off on what would become the Third Crusade. In 1191, Richard captured Cyprus, establishing the island as a base for western naval operations, followed by the re-conquest of Acre in that same year. From October 1191 throughout 1192, crusading forces attempted to retake Jerusalem without success. However, later that year, after a lengthy field battle that drained Saladin's financial and material resources, Richard succeeded in forcing a truce after the Battle of Jaffa.<sup>163</sup> Saladin died in 1193, at which time his kingdom was divided among regional rulers. In 1229, crusaders retook Jerusalem via negotiations only to be captured by Turks in 1244. With Jerusalem's recapture and the defeat of crusader forces, the call for jihad over Jerusalem came to an end and was not revived until the modern era.

The success of Muslim forces in driving the crusaders out of Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular conforms to the causal argument presented in this dissertation. First, the counter-crusaders were expressed in saliently religious terms. The counter offensives led by Ilghazi, Zangi, Nur-ad Din and Saladin were called as jihads, holy wars in defense of Islam. In addition to professional troops, these forces contained volunteers who had answered the call for holy war and were willing to die for the defense of their faith. Moreover, these leaders called for jihad with the express purpose of liberating Jerusalem from the hands of Christian crusaders. Although capturing other crusader strong points was a goal of these jihads, Jerusalem continued to be the priority of the holy war. This is evident, first, in the pulpit commissioned by Nur-ad Din for the

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<sup>162</sup> Hamblin, pg. 228

<sup>163</sup> Hans Eberhard Mayer, "Henry II of England and the Holy Land," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 385, (October 1982), pp 721-739; Irwin, pg. 235

al-Aqsa mosque and, second, in the persistence of clerics pushing for the liberation of Jerusalem.

Second, Muslim leaders called for jihads in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries largely in response to threat. The crusaders presented a general threat to the region; they had succeeded in capturing several cities on the eastern Mediterranean coast in addition to cities in the interior such as Jerusalem and Edessa; this created a menacing presence that threatened the viability of Muslim power in the region. However, the presence of crusaders was not merely a political or military threat, it was also a religious one. The crusaders showed no restraint when taking Jerusalem; they slaughtered tens of thousands of the city's inhabitants and desecrated its holy sites. They converted the Dome of the Rock to a church and made the al-Aqsa mosque a headquarters for military officers. When Saladin retook the city in 1187, it is reported that his first order of business was to clean and re-sanctify the sites on the *Haram*, a project in which he personally helped. Therefore threat in general and religious threat in particular were motivations for jihad against the crusaders.

Third, resources were key to the success of the jihads against the crusaders. Jihad forces and their leaders possessed greater social resources relative to their crusader counterparts. This included, most importantly, better trained soldiers and stronger leadership, which succeeded in optimizing resources for success against the crusader armies. It also allowed for innovation and flexibility in tactics, which consistently outmaneuvered their crusader opponents. In addition, Muslim forces had superior material resources to their crusader foes. This included more soldiers and more materiel

in addition to the possibility of reinforcements and more recruits from nearby cities within the region.

Fourth, the relationship between religious and political leaders reveals that both groups of elites worked together to defeat Christian forces and liberate Jerusalem. Religious scholars were the first to call for jihad against the crusaders. Shortly after raising the call, political leaders began to push for the liberation of Jerusalem. Both Nur ad-Din and Saladin relied on clerics and scholars to spread the call for jihad and to help with recruiting volunteers to fight. Likewise, as previously mentioned, it was the religious scholars and clerics who continued to push for the liberation of Jerusalem under Saladin. Moreover, both leaders called not only for jihad against crusaders but also for a renewed Sunni orthodoxy in the region. Both leaders were noted for their own personal piety and their willingness to sponsor religious schools, Sufis, and the restoration of holy sites in the region.

It is worth noting that, during this era, little is heard from Jewish communities regarding the governorship of Jerusalem and its holy sites. Records show that Jews were present in and around Jerusalem when it was under Shia Fatimid rule in the late tenth through mid-eleventh centuries and that the two religious groups coexisted. When Jerusalem fell to Turkish forces in 1073, both Shias and Jews were turned out of the city.<sup>164</sup> Despite this, Jewish pilgrims are reported as coming to the city throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, Saladin's personal physician was the Jewish scholar Maimonides, who had fled Spain amid Christian advances into the peninsula.<sup>166</sup> Likewise, Jewish refugees continued to come to the region from Europe and North Africa

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<sup>164</sup> Armstrong, pg. 269

<sup>165</sup> Armstrong, pg. 267

during this time, fleeing Christian persecution.<sup>167</sup> It is likely to argue, therefore, that Jewish communities lacked the resources and the cohesion to affect change during this era. It is not until the arrival of more and more Jewish migrants in the modern era that communities were able to organize and assert their demands. This will be discussed in the following section.

### *Jewish and Muslim battles over Jerusalem after 1967*

This section traces the status of Jerusalem following Israel's capture of the city in the 1967 Six-Day war to the present. It argues that Israel's motives for preemptive attack against its neighboring states in 1967 was not religiously driven. However, following the seizure of Jerusalem, the Israeli government has implemented policies that reflect the importance of Jerusalem as a religious city. Furthermore, Israel's capture of Jerusalem has inspired violent actions from both Muslim and Jewish organizations seeking to change the religious and political status quo of the city.

In 1947, as the British prepared to end its mandate rule, the newly created United Nations proposed a plan to partition Palestine into two areas: one that would become the state of Israel, which included the eastern Galilee, the upper Jordan valley, the Negev and the coastal plain; and the other that would become an Arab state consisting of the western Galilee, the lower Jordan valley, Nablus, Jenin, Ramallah, and Hebron. In this arrangement, Jerusalem would become a *corpus separatum* between the two states and, together with Bethlehem, would be placed under international control.<sup>168</sup> The Zionists accepted the plan, despite disagreeing with some of its details; the Arabs, on the other

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<sup>166</sup> Armstrong, pg. 299

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*

hand, rejected the proposal. The two sides went to war, ultimately ending in an armistice between Israel and Trans-Jordan in March 1948. Jerusalem was partitioned between Trans-Jordan and Israel into East and West Jerusalem respectively with a demilitarized zone restricting access between the two sides. Trans-Jordan gained control of the entire Old City with its Muslim, Christian and Jewish sites. Jews that had been living in the Old City were forced to flee as were Arabs that had been living in western suburbs of Jerusalem.<sup>169</sup>

Despite international condemnation of the partition—voiced in UN General Assembly Resolution 303—both Trans-Jordan and Israel took measures to solidify control of their respective sides of Jerusalem.<sup>170</sup> Trans-Jordan imposed restrictions on access to the Old City in violation of the armistice. In particular, they denied Israeli and international Jews access to the Western Wall, often requiring tourists to produce Christian baptismal certificates in order to ensure that they were not Jewish.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, the Jordanian government took measures to strengthen the Muslim and Arab character of East Jerusalem. It began a rigorous restoration program of the al-Aqsa mosque and the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount area. The government also renovated the commercial area in East Jerusalem and built apartment complexes in the suburbs east of the city.

Trans-Jordan also implemented controversial political changes to the organization of the Muslim leadership in Jerusalem. They appointed a new Grand Mufti, which

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<sup>168</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II), November 29, 1947, [www.yale.edu/lawweb](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb), downloaded on 5/15/03

<sup>169</sup> Dumper, pp. 174-175. Armstrong sites an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 Arabs fled from western Jerusalem, pg. 386.

<sup>170</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 303, [www.mideastweb.org](http://www.mideastweb.org), downloaded on 5/15/03

<sup>171</sup> Armstrong, pg. 389

Jerusalem had not had since Britain's deportation of its previous Grand Mufti in 1939, Hajj Amin al-Husaini, following the Arab Revolt. The government also abolished the hereditary structure of leadership within the Muslim community, appointing their own leaders who would ensure compliance with the Jordanian government.<sup>172</sup> The Muslim leadership showed its disapproval of the reforms by assassinating Jordan's newly crowned King Abdullah (I) in 1951.

Israel also implemented policies aimed at securing their control over West Jerusalem. On December 5, 1949—despite international opposition—Israel declared Jerusalem its capital, followed by the convening of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, in Jerusalem on January 23, 1950.<sup>173</sup> The president moved his office from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 1952 and the foreign ministry moved to Jerusalem the following year. These changes forced foreign diplomats to send their correspondence to offices in Jerusalem, prompting several to move from Tel Aviv altogether. By 1967, nearly 40% of foreign diplomats' offices were located in Jerusalem, with the notable exception of the US, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, whose embassies remained in Tel Aviv.<sup>174</sup> During this time, therefore, Israel's primary motivation for developing Jerusalem was to make it the capital of the state and not necessarily a religious city.

In May 1967 rumors of an Israeli offensive against Syria heightened tensions in the region. The rumors prompted the creation of a Syrian, Egyptian, Jordanian and Iraqi alliance aimed at deterring Israeli military action. Egypt closed the Red Sea to Israeli shipping, which Israel interpreted as an attack on its sovereignty. After securing US

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<sup>172</sup> Dumper, pg. 167; Armstrong, pg. 390

<sup>173</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Jerusalem: Illustrated History Atlas*, Third Edition, (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1994), pg. 101

<sup>174</sup> Gilbert, pg. 101; Armstrong, pg. 393

approval, Israel launched a preemptive attack against Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq on the morning of June 5. By June 10, it has succeeded in capturing the Golan Heights from Syria, the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan.<sup>175</sup> The UN condemned Israel's seizure of these lands as illegal and called for its immediate withdrawal in UN Resolution 242.<sup>176</sup> Despite this, Israel has continued to occupy these lands with the exception of the Sinai, which it returned to Egypt in 1979.

Israel took immediate actions to secure Jerusalem and the Old City as its own. On the night of June 10, the day the armistice was signed, Israel evacuated around 650 residents of the Maghribi Quarter then bulldozed all 153 homes of the neighborhood, including two mosques. The space was cleared to create room for the anticipated hordes of Jewish pilgrims wishing to visit the Western Wall.<sup>177</sup> The international community condemned the destruction, which was in violation of the Geneva and Hague Conventions on the protection of cultural property.<sup>178</sup> The act also sparked alarm within the Palestinian community over the safety of its holy sites.

The Israeli government also took political and legal actions aimed at solidifying its control over Jerusalem. On June 27, 1967, the Knesset passed the Protection of Holy Places Law as part of its overall legislation that "unified" East Jerusalem and the West Bank as Israeli property.<sup>179</sup> The Law ensured free access to the all holy sites, protection of sites from vandalism or destruction, a seven-year prison sentence for those who violated these laws, and the placement of all holy sites under the jurisdiction of the Israeli

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<sup>175</sup> For more on the 1967 war, see Chaim Herzog, *Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East From the War of Independence Through the Lebanese Invasion*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. 145-189; Morris, pp. 302-346

<sup>176</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 242, [www.un.org/documents](http://www.un.org/documents), downloaded on 5/15/03

<sup>177</sup> Dumper, pg. 162; Armstrong puts the number of displaced at 619, pp. 402-403

<sup>178</sup> Dumper, pg. 162

<sup>179</sup> Dumper, pg 163



Minister of Religious Affairs. The Act did not specifically state that it would uphold the status quo, however.<sup>180</sup> Shortly after the passage of this law, Zerah Warhaftig, the Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs, declared that the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif was the property of Israel by biblical right; according to II Samuel 5:6-12, the ancient Israelites had purchased Jerusalem from the Jebusites in the time of King David around 1000 BCE.<sup>181</sup> Along with this claim, he promised, however, not to remove the Muslim sites currently on the Temple Mount.<sup>182</sup> The declaration of ownership and promise of protection, however, did little to build Muslim confidence regarding Israeli guardianship of the sites.

In addition to declaring legal jurisdiction over the sacred sites in Jerusalem, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also assumed the authority to approve appointments of Christian and Muslim leaders. The Ministry required that all *Qadis*—Muslim religious judges—become Israeli citizens and denounce their Jordanian citizenship in order to keep their posts. Moreover, they attempted to construct a “Board of Guardians” in Israel that would administer Shari’a law.<sup>183</sup> In response, the existing board of Muslim legal and religious leaders, the Awqaf Administration, set up their own council, the Higher Islamic Board. This body spoke out against Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and criticized the government’s interference in religious affairs; in response, Israel deported the Board’s chairman in September of 1967.<sup>184</sup> Despite this, the Muslim leadership in Jerusalem continued to organize against Israeli policies, which prevented the government from completely co-opting their authority.

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<sup>180</sup> *ibid*

<sup>181</sup> II Samuel 5:6-12, *Tanakh*, pp. 476-477

<sup>182</sup> Dumper, pg. 164

<sup>183</sup> Dumper, pg. 169

The Christian authority in Jerusalem had a somewhat different experience with Israeli occupation. Under Jordanian rule, Christian leaders—the majority of whom were headquartered in the Old City—were faced with the difficult task of ministering to congregations on both sides of the Armistice line. Initially, the Jordanian government restricted the movement of the clergy between the West Bank and Israel. They also imposed restrictions on Christian building and limited the number of students allowed in Christian schools.<sup>185</sup>

After 1967, relations between most of the Christian clergy and Israel were somewhat better than under Jordanian rule. This was due, in part, to Israel's desire to foster good relations with western countries, develop tourism, and—it is argued—keep Palestinian leadership divided between the Christians and Muslims by favoring the Christians.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, Christian holy sites were less of an issue with Israel because they were situated away from the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, the site that holds significance to both Jews and Muslims.

However, the Israelis did subject the Christian churches to difficult treatment including, most notably, pressure for leaders to sell land to Israel. This was particularly true for the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and the Armenian Orthodox churches, which all owned substantial land within and around the Old City.<sup>187</sup> In more recent times, the emergence of Palestinian senior clergy within some churches, particularly the

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<sup>184</sup> Dumper, pg. 170

<sup>185</sup> Dumper, pg. 183

<sup>186</sup> Dumper, pp. 185-187

<sup>187</sup> Dumper, pp. 187-192

Roman Catholic Church, has resulted in Israel's efforts to regulate promotions of church heads.<sup>188</sup>

In addition to actions surrounding the Old City and religious leaders, the Israeli government also implemented policies aimed at developing “new” Jerusalem and its suburbs. On June 28, 1967, the government expanded the city limits to incorporate vacant lands and Jewish neighborhoods into the city and exclude Arab pockets, ensuring that the majority of voters would be Jewish.<sup>189</sup> The government also began a rapid development campaign in the newly annexed parts of the city, building enormous apartment complexes—such as Gilo near Bethlehem—and filling them with Jewish Israelis.<sup>190</sup>

In 1977, in the wake of Israel's costly 1973 “Yom Kippur/Ramadan” war, voters defeated the Labor Party for the first time in the country's history, ushering in a new coalitional government comprised of the right-wing Likud and the National Religious Party and headed by the nationalist Menachem Begin.<sup>191</sup> Unlike the Labor Party, which was reluctant to alter the status quo in the occupied territories, this new government was committed to absorbing all of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula and making it part of the state of Israel.

The new government began its incorporation of the “territories” by implementing a rapid building program of Jewish settlements modeled after the early settlements created by Zionists at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The settler movement consisted of both secular and religious groups. Secular settlers, such as Begin's “Movement for the Whole Land of Israel,” aimed to absorb the territories largely for perceived security benefits, for

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<sup>188</sup> Dumper, pp. 188-190; for details on Israeli efforts to block the promotion of a Greek Catholic Bishop in 1998, see Michael S. Arnold, “Test of Faiths,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 28, 1998

<sup>189</sup> Armstrong, pp. 403-404

<sup>190</sup> Armstrong, pg. 409

Jewish *lebensraum*, and to reoccupy *Eretz Yisrael*, land believed to be historically entitled to the Jewish state based on biblical precedent.<sup>192</sup> Their motivations, therefore, were nationalist and not driven by the desire to control particular sacred sites. Religious settlers, on the other hand, stated expressly religious motivation and goals for permanently occupying the territories. The umbrella organization *Gush Emunim*, the “Faithful Block,” became the central body for the religious settler movement, which believes that recapturing “Jewish” land and sacred sites will hasten the coming of the *Messiah* and the salvation of the world.<sup>193</sup> Their motto is “The Land of Israel, for the People of Israel, According to the Torah [Bible] of Israel.”<sup>194</sup> These groups, although divided in their ultimate goals, are united by the objective of appropriating as much land as possible.

Once in office, the Likud government began a rigorous building program in the territories. Political scientist Ian Lustick reports:

Between 1977 and mid-1981 the Likud government spent \$400 million [US dollars] in the West Bank and Gaza, built twenty settlements in areas considered off limits by the previous governments, and increased the number of settlers living in the West Bank, minus the Jordan Valley and East Jerusalem, from approximately 3,500 to 18,500...By the end of Likud’s second term, in August 1984, some 113 settlements were spread over the entire West Bank, including a half-dozen sizable towns. Some 46,000 Jewish settlers lived in the area (excluding expanded East Jerusalem), and housing and services were under construction to absorb 15,000 additional settlers each year.<sup>195</sup>

The religious settlers targeted areas that had important religious sites. They began by creating an illegal settlement in Hebron during Passover in 1968, which later became one of the largest settlements in the West Bank, *Kiryat Arba*.

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<sup>191</sup> Lustick, pp. 39-40

<sup>192</sup> Lustick, pg. 43

<sup>193</sup> Lustick, pp. 9-10

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in Lustick, pg. 8

Religious settlers used various violent and non-violent tactics to achieve their goals including hunger strikes, demonstrations, illegal cessation of land, buying land, lobbying the government, running for office, encouraging “charitable donations” from Jews overseas and, later, assassinations, bombings, and attacks on Arab individuals and property.<sup>196</sup> In particular, however, they gained financial and political support through their ties with the Likud government, which provided the bulk of funding for settlement expansion.<sup>197</sup>

In addition to efforts to secure the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Jewish land, religious settlers also set their sights on Jerusalem. Groups like the Temple Faithful, Kach, and Gush Emunim, attempted to clear the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif of its Muslim sites in order to claim it for Judaism. This included at least three attempts to blow up the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque: an attempt in 1980, linked to Kach and Gush Emunim; an attempt in 1983, connected to Gush Emunim; and an attempt in 1984 by a group of skilled explosives experts that escaped unidentified.<sup>198</sup> In addition, militant Jewish groups have attempted to hold prayer vigils on the Mount and have made annual efforts to lay the corner stone of the Third Temple on the Haram al-Sharif/ Temple Mount.<sup>199</sup> The government has succeeded in thwarting all of these attempts, but not without concern from Muslims in Jerusalem and all over the world for the safety of this sacred space.

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<sup>195</sup> Lustick, pg. 47

<sup>196</sup> Lustick, pp. 48-67. Perhaps one of the most notorious acts committed by a religious settler occurred in Hebron in 1994 when Baruch Goldstein, an American connected with *Kiryat Arba*, entered the Tomb of the Patriarchs during Ramadan and killed 29 Palestinian Muslims in prayer.

<sup>197</sup> Lustick, pg. 47

<sup>198</sup> Lustick, pp. 68-69

<sup>199</sup> Armstrong, pp. 408-409

By the 1970s, the permanence of Israeli occupation of the city had become real. This reality, coupled with threats to the Muslim sites in the Old City, prompted calls throughout the Muslim world for the liberation of Jerusalem and its return to Muslim hands. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) made the liberation and protection of Jerusalem one of its goals, both to preserve its Muslim integrity and to keep it an Arab city.<sup>200</sup> The Lebanese Hizballah, which came into being after the Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon in 1982, made one of its objectives the liberation of Palestine, especially Jerusalem, from non-Muslim hands.<sup>201</sup> And more recently, Osama Bin Laden and his international terrorist organization Al Qaeda have named the defense of the Palestinian people and Jerusalem as one of its justifications for jihad against Israel and the US.<sup>202</sup>

In December of 1987, the death of four Palestinian laborers in a car accident at the Gaza checkpoint led to a series of events that ignited growing Palestinian frustration towards Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.<sup>203</sup> The massive Palestinian *Intifada*—uprising or “shaking off” of Israeli domination—lasted more than six years before negotiations at Oslo produced a shaky peace between the two sides. The Intifada prompted the creation of a new militant Islamic organization, *HAMAS*, which vowed not only to end Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and

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<sup>200</sup> Articulated as “the Holy Land,” particularly Article 16: “The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual point of view, will provide the Holy Land with an atmosphere of safety and tranquility, which in turn will safeguard the country's religious sanctuaries and guarantee freedom of worship and of visit to all, without discrimination of race, color, language, or religion. Accordingly, the people of Palestine look to all spiritual forces in the world for support,” see *PLO Charter*, July 1968, [www.iris.org.il](http://www.iris.org.il), downloaded on 5/15/03

<sup>201</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 49-51

<sup>202</sup> “Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders,” *World Islamic Front Statement*, February 23, 1998, downloaded from the Federation of American Scientists' website, [www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org), downloaded on 6/27/02;

<sup>203</sup> For a summary on the outbreak of the first Intifada, see Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, (London: Collins, 1990), pp.370-372; Morris, pp. 561-610

Jerusalem but also to install an Islamic government to rule over the Palestinian people.<sup>204</sup>

This program is also shared by another Islamic Militant organization in Palestine, the Palestine Islamic Jihad.<sup>205</sup>

Both of these organizations, but particularly HAMAS, has grown in prominence over the last fifteen years. In addition to violent operations aimed at ousting the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, HAMAS has provided social services to the Palestinians, such as health care, education, and vocational training.<sup>206</sup> This approach has helped to win hearts and minds over to their cause. Likewise, these militant Islamic organizations have prospered from international donations and training. It is believed that Iran and Saudi Arabia have provided funds and possibly even weapons to these groups to support their goal of ending Israeli occupation and creating an Islamic state.<sup>207</sup>

The Oslo Peace Accords ended open hostility between the Palestinians and the Israelis and marked the first time that the PLO, headed by Yassir Arafat, and the Israeli government recognized each other's authority. However, the agreement had no definitive framework for achieving Palestinian statehood and specifically avoided five points of contestation between the two sides: the status of Jerusalem, the right of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel, Israeli settlements, security measures, and borders.<sup>208</sup> All five of these issues have remained obstacles to a lasting peace between Israel and the future state of Palestine. Jerusalem, however, provided the occasion for the renewal of open

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<sup>204</sup> Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 34-37

<sup>205</sup> Meir Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine: The Islamic Jihad Movement*, (Tel Aviv: Dayan Center for Middle East and African Studies, 2002)

<sup>206</sup> Mishal and Sela, pg. 20

<sup>207</sup> Hilal Kashan, "The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (1997), pp. 14-15; Mishal and Sela, pg. 21

<sup>208</sup> "Oslo Accords," *Wikipedia*, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), downloaded on 5.28/03.

hostility between the two sides with the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising, the “al-Aqsa Intifada.”

Prior to the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada, Jerusalem experienced several incidents of violence over the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. The biggest, in 1996, occurred when Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu announced the opening of a tunnel underneath the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, sparking regional and international concern about potential damage to the compound’s structural integrity. Violent clashes over the issue caused 78 deaths—59 Palestinians, 16 Israelis and three Egyptians—and 1,500 injuries.<sup>209</sup>

In addition, tensions resumed around the holy compound when Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak held final status talks at Camp David in July of 2000. In the talks, it was rumored that Barak made new concessions to the Palestinians regarding Jerusalem, including agreeing to the right of Palestinians to fly their flag over various East Jerusalem buildings, control over most of the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, and some territorial sovereignty of Jerusalem’s suburbs.<sup>210</sup> However, it is also believed that the talks broke down because Arafat believed this was less-than-the-minimum of what he could accept on behalf of the Palestinians and other Muslims who were pressuring him not to cede the holy city.<sup>211</sup> Arafat returned to a “hero’s welcome” in Gaza and “won support across the Arab world for his refusal to compromise over Jerusalem.”<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> “Escalation of violence,” *ABCNews.com*, pg. 4

<sup>210</sup> “Jerusalem: Eternal Intractable,” *BBC*, July 20, 2000, pp. 1-3

<sup>211</sup> “Compromise fears over Jerusalem,” *BBC*, July 24, 2000, pp. 1-2

<sup>212</sup> “Arafat defiant of the summit failure,” *BBC*, July 26, 2000, pp. 1-3



Tensions reached a boiling point in September 2000, when Barak and Arafat agreed to return to the US and resume peace talks with US President Bill Clinton. Rumors circulated that a new proposal was on the table for Jerusalem, including the controversial plan to place the Old City under the protection of the UN Security Council.<sup>213</sup> Amidst these tensions, right-wing Israeli nationalist and leader of the Likud party, Ariel Sharon, visited the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount accompanied by members of his party and approximately 1,000 Israeli security forces. He visited the holy compound on September 28, 2000, the five-year anniversary of the signing of Oslo II, which gave the Palestinian Authority control over Jericho, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, and Tulkaram.<sup>214</sup>

Sharon's visit was provocative not because he was a Jew, an Israeli, a politician, or because he came accompanied by 1,000 security troops, but because of his lengthy history of notorious acts against the Palestinians. In 1953, as a member of the "Unit 101" commandos, Sharon was responsible for ordering an attack on the village Qibya in trans-Jordan, near the Israeli border, killing 69 civilians and destroying 45 homes.<sup>215</sup> In 1982, as Defense Minister of the Israeli government and as part of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Sharon oversaw a Lebanese attack on two Palestinian refugee camps near Beirut—Sabra and Shatilla—which resulted in the murder of hundreds—some say thousands—of Palestinian refugees, an incident for which Sharon was found indirectly

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<sup>213</sup> "International Jerusalem high on the agenda," *BBC*, September 26, 2000, pp. 1-3

<sup>214</sup> David Horowitz, "Visit by Sharon provokes a day of violence," *The Irish Times*, September 29, 2000, pg. 1

<sup>215</sup> Brian Whitaker, "Ariel Sharon: the bloodstained past that inflames Palestinians," *The Guardian*, October 3, 2000, pg. 3

guilty in an Israeli tribunal.<sup>216</sup> Sharon's visit, therefore, was especially provocative to the Palestinians.

Sharon's visit sparked immediate reaction from Palestinians on the Holy Compound, who threw rocks and yelled at the entourage, "Murder, get out!"<sup>217</sup> The tour ended with Israeli troops firing rubber-coated bullets at the protesters.<sup>218</sup> In addition to this initial reaction from Palestinians, Sharon's visit to the Holy Compound sparked condemnation from around the Muslim world: Lebanon, Syria, Oman, Tunis, Sudan, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen all experienced spontaneous demonstrations against Sharon's visit.<sup>219</sup> Therefore, Sharon's visit to the Haram al-Sharif was more than a threat to Palestinian sovereignty; it was a threat to the larger Muslim community.

The following day, scores of Palestinians were shot and four killed after Friday Muslim prayers.<sup>220</sup> Within hours, violence had erupted in all the major Palestinian cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At the close of the weekend, at least 27 Palestinians had been killed, one Israeli, and one Israeli-Arab with over 700 Palestinians reported injured.<sup>221</sup> Following this first weekend of violence, clashes between Israel and the Palestinians spiraled into a new Intifada that continues to date.

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<sup>216</sup> Hockstader, "Israeli defends visit to contested site," *The Washington Post*, October 2, 2000, pg. 1. There is a plaque on the Site commemorating the Sabra and Shatilla massacres, see Mary Curits, "Sharon blames Mid-east unrest on Arafat," *LA Times*, November 2, 2000 pg. 2

<sup>217</sup> "Shots fired at Jerusalem Holy Site," *BBC*, September 28, 2000, pp. 1-2

<sup>218</sup> Horovitz, "Visit by Sharon provokes a day of violence," *Irish Times*, September 29, 2000, pg. 2

<sup>219</sup> David Hir, "Spontaneity Marks Protests Across the Arab Countries," *The Chicago Tribune*, October 10, 2000, pp. 1-2

<sup>220</sup> "Events on the Temple Mount—September 29, 2000: Interim Report," B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (taken from their website: [www.btselem.org](http://www.btselem.org)), downloaded 1/11/00

<sup>221</sup> "Barak threatens to use tanks to stop Palestinian uprising," *CNN*, October 2, 2000, pg. 3

The goals of this current Intifada have been expressed both in secular and religious terms. Various groups sprang up in the wake of the September 2000 outbreak of violence voicing secular-nationalist goals, specifically the creation of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This has included groups like the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, an organization connected with Arafat and his political party *Fatah*. Other groups, however, particularly the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and HAMAS, aim to end Israeli occupation but also to create an Islamic state in Palestine, one that would ensure the maintenance of Shari'a law and the "Islamic" culture of Palestine.

Jewish and Muslim battles for control of Jerusalem contain elements that conform to the causal argument proposed in this dissertation. First, religion has played a salient role in the motivations and goals of some groups fighting for Jerusalem. Although Israel's aims in the 1967 war were not religious—it strove to preempt a combined Arab attack by disabling the core of its military capabilities—the consequences of Israel's capture of Jerusalem sparked religious battles over the city. Specifically, Jewish militant groups emerged, such as Gush Emunim and Kach, with the goal of appropriating all land believed to be Jewish and by cleansing the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif of its non-Jewish elements in hopes of hastening the coming of the *Messiah*. These groups have used a variety of tactics to achieve these aims including terrorism, assassination, and attempts at blowing up Muslim sites on the Holy Compound. In addition to Jewish militant groups, secular Israeli groups have also emerged with the goal of appropriating as much Arab land as possible, including Jerusalem. These groups have this goal not for religious reasons but for Zionist-nationalist aspirations; they want land for Israel's growth and security. Both types of groups are united by the goal of seizing as much land as

possible, but they differ in their reasons for wanting the land; Jewish militant groups aim to hasten the coming of the Messiah while secular militant groups desire an expanded Zionist state.

Likewise, Israel's capture and occupation of East Jerusalem and the Old City sparked a religious reaction from within the Palestinian and wider Muslim community. Initially, the Palestinians formed groups around the secular nationalist goal of creating an independent Palestinian state, particularly through the efforts of the PLO. However, beginning in the 1980s, militant Islamic groups—most notably the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and HAMAS—emerged alongside secular organizations. These groups have also sought to end Israeli occupation and create a Palestinian state; however, in addition, they are striving to make this state Islamic with a government that keeps the tenets of Islam and upholds Shari'a law. Both groups have used terrorist tactics to achieve these goals including attacks on settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and suicide bombing of civilians in Israel.

Second, threat perception has been a salient cause of recent religious violence over Jerusalem. Jordanian occupation of the Old City from 1948 to 1967 resulted in the expulsion of all Jews from Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter and the restriction of Jews from visiting the Western Wall; these policies effectively stamped out the Jewish presence in the Old City. Karen Armstrong argues that the loss of Jerusalem coupled with its miraculous return in 1967 touched a nerve within Israelis and most Jews around the world, prompting the fervent desire to protect the city at all costs and to never let it fall out of Jewish hands again.<sup>222</sup> In 2000, rumors that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was willing to cede portions of Jerusalem to the Palestinians renewed this sense of threat in

Israeli society. These rumors prompted Ariel Sharon's infamous visit to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount in September of 2000, which, in turn sparked the al-Aqsa Intifada.

Likewise, Islamic militants have responded to threats surrounding Jerusalem. The loss of the city to Israeli forces in 1967 marked the first time in nearly 800 years that al-Quds had fallen completely out of Muslim hands; this alone provided an unsure and threatening environment for the status of the holy sites on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. Moreover, the Israeli government implemented policies that enforced this uncertainty, particularly its decision to level the Maghribi Quarter of the Old City, its deportation of Muslim leaders deemed uncooperative to the Israeli government, and its overall development of settlements in Jerusalem and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Militant Jewish groups' plots to blow up the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque have further exacerbated this sense of threat. Although the government successfully thwarted these attempts, they have demonstrated the resolve of some Jews to destroy the Muslim presence in the Old City. Lastly, the provocative visit to the Haram al-Sharif of Ariel Sharon, who has a long history of persecution towards the Palestinians, inflamed emotions in an already stressed environment over the status and future of Jerusalem. Under these conditions of threat, Palestinians and Muslims all over the world took to the streets in protest, demonstrating the importance of Jerusalem to the faith.

Third, the relationship between religious and political authority in both Israel and Palestine reveals that collusion between secular and religious groups has produced religious violence. Although Israel has had religious political parties since 1956, the importance of these parties for shaping Israeli policies was not realized until the 1970s. After the political and military blunders of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the religious and

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<sup>222</sup> Armstrong, pg 400

secular right in Israel joined forces to defeat the Labor party and win control of both the premiership and the Knesset. This relationship gained the Likud party much needed votes and provided militant Jewish groups with the political, legal and financial resources of the state to develop settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Although the religious and secular right were divided on ideology, motives, and ultimate goals, they were united on the immediate objective of appropriating as much Palestinian land as possible through the *fait accomplis* of settlements.

The Palestinians have had a similar relationship between its religious and political authority. In the first Intifada, religious and secular groups joined forces in attempts to compel the Israelis to withdrawal from Palestinian land; they, therefore, were united in the goal of ending Israeli occupation. The groups were divided, however in their ultimate goals: secular nationalists sought to create an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capitol; the militant Islamists, however, strove to create a Palestinian state that was distinctly Islamic in its leadership and character, which ultimately excluded the secular leadership.

Fourth, material and social resources have aided recent religious battles over Jerusalem. In particular, Jewish militants have received material resources through their ties to the Israeli governments. As previously mentioned, the legal, political and financial means for appropriating Palestinian land via settlements has come primarily from the government. Groups like Kach and Gush Emunim also have raised money through diasporic communities; however, the greater resources have come from the Israeli government. These groups lacked the material, political and social resources to carry out

their goals prior to the election of Likud to office in 1977. The arrival of Likud allowed for an explosion of settler activity in the 1980s.

Islamic militants on the other hand, appear to have received greater material and social assets from international sources. This includes financing from foreign governments—specifically the Saudis, the Iranians and the Sudanese—and also includes alleged training from foreign governments and international militant Islamic groups. Lastly, these groups have profited from international Islamic charities that have provided health care, schools and other resources to the impoverished Palestinian communities, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which have succeeded in undermining secular Palestinian authority in these areas. The success of these groups, therefore, has depended in large part on the resources they have been able to accrue through international sources.

Finally, it is worth considering why the current battles over Jerusalem have been primarily between Jews and Muslims and have not—for the most part—included Christians. First, the sacred site of contestation between Jews and Muslims is the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, which is not of critical importance to the Christian faith. Second, Christians are much fewer in number than Jews and Muslims in the region. Census material reveals that Christians make up around 2% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip's population; therefore they lack a critical mass. Third, Christian leadership—particularly in the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox Churches—is made up largely of foreign nationals. They therefore have been accused of not being personally involved with the liberation of Palestine, a country that is not their own. However, it is important to note that Palestinian Christians have played an active role in both Intifadas and, like their fellow Palestinian Muslims, are seeking an end to Israeli occupation of the

West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Likewise, the more recent appointment of Palestinian bishops to the Latin Roman Catholic Church as well as the Anglican and Lutheran churches has provided indigenous Christian leadership that is actively outspoken against the occupation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has traced three waves of violence over control of sacred sites in Jerusalem: Christian Crusades to liberate Christ's tomb beginning in the eleventh century; Muslim holy wars to counter the Christian presence in the region and recapture Jerusalem; and Israel's seizure of Jerusalem in 1967 and the religious reactions it produced within Jewish and Muslim groups.

This chapter has argued, first, that while not all historic battles over Jerusalem have had saliently religious end goals, these three waves of violence represent Christian, Muslim and Jewish efforts to seize Jerusalem's sacred space, often with the goal of excluding other religious groups from access to their sites. The Christian call to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim hands inspired kings, clergy, and laity to take up arms to free the city in which Jesus was arrested, crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. The invasion of European Christians prompted Muslim leaders, weakened by infighting, to join forces in a jihad against the crusaders and to return Jerusalem and its holy sites to Muslim custodianship. Although the aims of the 1967 Six-Day war were not to capture Jerusalem, Israel found itself in control of the holy city, inspiring militant Jewish groups to organize with the aim of violently cleansing the Old City of its non-Jewish elements.

Second, threat perception has played an important role in explaining motivations for battles to seize and defend Jerusalem's holy sites. The call for a Christian holy war



against Muslim forces was inspired by perceived threats to Christendom at large and Jerusalem in particular. Muslim empires in Asia Minor and North Africa presented a growing threat to Christian frontiers in Byzantium and Spain, prompting several popes to call for religiously sanctioned armed struggle against these invading forces. However, it wasn't until Pope Urban II called for a crusade aimed at repelling these forces *and* liberating Jerusalem from Muslim hands that thousands of commoners took up arms and marched off to holy war; the goal of liberating Jerusalem, therefore, was a powerful motivating force that resonated with the masses.

Likewise, after the loss of Jerusalem, Muslim leaders joined forces with the general aim of ousting crusaders from the region—which posed a security threat to Muslim empires in the Near and Middle East—and the more specific goal of liberating al-Quds and returning it to Muslim trusteeship. As with the crusades, the call to liberate Jerusalem inspired devout Muslims to join forces with Nur ad-Din and Saladin's p troops and to march on Jerusalem. The importance of Jerusalem's holy sites in the jihad against the crusaders is illustrated by reports that Saladin personally oversaw the cleansing of the al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock shrine after seizing the city.

Israel's capture of Jerusalem in 1967 ended a twenty-year restriction on Jewish access to the Old City and the Western Wall, imposed under Jordanian occupation of the city. Although the status of Jerusalem was not the salient threat in the Six-Day war—a three-front war with Egypt, Jordan and Syria was the motivation for Israel's preemptive attack—Israel's seizure and, more importantly, its continued occupation of Jerusalem reflects the perception that the Jewish dimensions of Jerusalem, both religious and national, could not be ensured without Israel's governorship over the city. However,

Israel's possession of Jerusalem has raised concerns within Muslim circles over the safety of their sites, particularly towards the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. This is clearly illustrated in the massive uprising sparked by Ariel Sharon's visit to the compound in September 2000, plunging Israel and Palestine into the "al-Aqsa Intifada."

Third, resources played a role in determining the use of force to capture and hold Jerusalem, in varying degrees. Crusader forces succeeded in capturing Jerusalem in 1099 despite being poorly equipped, badly outnumbered, and lacking in cohesive leadership; their success is best explained by infighting in the region that weakened Muslim forces and laid Jerusalem open for conquest. After consolidating its forces, however, Muslims in the region succeeded in driving crusaders out of the Holy Land, aided by larger forces that were better trained, had more materiel, and were united by strong leadership. In 1967, Israel captured Jerusalem largely through its daring preemptive strike against its neighbors and in spite of being outnumbered. After 1967, militant religious and secular Jewish organizations have succeeded in appropriating land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip primarily through resources provided by the state, namely money and a permissive legal and security environment, in addition to some international financing. Jewish militant groups aimed at destroying non-Jewish holy sites in Jerusalem, however, have not had the political and material assets of the government; their efforts, in fact, have been checked by Israeli security forces. Muslim militants have benefited from international resources including state funding and various resources through Islamic charities.

Lastly, the relationship between political and religious leaders does not clearly explain motivations and successes in battles over Jerusalem. Kings and popes were

initially united in early crusades aimed at liberating and defending Jerusalem. However, popes also declared subsequent crusades *against* European kings that they perceived to be undermining the Church. In the call for jihad, religious and political leaders were united in the goal of ousting crusader forces in the region and liberating Jerusalem; the two authorities reinforced each other's religious and political motivations resulting in a successful holy war. However, in post-1967 Israel—particularly after the 1977 election of a Likud-dominated government—militant religious and secular Jewish organizations have profited from their alliance with the state; militant groups have voted for and joined forces with Likud while Likud has provided legal, military and financial backing to settlers confiscating land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This relationship, however, broke down over Jewish militant aspirations to destroy non-Jewish holy sites in Jerusalem, particularly Muslim sites on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. In this case, the Israeli government has worked to thwart these efforts and arrest the perpetrators of violence. These findings are summarized in Table 4.1.

Jerusalem, despite its religious importance to Judaism, Islam and Christianity, has not been a city of peace; rather, it is precisely *because* of its religious importance that nations, armies, empires and common people have risen up in defense of its religious significance. The challenge this city faces, therefore, is for all of its sacred sites to be perceived as safe, thus preventing groups from rising up and using force to defend their religious interests. There have been few governors in the city's history who have succeeded in creating such an environment and, unfortunately, Israel is no exception.

#### 4.1, Variables Summary: Battles Over Jerusalem

	<b>Threat Perception</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Political/Religious Leaders</b>
<b>Christian Crusades</b> <i>Goals: Liberate Jerusalem and “Christian” land, co-religionists</i>	General, Christian Holy Sites in Muslim Hands Immediate, Advancing Muslim Empires	Lacked material, social and military resources	United in crusades against Muslims in the Holy Land Divided on other crusades
<b>Muslim Jihads against Crusaders</b> <i>Goals: Drive crusaders out of region, liberate Jerusalem</i>	Advancing Crusader Kingdoms, loss of Jerusalem	After unifying, superior social and material resources	United in efforts to defeat crusaders, supported each other’s authority
<b>Post-1967 Jerusalem</b> <i>Government goals: Keep Jerusalem Jewish Israeli</i>  <i>Militant goals: Make Jerusalem mono-religious</i>	<i>Government—</i> Open access to sites but aggressive development  <i>Jewish/Muslim Militants—</i> claims of exclusive rights to Jerusalem	Jewish militants in territories have resources of state, Jerusalem militants do not.  Islamic militants have international aid.	Jewish militants and Likud united.  Muslim militants at odds with Palestinian Authority

# **III.**

# **Religious**

# **Revolutions**



## Overview of Religious Revolutions

The 1917 Russian Revolution and China's fall to communism in 1949 ignited fears in the US that the world was on the brink of succumbing to Marxism, an ideology infinitely at odds with democracy, liberty, and the American way of life. The United States' foreign policy prerogative soon focused on containing this new threat and checking communist movements wherever they arose, assuming that the ideology was contagious and the fall of one state to communism would cause other states around it to fall like dominos.<sup>1</sup> The official end of the Soviet Union in 1991 largely concluded the "Red Scare," with only Cuba, China, and North Korea persisting as communist states. After fifty-odd years of fighting communism in the Cold War, the US emerged as the victor and sole superpower.

In the post-Cold War era, a new ideological threat has emerged—religious fundamentalism, particularly violent interpretations of Islam—leading sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer to ask if this is "The New Cold War?"<sup>2</sup> The rise of bellicose interpretations of Islam—which seeks to overthrow existing regimes and create a religious system governed by Islamic law, *Shari'a*—presents the US with new foreign policy challenges. In particular, violent strains of Islam may present an obstacle for US efforts to export liberal democracy around the globe.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, militant, radical forms of Islam pose a direct security threat to the US and its interests, as horrifically displayed

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<sup>1</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), particularly chapter 5: "Eisenhower, Dulles, and the New Look," pp. 127-163

<sup>2</sup> Quoting the title of his book: Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)

on September 11<sup>th</sup>. This new ideological threat has prompted President George W. Bush to declare a Global War on Terror—aimed primarily at militant Islam—with the goal of ridding the US and the world of this political and military challenge.

Has political Islam replaced communism as the new revolutionary ideology threatening the United States? Are there any lessons to be learned from US efforts to minimize communism’s spread around the globe during the Cold War? This section aims to offer insights into these questions by comparing an Islamic revolution with Marxist-inspired revolutions in Russia, China, and Cuba.

The first case considers the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. It compares Iran’s two revolutions: its 1906 “Constitutional Revolution” in which groups fought for a representational government with a constitution; and the 1978-1979 Revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of the Shah and creation of an Islamic Republic. It argues that, while the first revolution contained elements of religion—most notably the participation of the Ulama, Muslim scholars—the ultimate goal of the revolution was a government based on liberal democratic principles. The 1978-1979 revolution initially had similar goals; the revolution, however, became saliently religious through Islamic organizations—particularly the Liberation Movement and its revolutionary interpretations of Islam—and through the leadership of the Ayatallah Khomeini, who succeeded in uniting religious and secular movements with the unifying goals of deposing the Shah and ending the US presence in Iran. Once created, the Islamic Republic named as one of its foreign policy goals the export of the revolution and the creation of Islamic theocracies in other states.

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<sup>3</sup> *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*, second edition, edited by Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), especially



The second case considers the rise of Marxist ideology and its role in fomenting revolutions in Russia, China, and Cuba. It argues that Marxism contains both a program for revolution *and* specified end-goals of the revolution, most notably the liberation of the world's masses from the ills of capitalism. The applications of Marxism in Russia, China, and Latin America, however, have focused primarily on Marx's program for revolution; none of these cases succeeded in establishing a communist utopia and, quite to the contrary, resulted in mass killing, famine, and suffering. Despite this, countries that succeed in realizing the Marxist revolution made exporting the revolution one of its goals. While Marxist movements sprang up around the globe, most failed to realize a revolution or its goal of creating a communist utopia.

Political Islam and Marxism share many traits. They are both revolutionary ideologies; in other words, they seek to radically change not only the structure of existing governments but also to change societies.<sup>4</sup> Marxism sought to overthrow existing governments with the aim of introducing a radically new economic system that would, in turn, usher in more harmonious and just social dynamics. Likewise, Islamic revolutionaries aim to depose corrupt leaders in the Muslim world with the greater goal of establishing a social and political system based on the tenets of Islam and particularly Shari'a law. Therefore, both ideologies aim to achieve more than mere regime change.

Moreover, both Marxism and political Islam have inspired post-revolutionary governments that have exported their ideologies in hopes of creating global change.

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chapter 1: "Introduction: What Makes for Democracy?"

<sup>4</sup>Theda Skocpol defines revolution as "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures, accompanied and in part accomplished through popular revolts from below." She further argues that revolutions are aided by a breakdown in a state's coercive power, by international circumstances, and are aided by "marginalized elites" operating under structural constraints. See *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), "Explaining Social Revolutions," pp. 3-22

Marxist-based governments in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba all attempted to export the revolution to countries around the globe through financial and military aid, education, and advisors. Similarly, post-revolutionary Iran has aimed to “support the just struggles of the freedom fighters against oppression in every corner of the globe.”<sup>5</sup> To this end, it has been accused of funding various Islamic militant groups, such as the Lebanese Hizbollah and the Palestinian Hamas, in addition to mobilizing Shia populations for revolution in Bahrain and Iraq. Therefore, both ideologies seek not only change within a state but, more broadly, change on a global scale.

However, comparing these two cases reveals important differences between Marxism and political Islam. First, Islam, as a religion, has existed for well over a millennium; the faith has gone through “golden eras” and crises but has persisted as a belief system in virtually every continent on the globe. Marxism, in contrast, appears to be dwindling as a belief system. Moreover, Islam also enjoys a broad base of adherents that numbers well over one billion. Marxism, on the other hand, failed to garner a popular base of support. This lack of popular support forced leaders such as Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Castro to impose the ideology through coercion, intimidation and death. In the end, Marxism’s lack of support with the masses spelled its own extinction; it was an ideology to be challenged and deposed, not embraced as a liberating belief system.

Furthermore, Marxism, in theory, has the goal of creating a communist utopia, which is similar to this dissertation’s definition of “earthly salvation.” However, Marxism in practiced failed to deliver salvation; rather, Marxist regimes in Russia, China and Latin America resulted in the deaths of millions of people through famine, imprisonment, and

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<sup>5</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution, Chapter 10: Foreign Policy; Article 154: Independence, Support of Just Struggles.

civil war. This is a far cry from earthly salvation. Islam, on the other hand, offers a belief system that has, on varying levels, given its adherents hope in both earthly and eternal salvation. Islam takes very seriously the status and well being of fellow humans; one of its pillars is *zakat*, alms-giving to the poor. Islam has also inspired the creation of charities with the aim of improving the lives of the impoverished. The continued numbers of adherents suggests that Islam offers earthly and cosmic meaning to those who practice the faith.

Finally, it is important to note that Islam is not the only faith that seeks to foment a religious revolution. The JVP—a militant Buddhist organization in Sri Lanka—attempted to overthrow its government in the 1970s and 1980s with the aim of creating a Buddhist theocracy on the island, which is discussed in chapter three. Likewise, certain elements within the Hindu national movement in India have similar designs on its government, as discussed in chapter five. The same can be said for militant Jewish organizations in Israel who are attempting to seize the government—either by force or through popular elections—in order to create a religious and ethnically pure Jewish state, which is discussed in chapter six. Lastly, although not discussed in this dissertation, fringes of the “Christian Patriot Movement” in the US have attacked minorities with the aim of starting a race war that would topple the government, paving the way for a Christian theocracy.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, religious revolutions are manifest in all the world’s major religions, in addition to Marxism and Liberalism.

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<sup>6</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), chapter 2: “Soldiers for Christ,” pp. 19-43



## Chapter 7 Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979

The 1979 revolution in Iran followed by the creation of the Islamic Republic with the Ayatallah Khomeini as the *velayat-e faqih*—the supreme religious and political authority—is the textbook example of a religious revolution. The revolution, coupled with the US hostage crisis that lasted 444 days, continues to affect US-Iranian diplomatic relations nearly twenty-five years later. What caused an educated, relatively modernized, oil rich country to overthrow its government and replace it with a system that has fused religious and political authority and which has declared the United States, its former closest ally, to be the “Great Satan”?

This chapter aims to provide insights into these questions by comparing Iran's Islamic Revolution with its first revolution in 1906, in which Iranians fought for a representational government and constitution modeled after western democratic principles. Drawing from the causal argument presented in chapter two, it will focus on three variables as possible explanations for the rise of the Islamic Revolution: the relationship between religious and political leaders, the role of threat perception in influencing actions of leaders and their groups, and the amount of material, social, and technological resources available to groups calling for revolution. It will test three empirical predictions from the causal argument. First, religious leaders will call for violence to defend their role in society, if threatened. Second, religious leaders will call for revolt in response to perceived or actual threats from the government, particularly if the government is threatening the status of religious leaders or their resources. And third, the religious group initiating the revolution will have sufficient material, social and

technological resources—including finances, strong leadership, and organizations—with which to challenge the state.

This chapter argues, first, that while the 1906 Constitutional Revolution involved religion—namely the active participation of the Muslim clerisy, the Ulama—the goals for which people were fighting were not saliently religious. Rather, groups were agitating for a constitutional government and greater political participation. In contrast, the aims of the 1979 revolution were saliently religious, specifically the creation of an Islamic republic ruled by Shari'a law. These religious end goals were realized by new interpretations of the faith, which inspired the masses, and by strong leadership that united the people against the Shah, specifically the leadership of the Ayatallah Khomeini.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief introduction to Islam, outlining its core beliefs and doctrine, early history, and different forms of leadership. The second section offers an overview of Iranian history, highlighting key events. The third section compares the 1906 Constitutional Revolution to the 1978-1979 Islamic Revolution. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks, testing the causal argument proposed in this dissertation for its explanatory power to the Iranian case.

## **Overview of Islam**

This section provides a brief overview of Islam including its beliefs, doctrines, and an introduction to Twelver Shii Islam, the branch of the faith that predominates in Iran. In addition, this section considers the forms of leadership particular to Islam in Iran, including the relationship between Muslim clerics, the monarchy and society.

The core beliefs of Islam stress the oneness of God, or *tawhid*, and the role of the Prophet Muhammad in transmitting God's message, which is the *Qur'an*, the literal word

of God. These two beliefs—the oneness of God and the Prophet as God’s messenger—make up the *shahaddah*, the proclamation of faith, and forms the first of five pillars of Islam; one who proclaims the shahaddah is a Muslim. The other four pillars include ritual prayer said five times a day facing towards Mecca (*salat*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, the month the Prophet first received revelations from God (*sawm*); almsgiving to the poor (*zakat*); and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), which should be taken by every Muslims at least once in his or her life, finances and health permitting. Along with the pillars, Islam emphasizes the unity of the worldwide Muslim community, *ummah*, which, in principle, is not divided by gender, race, class or any other human distinction.<sup>1</sup>

Islam’s beliefs form the basis for its doctrines, or application of the faith in individual, social and political life. One doctrine in particular, *Shari’a*, or Islamic law is especially important for understanding the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Islamic law involves all aspects of Muslim life including personal, spiritual, family, societal, criminal, economic and political life. Formation of the law is based on two texts: the Qur’an, and the Sunna, which are sayings of the Prophet—recorded in the *Hadith*—and the customs of the Prophet and his companions.<sup>2</sup> The Qur’an, as the literal word of God, is the primary text and cannot be contradicted by any passages of the Sunna or interpretations of the law. However, despite this, the Qur’an contains few passages that offer explicit legal instruction; the Sunna, therefore, is used as authoritative examples of how the

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on key beliefs in Islam, see John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Chapter Three: “Religious Life and Belief,” pp. 69-113

<sup>2</sup> David S. Pearl, *A Textbook on Muslim Law*, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pg. 4. Pearl cites the definitions of scholars Ignac Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translated by Andras and Ruth Hamori, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Joseph Schacht, *Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), which are the foundational western works on Islamic jurisprudence.

Prophet and his companions applied the message of the Qur'an to actions in every day religious, societal and political life.<sup>3</sup>

The Qur'an and the Sunna are the textual sources of Islamic law. However, the textual sources of law alone cannot prescribe guidance for all human actions; this requires interpretation. The Ulama, or "learned ones," have historically been the interpreters of the law. Members of the Ulama have codified the law through *qiyas*, a process of analogy by comparing cases, and *ijma*, which is consensus among the jurists in the interpretation. Therefore the sources of Islamic law are the Qur'an, the Sunna, *qiyas*, and *ijma*.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, several schools of law developed within Islam. Four of these schools remain in Sunni Islam today: the Hanafi school, the Maliki school, the Shafi'i school, and the Hanbali school.<sup>5</sup> In addition, there are several schools within the *Shii* branch of Islam; the most prominent is the *Jafari* school, which is practiced by Twelver Shiis concentrated in the Persian Gulf and Lebanon.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the Ulama, political leaders also guide Muslim communities. After the sudden death of the Prophet in 632 CE, a debate broke out within the Muslim community regarding leadership and succession. The majority within the community believed that a new leader, called the *khalifa* or Caliph, should be elected from within the community. A minority believed that the Prophet had designated a successor, his cousin and son-in-law Ali, and that leadership should come from the bloodline of the Prophet and be determined through inheritance.<sup>7</sup> This division in the understanding of leadership

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<sup>3</sup> Pearl notes there are only around 80 verses in the Qur'an that offer explicit legal instruction, pg. 1. This is also noted by Esposito, pg. 77

<sup>4</sup> Pearl, pg. 14; Esposito, pp. 79-83

<sup>5</sup> Pearl, pp. 16-17

<sup>6</sup> Esposito, pg. 85

<sup>7</sup> Esposito, pp. 37-47



ultimately evolved into the Sunni and Shii factions, respectively. Shii Islam underwent an additional schism over succession of leadership, creating the Ismaili Shii faction, which exist primarily in South Asia today, and the Twelver Shiis, which predominate in Iran but also have substantial numbers in Iraq, Bahrain and Lebanon. In 874 CE, the Twelver Shiis' Imam disappeared. They believe that he has gone into hiding and will return as the *Mahdi*, the "expected one" to restore justice to the world at the end of the ages.<sup>8</sup>

Within this structure of religious and political authority, Iran has developed its own particular forms of leadership. Under the Safavid Dynasty (1501-1722), the Twelver Shii Ulama became closely aligned with the royal court, which embraced Twelver Shiism as its official religion. Under the Safavids and later the Qajars, the Ulama developed a hierarchy structured according to knowledge and tasks they perform for society and the crown. The highest level of Ulama in Iran is the *Mujtahid* or *Marja'i taqlid*, who is qualified to practice *ijtihad*, discernment of the law, and issue legal edicts, or *fatvas*.<sup>9</sup> Often times, *Mujtahids* specialize in particular areas of the law and certain *Mujtahids* have higher status based on their skill and location. At the city level, one *Mujtahid* is appointed the *Imam Jum'a*, who acts as the link between the government and the Ulama.<sup>10</sup> Within the *Mujtahids* is one who is considered especially gifted in discerning the law. This individual receives the title *Ayatallah*, which literally means miraculous signs.<sup>11</sup> After the formation of the Islamic Republic in 1979, the *Ayatallah* became the supreme authority on the interpretation of the law. In addition to the *Mujtahid*, lesser

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<sup>8</sup> Abdul-Hadi Hairi, *Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1977), pp. 57-61

<sup>9</sup> Vanessa Martin, *Islam and Modernism: The Iranian Revolution of 1906*, (London: IB Tauris &Co., 1989), pg. 12. *Fatva* is the Persian transliteration of the Arabic *Fatwa*.

<sup>10</sup> Martin, pg. 14

<sup>11</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition Glossary and Index*, compiled by J. Van Lend and H.U. Qureshi, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pg 30

authorities within the Ulama include *Mullas*, which are graduates of seminaries, *tullabi*, seminary students, and *Sayyids*, individuals who can trace their lineage back to the Prophet.<sup>12</sup>

The Safavid and Qajar Dynasties called on the Ulama to legitimate their authority; in return, the monarchy acted as the ideal Muslim ruler by upholding Shari'a law and protecting the faith. These dynastic rulers asserted their right to rule not on lineage to the Prophet but, rather, on behalf of the Hidden Imam; they described their leadership as *zilla allah*, the shadow of God.<sup>13</sup> This claim to rule sparked considerable debate within the ranks of the Ulama over the limits of temporal authority in the absence of the Hidden Imam but, ultimately, the majority of Ulama backed the new leaders.<sup>14</sup> Under the Qajars, a *Mujtahid* was appointed to officiate over religious affairs and to maintain religious property and endowments, the *vaqf*.<sup>15</sup> Also under the Qajars, the rule of law was divided between *Shar'* courts, which administered civil law based on Shari'a and applied by *Mujtahids*, and *'Urf* law, which governed over criminal and some commercial cases.<sup>16</sup> By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the Ulama and the monarchy had a mutually reinforcing relationship with both shared and separate spheres of influence.

Alongside this evolving relationship between political and religious authority, several Shii practices and beliefs have become important to Iranian identity. Specifically, the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbala in 680 CE, the son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet, marks an important day of remembrance on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of

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<sup>12</sup> Martin, pg. 37

<sup>13</sup> Said Amir Arjomand, "Introduction: Shi'ism, Authority, and Political Culture," pp. 1-24, *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism*, edited by Said Amir Arjomand, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), pg. 6; Martin, pg. 16

<sup>14</sup> Hairi, pp. 61-65

<sup>15</sup> Martin, pg. 17. *Vaqf* is the Persian transliteration of the Arabic *waqf*.

<sup>16</sup> Martin, pg. 8

Muharram, a day that has been fastidiously observed by Twelver Shi' Muslims in Iran. In addition, the belief in the hidden Imam, the twelfth Imam that will return from hiding to justly rule the *ummah*, is a salient belief within Iran. Both of these practices and beliefs are important for understanding Iran's Islamic Revolution, which will be discussed further below.

### **Overview of Persian and Iranian History**

Most scholars date the origins of Persian identity back to the Achaemenid Persian Empire of the sixth century BCE, which, at its zenith, established a polity from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River.<sup>17</sup> One of the unifying elements of the Achaemenid Empire was the Zoroastrian faith—based on the prophetic revelations of Zoroaster—a monotheistic tradition that espoused ethical conduct and the moral needs of the populous.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the empire promoted agricultural, free trade, and encouraged tolerance among its subjects. The empire fell to Alexander in 331 BCE but, despite this, the Zoroastrian faith and other aspects of Persian identity continued to develop under Hellenistic influences.<sup>19</sup>

At the time of Islam's introduction in the seventh century CE, the Persian Gulf region was in a state of political and social turmoil. The two main empires, the Persian Sasanian Empire and the Byzantine Empire, were engaged in a protracted conflict, which weakened both polities to advancing Muslim forces.<sup>20</sup> In 633CE, the year of the Prophet Muhammad's death, Muslim forces captured Hira, a Sasanian town near the Euphrates

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<sup>17</sup> Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam: The Classic Age of Islam*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pg. 118

<sup>18</sup> Hodgson, pp. 126-130

<sup>19</sup> Hodgson, pg. 119

<sup>20</sup> Hodgson, pg. 153

River. This was followed by a second offensive in 637CE, in which the Sasanian capital Ctesiphon was captured. In less than thirty years after its introduction, Islam spread throughout the Gulf region, uniting the former subjects of the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires into the first Muslim dynasty of the Umayyads, which lasted from 661 to 750CE. The faith introduced a new social and political system to the region, one unified by the equality of its adherents.<sup>21</sup>

Twelver Shiism and Persian identity did not formally unite until the creation of the Safavid Dynasty in 1501CE. Its founder, Isma'il, called on the legacy of the Twelve Imams, particularly of Ali, to justify conquest of its Sunni Ottoman neighbors to the West and Sunni Uzbeks to the North.<sup>22</sup> In addition to military conquest, Isma'il and his successors spread Persian art, literature and language to its new territories, particularly in the form of Persian manuscripts, which left their artistic mark from Constantinople to Calcutta.<sup>23</sup> The Safavid Dynasty collapsed in 1722 after an Afghani invasion, leaving the region in a state of political chaos.

In 1785, Muhammad Qajar fought his way to the throne, consolidated power and formed the Qajar Dynasty. From its founding, however, the new dynasty was fraught with external and domestic challenges. In 1813 and again in 1828, Russian troops on Iran's western borders defeated Muhammad's successor, Fath 'ali Shah. In hopes of ending the protracted struggle, the two countries signed the Treaty of Torkmanchia,

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<sup>21</sup> Esposito, pg 35

<sup>22</sup> Abdolala Soudavar, "The Early Safavids and Their Cultural Interactions with Surrounding States," pp. 89-120, *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, edited by Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), pg. 90

<sup>23</sup> Soudavar, pp. 92-106

which imposed particularly stringent terms for the Dynasty.<sup>24</sup> In response to this military defeat, the Qajars made efforts to modernize the dynasty, particularly its military. They acquired western weapons, created military academies, and opened a secular high school that specialized in science and engineering.<sup>25</sup> This was followed by efforts to consolidate the legal system in the empire, specifically codes surrounding trade, commerce, and taxation.<sup>26</sup>

Iranian society during this period was ethnically, linguistically, tribally and religiously diverse. The region was comprised of autonomous or semi-autonomous villages that were isolated from one another and the capital. Various tribes predominated in regions and were further diversified by different languages, religions and ethnic groups. Furthermore, the geographic diversity of Iran and its lack of roads and other means of transportation and communication further separated the population. Thus, although existing as a territory with frontiers, Iran was not a nation bound by a common sense of identity.<sup>27</sup>

In 1857, Nasr al-din Shah signed the Treaty of Paris with Russia and Britain to demarcate spheres of influence between the two colonial powers. The Shah conceded considerable rights to both countries, particularly concerning areas of commerce and trade.<sup>28</sup> Nasr al-din Shah continued to implement policies aimed at modernizing the nation including the creation of a national bank backed by British investment, the development of transportation and communications infrastructure, and further

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<sup>24</sup> Firoozeh Kshani-Sabet, "Cultures of Iranianess: The Evolving Polemic of Iranian Nationalism," pp. 162-181, *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, edited by Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), pg. 163

<sup>25</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 53-54

<sup>26</sup> Martin, pg. 8

<sup>27</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 10-15

advancements in education, print media, and national text books.<sup>29</sup> The Shah failed to implement protective tariffs for the nation, however, which laid the local economy open to British and Russian commercial interests.

In 1891, the Shah sold fifty-year monopoly rights on tobacco production and distribution to an English businessman. In protest, merchants closed down the bazaar in Tabriz and staged demonstrations. Many members of the Ulama backed the merchant's protest, issuing *fatvas* that forbade smoking. The Ulama also acted as a mediating force between the merchants and the Shah, eventually succeeding in the annulment of the contract.<sup>30</sup>

Also around this time, the government's reformist minister attempted to place heavier taxes on imports and exports, which were unpopular with the merchants. This agitation was furthered by the government's decision to accept two loans from Russia in 1901 and 1902 followed by a 1903 tariff that favored Russian goods.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the government increased taxes on salaries and pensions in 1904, raised guild fees, and then imposed a 10% stamp tax in 1905.<sup>32</sup> Taken together, these fiscal policies hurt a wide spectrum of the population, creating a sense of frustration and mistrust towards the government.

In December 1905, a series of protests marked the beginning of what became known as the Constitutional Revolution. Merchants, guilds, seminary students, and certain members of the Ulama joined forces to demand reforms in the government. The revolution culminated with key members of the Ulama leaving the city in protest and

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<sup>28</sup> Abrahamian, pg. 51

<sup>29</sup> Martin, pg. 27; Abrahamian, pg. 57

<sup>30</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 73-79

<sup>31</sup> Martin, pp. 49-51

14,000 demonstrators taking *bast*, or sanctuary, in the British Legation to draw attention to their cause. During the *bast*, demands of the protesters expanded to include the creation of a national assembly governed by a constitution. Through a series of negotiations, the Shah finally consented in August of 1906 and elections were held for the first national assembly, the *Majles*, in October of that same year.<sup>33</sup>

The creation of a national assembly sparked debates within the Ulama over the nature and scope of a constitutional government vis-à-vis Shari'a law, a debate that ultimately created two camps: those that supported a constitutional government and saw it to be compatible with Shari'a law, and those that believed the political changes to be fundamentally at odds with Islam. The latter group, headed by Sheikh Fazlallah Nouri, backed the Shah's policy to ban the constitution in November of 1908 on the grounds of protecting Islam.<sup>34</sup>

The Shah's ban on the constitution plunged the country into a civil war between those loyal to the Shah and those demanding the maintenance of a constitutional government. In July 1909, constitutionalist forces marched on the Shah's palace in Tehran, forcing him to flee to the Russian Embassy. The constitutionalists called for an ad hoc grand assembly and a new government was formed in August.<sup>35</sup> The new government, however, collapsed within months and Russian, British and Ottoman forces were all present within Iran's borders by 1915.<sup>36</sup> Amidst this, an Islamic guerilla group called the Committee of Islamic Unity or *Jangalis* (men of the jungle) began launching military attacks against Russian troops on Iran's western borders.

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<sup>32</sup> Martin, pp. 51-55

<sup>33</sup> Martin, pp. 52-107; Abrahamian, pp. 81-93

<sup>34</sup> Martin, pp. 147-167

<sup>35</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 102-105

The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the end of World War I ushered in a new era in Iran's domestic and foreign affairs. In 1919, the British and the Shah signed the Anglo-Iranian Treaty aimed at preventing the Bolsheviks from attaining Iranian oil and meddling in Iranian domestic affairs.<sup>37</sup> In February 1921, amidst increasing political and social chaos, the military general Reza Khan marched into Tehran, arrested 60 politicians and declared a coup d'état. Reza Khan proceeded to consolidate political and military power, defeat the Jangalis and, in 1926, crowned himself king and adopted the name Pahlevi, establishing the Pahlevi dynasty.<sup>38</sup>

The new Shah imposed radical cultural and social changes during his rule. In particular, he emphasized Iran's pre-Islamic Persian identity, downplaying the salience of Islam. He also instituted several policies aimed at modernizing women including the formation of the "Society for Women" and a ban on the veil in 1936.<sup>39</sup> In addition to cultural changes, Reza Shah also clamped down on secular organizations, banning political parties, unions and newspapers.<sup>40</sup>

Although initially welcomed, the Shah's harsh reforms diminished popular support for his rule. Underground movements began to emerge in the 1930s, organizing labor strikes and other forms of resistance. In response, Reza Shah arrested and imprisoned fifty-three intellectuals and accused them of being communists and subversives.<sup>41</sup> In August 1941, amid fears of Nazi intrigue in Tehran, British and Soviet forces invaded Iran, deposed the Shah, and occupied the country. During this time,

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<sup>36</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 103-111

<sup>37</sup> Sabet, pg. 169

<sup>38</sup> Sabet, pg. 120; Abrahamian, pp. 120, 135

<sup>39</sup> Sabet, pg. 176

<sup>40</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 138-141

<sup>41</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 155, 162



twenty-seven of the arrested “fifty-three” began to form what would become the Tudeh party. They opened offices throughout the country, emerging as a well-organized nationwide party by 1943. In 1944, they sponsored twenty-three candidates for the 14<sup>th</sup> Majles and received over 70% of the vote.<sup>42</sup>

In 1944, Britain and the US attempted to block oil sales to the Soviet Union. In response, the Tudeh party organized strikes and demonstrations demanding for nationalization of Iranian oil and the rights to export to the Soviet Union. These demands sharpened tensions between the Shah on the one hand, who was backed by the US and Britain, and the popularity of the Tudeh party on the other, which was more leftist in its ideology and policies. In 1949, an attempt was made on the Shah’s life, resulting in the imposition of martial law.<sup>43</sup>

During this time, Mohammad Mossadeq emerged as a leader of the opposition movement. Mosadeq worked alongside the Tudeh party to create the umbrella organization *The National Front*, which capitalized on growing unpopularity towards the Shah and his dependence on the US. The National Front mobilized the masses and demanded elections, free press, and maintenance of the constitution. In May 1951, after the assassination of Prime Minister Razmara, Mosadeq became prime minister. While in office, he implemented drastic reforms including the dismissal of numerous military officers.

In 1953, Mossadeq called for a national referendum, which was widely supported by the public. One week later on August 16, several of the dismissed military officers—believed to be sponsored by the CIA—staged a coup d’état, arrested Mossadeq, and

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<sup>42</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 186, 292

<sup>43</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 249-252

imposed martial law. Over the next five years, an estimated 3,000 members of the Tudeh party were arrested, of which 54 were either executed or died in prison. Mossadeq was confined to house arrest where he died in 1967.<sup>44</sup>

The following twenty-four years were relatively quiet for Iran with one major demonstration in 1963. The 1963 protests occurred amidst the Shah's "White Revolution" of economic and social reforms, which failed to produce visible improvements for the working and merchant classes.<sup>45</sup> The newly emerging Liberation Movement called for strikes and protests during the holy month of Muharram. It was during these protests that the Ayatallah Khomeini entered the political scene as a charismatic leader demanding the overthrow of the Shah. The Shah's regime survived the demonstrations, however, and order was reestablished, the Liberation Movement disbanded and Khomeini deported to Turkey.<sup>46</sup>

The Shah's crackdown following the 1963 uprising forced several movements underground. During this time guerilla organizations formed with the goal of deposing the Shah, including the *Feda'i* organization—which espoused a mixture of Marxist and Islamic ideals—and the *Mujahedin*, which sprang out of the Liberation Movement and was Islamic in its ideals and goals. Both of these movements carried out assassinations, bank robberies, embassy bombings and attacks on military outposts, successfully challenging the authority of the state.<sup>47</sup>

Also after 1963, members of the Ulama and lay people began to interpret Islam in light of their domestic and international circumstances. In particular, the Sociologist Ali

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<sup>44</sup> Abrahamian, pg. 457

<sup>45</sup> Abrahamian, pg. 422-462

<sup>46</sup> Abrahamain, pg. 426

<sup>47</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 481-495

Shariati, who returned in 1965 from doctoral work in Paris, began to offer fiery interpretations of Shii Islam. He called for individuals to resist Marxism, to reject corrupt interpretations of Islam, and to take action to defend and revitalize the faith. He also called for an Islamic Revolution to purify the nation. His writings and talks were widely read among university students and resonated throughout the educated middle class.<sup>48</sup>

Beginning in 1975, the Shah implemented several policies that brought the Islamic revolution to fruition. First, he attempted to create a one party system in Iran, forming the Resurgence Party in 1975, which was popularly condemned. In addition, the Shah began a series of attacks on the Ulama and the merchant classes, attempting to penetrate and undermine their organizations. Also during this time, the Shah came under increasing international pressure to reform his political and human rights practices including criticism from the newly formed Amnesty International and the US government, particularly under the Carter administration. In response, the Shah announced that he would relax police and secret service activities and try dissidents in civil courts, as opposed to military tribunals.<sup>49</sup>

These reforms emboldened intellectuals and various organizations to write letters and speak out against the Shah. Old organizations—such as the Tudeh party and the Liberation Movement—reconvened and new groups sprang up with the intent of pushing for greater reforms. In November 1977, police broke up a political poetry reading in Qum, resulting in the death of one student. This event sparked a series of demonstrations, deaths, and memorials that mobilized the nation in opposition to the Shah. The

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<sup>48</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 464-473

<sup>49</sup> Abrahamian, pp. 445-497

government further angered the people by publishing an article in the state-run newspaper in January 1978, criticizing the Ulama and defaming Khomeini.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout that year, virtually all strata of society—the merchants, the working class, the clerisy, university students, and even the military and police—unified against the Shah. The revolt took on a particularly religious tone in September of 1978, after a series of demonstrations during Ramadan raised the call for an Islamic republic, *hukumat-i Islami*. By the end of December, the Shah had lost his power base; he left the country on January 16, 1979, followed by Khomeini’s victorious return on February 1 and the creation of the first Islamic republic.

The Islamic Revolution not only transformed domestic society and politics within Iran but also impacted Iran’s relations with its neighbors and the West. On November 4, 1979, militants—angered by the US government’s decision to grant the Shah sanctuary—stormed the US embassy and took 52 Americans hostage. In exchange for the hostages’ safe release, the militants demanded the extradition of the Shah to Iran to stand trial. The Shah, however, died before this demand could be met. Following the end of the US hostage crisis in 1981, the US imposed sanctions against the republic and refused to recognize Iran as a state. In September 1980, Iraq attacked Iran in what would become an eight-year war with the aim of stamping out Iran’s revolutionary zeal. Iran also launched an initiative to export the revolution throughout the Muslim world, including through means of insurgency and terrorism, further inciting western criticism of the republic. In 1989, the Ayatallah Khomeini issued a *fatva*, against Salman Rushdie for his book *The Satanic Verses*, which called for Muslims everywhere to kill Rushdie and those

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<sup>50</sup> Jerrold D.Green, “Terrorism and Politics in Iran,” pp. 553-594, *Terrorism in Context*, edited by Martha Crenshaw, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pg. 573

connected with the book, also earning the republic condemnation. Despite these international confrontations, the Islamic Republic did not collapse.

The Islamic republic has also had its share of domestic struggles. It has faced severe economic hardship as a result of the eight-year war with Iraq. In addition, the republic has had to work out complex relationships between clerics, politicians and technocrats in order to create a viable government.<sup>51</sup> The republic has also had to confront social and political issues such as literacy, birth control, and press freedoms.<sup>52</sup> Despite this, the republic has survived amid bouts of unrest and political turmoil including a student-led revolt in 1999. The Islamic republic is nearing its twenty-fifth anniversary, making it the longest lasting regime since the creation of a constitutional government in 1906.

### **Iran's Constitutional and Islamic Revolutions**

This chronology reveals that Iran has had not one but two revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the 1906 Revolution for a national assembly and constitutional government, and the revolution for an Islamic republic in 1978-1979. Drawing on the causal argument from chapter two, this section asks the following questions concerning these two revolutions: Is there an identifiable threat or the perception of a threat to which the revolutionary parties are responding? What are the material, social, and technological resources available to the involved groups? And what is the relationship between political and religious leaders and how does that relationship affect each revolution?

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<sup>51</sup> See Shahrugh Akhavi, "Iran: Implementation of an Islamic State," *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics and Society*, edited by John L. Esposito, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 27-52

<sup>52</sup> Nora Bensahel, "Political Reform in the Middle East," *Security Trends in the Middle East and Their Implications for the United States*, edited by Nora Bensahel and Daniel Byman, pp. 15-51, (Santa Monica: RAND, forthcoming), pp. 37-41

## The 1906 Constitutional Revolution

This section considers the antecedent conditions that helped fuel the call for governmental reforms—specifically the international, domestic, and political environment leading up to the revolution—and the process whereby disgruntled groups came to demand a national assembly and constitution in 1906. It posits that the revolution had two main causes: economic policies that hurt the overall population in general and the merchant class, the *bazaari*, in particular; and the government's economic dependency on Russia and Britain. Although the 1906 revolution aimed to create democratic institutions—specifically the right to popular representation and a constitution that limited the powers of the Shah—the Muslim religious leaders of Iran, the Ulama, still played a critical role in mobilizing groups, pressuring the government for change, and shaping the debate on the nature and scope of the new government.

In order to understand the causes of the 1906 Revolution, it is important to identify the key groups within Iranian society leading up to the revolt. First, prior to the revolution, the government consisted of the Shah and his appointed advisors and cabinet members. The ministers of finance and reform played a particularly important role in creating controversial policies that angered various groups in society.<sup>53</sup> Second, merchants, or *bazaari*, were key participants in the revolution. Merchants included shop owners, importers and exporters, and members of guilds such as shoe cobblers and masons.<sup>54</sup> Third, Iran had an emerging educated middle class that had studied in western countries and were knowledgeable in western concepts of politics and philosophy, knowledge that became useful for shaping a constitutional government. Fourth, the

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<sup>53</sup> Martin, pg. 46

Ulama of Iran were a critical group that impacted the revolution through their role in mobilizing and organizing different groups, negotiating with the government, and helping to shape the nature and scope of the new government. These groups were not mutually exclusive of one another. For example, many of the educated middle class came from families of the merchants. Likewise, many of the Ulama had commercial interests, making them part of the merchants.<sup>55</sup>

Three background factors helped to precipitate the 1906 Revolution: the government's international policies, particularly towards Russia and Britain; the transformation of society aided by modernization efforts; and changes within the government itself. First, International circumstances impacted social and political dynamics within Iran. In particular, increasing Russian and British economic influences became a salient cause of discontent. Within the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, British and Russian investors moved in on Iranian markets and development possibilities. Investments soared from nearly nothing to over 12 million pounds by the end of the century.<sup>56</sup>

During this time, the Shah forged several important international deals that bred discontent within the population. In 1872, the Shah negotiated a deal with the British entrepreneur Baron Julius de Reuter to develop Iran's communications and transportation infrastructure in exchange for the total income of the customs bureau for twenty-five years, total mineral rights except precious stones, and full access to Iran's forests.<sup>57</sup> Lord

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<sup>54</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, "Iran's Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," pp. 579-598, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3, (June, 1983), pg. 583

<sup>55</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," pp. 381-414, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 10, (1979), pg. 388

<sup>56</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 56

<sup>57</sup> Janet Afary, *Grassroots Democracy and Social Democracy in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911*, Volumes One and Two, (Michigan: University of Michigan Dissertation Services (unpublished)

Curzon observed that the deal, “handed over the entire resources of Persia to foreign hands for a period of seventy years.”<sup>58</sup> The agreement sparked outcries from merchants, the Ulama, the Qajar family, and European powers, especially Russia. Under domestic and international pressure, the Shah cancelled the deal.<sup>59</sup> Despite this, British investors still made considerable inroads including contracts to build a telegraph system in Iran, shipping privileges, revenues on road tolls, and a monopoly on printing money.<sup>60</sup>

During this time Russian entrepreneurs also sought to capitalize on Iran’s investment potential. A Russian business, *Cie del al Route*, worked on developing Iran’s transportation infrastructure, dredging the port of Enzeli and paving roads from Tehran to nearby cities.<sup>61</sup> In the West, Russians gained the rights to commercial fishing in the Caspian Sea and developed rail lines linking the western provinces of Iran with Russian towns near its borders.<sup>62</sup>

In March of 1890, the Shah signed a deal with a British entrepreneur for a fifty-year monopoly on the right to produce, sell and export all tobacco in Iran. In return, the Shah was given “an annual sum of 15,000 pounds, 25% of the annual profit, and a 5% dividend.”<sup>63</sup> The agreement impacted a variety of merchants including those involved in retail, wholesale, and export. In 1891, merchants and members of the Ulama joined together to protest the concession, taking to the streets in peaceful demonstrations and

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dissertation), 1991) pg. 64; Mangol Bayat, *Iran’s First Revolution: Shi’ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 46-47

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Afary, pg. 64

<sup>59</sup> Afary, pg. 65

<sup>60</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 55

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 56

<sup>63</sup> Afary, pg. 65



closing the *bazaars*.<sup>64</sup> Some members of the Ulama joined in the protests out of solidarity with the merchants and in fear of their own economic interests through personal or familial ties to commerce.<sup>65</sup>

In December of 1891, the nation participated in a boycott of all tobacco products. News of the boycott spread via the telegraph, prompting towns and cities throughout the country to join in the protest.<sup>66</sup> This initiative was backed by *fatvas* from high-ranking members of the Ulama.<sup>67</sup> A mass demonstration in Tehran clashed with armed forces, resulting in several deaths.<sup>68</sup> By January of 1892, the Shah was forced to rescind the offer amidst growing public outrage.

The cancellation of the tobacco agreement caused an economic crisis for the country, which resulted in Iran's first major loan from the British.<sup>69</sup> In the late 1890s and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Shah continued to take loans from both the British and the Russians. Two loans granted by the Russians in particular, in 1901 and 1902, earned condemnation from the merchants and certain members of the Ulama, who accused the Shah of selling the country to Russia.<sup>70</sup> These controversial business deals and loans, therefore, helped incite public anger against the Shah.

Second, changes in society also played a role in the rise of revolutionary demands. Iran's exposure to the West encouraged individuals to travel abroad and study in European universities. Not only did these individuals return with valuable skills in

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<sup>64</sup> Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran: 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in The Qajar Period*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 205-221

<sup>65</sup> Afary, pg. 67

<sup>66</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pg. 67; Afary, pg. 69

<sup>67</sup> Martin, pg. 41;

<sup>68</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 67

<sup>69</sup> Afary, pg. 69

<sup>70</sup> Martin, pg. 48

military training, medicine, and engineering, but they also brought back new ideas in politics and philosophy. This exposure to western ideas and concepts, in turn, threw into question Iran's traditional forms of society, government and religious authority. Works by Descartes, Spinoza, Darwin and Kant, to name a few, were translated into Persian and sold in increasing numbers as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, educated individuals returning from the West took up posts within the emerging government bureaucracy. These individuals began to push for reforms, particularly for judicial reforms and the creation of secular courts.<sup>72</sup> These proposals raised considerable opposition with certain members of the Ulama, who argued that adjudication was the right of *mujtahads* and that Shari'a was the only legitimate law in the land.<sup>73</sup> Western educated intellectuals continued to agitate for political and social reforms throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They became one of the ideological voices during the 1906 Revolution and key architects of the national assembly and constitution for the country, which will be discussed further below.

During this time, Iran also experienced a wave of new religious movements that challenged the orthodoxy of Shii Islam and the power of the Ulama. In 1810, Shaykh Ahmad 'Ahsa'i preached that humans, through mystical practices, could communicate directly with God, a notion that directly challenged Twelver Shii beliefs on the limits of the human/divine relationship. This movement became known as *Shaykhism*.<sup>74</sup> From Shaykhism came the belief that special humans could act as gates, *bab*, to the divine and the hidden Imam. This belief became known as *Babism* and produced two offshoots in

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<sup>71</sup> Bayat, pp. 36-37

<sup>72</sup> Bayat, pp. 37-38; Martin, pp. 8-9

<sup>73</sup> Bayat, pp. 38-39

<sup>74</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 16

the 1850s, the Baha'is and the 'Azalis.<sup>75</sup> The orthodox Twelver Shii Ulama condemned these movements as deviant innovations and called on the Shah to perform his duty as protector of Islam by ridding the country of these religious threats. In response, the Shah created an office, the *sadr*, whose purpose was to define Twelver Shii Islam, stamp out heresy, and maintain relations between the Shah and the Ulama.<sup>76</sup> Despite the persistence of both the Baha'i and Azali traditions, this threat to orthodoxy strengthened ties between the government and Ulama.

The development of communications and transportation infrastructure also changed Iranian society during this time and impacted the revolution. Communications technology, particularly the telegraph, put isolated communities throughout Iran in contact with one another. This, in turn, allowed for a new level of national cohesiveness that was previously not possible. For example, during the Tobacco Revolt of 1891-1892, telegraphs informed provinces of demonstrations and boycotts occurring in the big cities, allowing these other regions to take part and support the movement. The creation of national newspapers in the mid-1800s also helped unify the nation by spreading information on happenings in the capital to the provinces and vice versa. Roads, railways and dredged rivers also changed social dynamics in Iran by providing infrastructure that linked regions in the country together.

However, modernization also had adverse effects on society. For example, previously self-sufficient communities were exposed to foreign goods, prompting a new level of competition and driving some businesses into bankruptcy.<sup>77</sup> Merchants, angered by the government's failure to impose protective tariffs, organized the Council of

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<sup>75</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 16-17

<sup>76</sup> Martin, pg. 17

Merchants in 1884 to assert their demands to the Shah.<sup>78</sup> However, the council had little impact on the government's policies. Relations between the government and the merchants came to a boiling point after the Shah signed a tariff agreement with Russia in 1903 that greatly favored Russian over domestic goods; this proved to be one of the triggering events of the 1906 Revolution.<sup>79</sup>

During this time, particularly after the Tobacco Revolt of 1891-1892, secret societies were founded with the aim of pushing for governmental reforms. These societies cut across key groups in Iranian society to include merchants, members of the Ulama, intellectuals, and even certain individuals in the royal court.<sup>80</sup> These groups issued leaflets such as the "Night Letters" denouncing the government, particularly its fiscal policies.<sup>81</sup> Secret societies formed one of the pillars of organizations that pushed for revolution in 1906 and helped shape the form and content of the new government.<sup>82</sup> They also were the groups from which *anjumans*, grassroots councils, emerged during the revolution and served as pressure groups to the newly formed government, which will be discussed further below.

Third, the government itself was going through changes during this time that impacted society and created unrest. Muhammad Shah and his successor, Naser al-Din Shah, attempted to create a central governmental bureaucracy following Iran's military defeat to Russia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This included consolidating and reforming Iran's system of law, commerce, trade, taxation, land distribution and

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<sup>77</sup> Bayat, pp. 45-46

<sup>78</sup> Bayat, pg. 47

<sup>79</sup> Martin, pg. 47; Afary, pg. 72

<sup>80</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 71

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*

<sup>82</sup> Afary, pg. 81

education.<sup>83</sup> These changes required opening national offices throughout the country, including remote areas dominated by tribal and feudal systems, which confronted their autonomy and authority. Furthermore, the Shah attempted to create a military and police force that would not only protect Iran from foreign invasion but also unify internal dissidents.<sup>84</sup> Several strata of society resisted these efforts of national consolidation, particularly tribal leaders who feared the loss of their autonomy, members of the Ulama who interpreted Shari'a law, and merchants not accustomed to paying taxes.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular, the government implemented policies that fostered resentment within several groups in society. First, the government asked several Belgians to organize Iran's customs policies and made M. Joseph Naus, a Belgian, the minister of customs.<sup>85</sup> This appointment became a source of tension for both the merchants and Ulama, the latter of which asserted that no foreigners should be allowed in the government.<sup>86</sup> Despite this, he remained in office until the revolution. Amidst these controversies, Naser ed-Din Shah was assassinated in 1896.<sup>87</sup>

In the face of growing debt, the government also imposed several new taxes aimed at generating revenue. This included, first, new import-export taxes in 1898-1899, which were so unpopular that they led to the reformist minister Amin al-Dawlah's resignation.<sup>88</sup> The Shah appointed a hard-line relative in his place, Ain ad-Dauleh.<sup>89</sup> In 1901, 1902, and 1903, the government imposed new tariffs that hurt local merchants and, in the case of the 1903 tariff, favored Russian goods over domestic products. Each of

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<sup>83</sup> Martin, pp. 7-8

<sup>84</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 38-39; Afary, pg. 71

<sup>85</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 70; Afary, pg. 72

<sup>86</sup> Martin, pg. 47

<sup>87</sup> Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions," pg. 586

<sup>88</sup> Afary, pg. 71; Martin, pg. 46

<sup>89</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 71

these new tariffs sparked protests.<sup>90</sup> In 1904, the government implemented a new policy that taxed salaries and pensions. Also in 1904, the government introduced a 10% stamp tax that affected nearly all strata of society.<sup>91</sup> These increases in taxes were compounded by the outbreak of war between Russia and Japan in 1904 and Russia's defeat in 1905. The war limited the supply of staple imports coming in from Russia—such as sugar and wheat—creating shortages and price-hikes that disgruntled a wide spectrum of society.<sup>92</sup>

The Constitutional Revolution, therefore, began largely in reaction to increased taxes, lack of tariffs that protected domestic goods, and governmental dependency on foreign loans. The revolution itself can be divided into three phases: the first phase from December 1905 through August 1906, in which three series of protests resulted in the creation of a national assembly; the second phase from September through December 1906, in which groups debated the formation of a constitution; and the third phase, the struggle to uphold the constitution and the outbreak of civil war between those loyal to the Shah and the constitutionalists. In each of these phases, the key actors included the Shah and his advisors, the merchants and guilds, the Ulama, and the intellectuals. These groups were often internally divided and formed alliances with other groups, depending on the issues at stake.

Two policies in particular explain the timing of the first phase of the revolution. First, the 1903 tariffs were scheduled to take effect in March of 1905. In April, merchants organized demonstrations and closed the *bazaars* in protest.<sup>93</sup> Their initial demand was for reforms in policy and finance, not for a constitutional government. In December,

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<sup>90</sup> Afary, pg. 72

<sup>91</sup> Martin, pg. 52

<sup>92</sup> Afary, pg. 81

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*

amidst popular discontent over the soaring cost of basic staples, the government attempted to force merchants to lower the price of sugar. After refusing on the grounds that the import prices could not be lowered, the government ordered several prominent shop owners to be beaten. Merchants reacted by closing the *bazaars* and, together with members of the Ulama and seminary students, by taking *bast*, or sanctuary, in the royal mosque of Tehran.<sup>94</sup> They demanded the dismissal of Naus and ad-Dauleh, the creation of an *adalatkhana*—a house of justice where citizens could voice their grievances against the government—and the maintenance of Shari’a law.<sup>95</sup>

Within a month, the Shah agreed to the creation of a “House of Justice that would carry the rulings of the Shariat [sic];” however, its implementation bogged down in structure and scope.<sup>96</sup> During this time, prominent *mujttahids* including Sheikh Jamal ad-Din and Sheikh Muhammad Va’ez began to speak out against the Shah and the government, demanding reforms. In July 1906, the government tried to arrest Va’ez, sparking a confrontation between the police and his seminary students, resulting in one student’s death. The student’s funeral turned violent and between twenty-two to over a hundred people died in clashes with the police.<sup>97</sup>

The bloodshed prompted merchants and members of the Ulama to unite and coordinate protests against the Shah. In the days following the bloody funeral procession, key members of the Ulama left Tehran for Qum in protest.<sup>98</sup> The entourage included Sheikh Fazlallah, who would later side with the Shah against the constitutional

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<sup>94</sup> Afary, pg. 82

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Afary, pg. 83

<sup>97</sup> Abrahamian puts the number at 22, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 83; Afary cites “over a hundred people died,” pg. 84

<sup>98</sup> Martin, pg. 89

government.<sup>99</sup> On July 21, around 700 guild members, merchants, and students occupied the British Legation's garden in Tehran.<sup>100</sup> This *bast* quickly grew to over 14,000 by the first week of August, the provisions for which were funded by wealthy merchants.<sup>101</sup> Protesters demanded the creation of a national assembly, the resignation of ad-Dauleh, and the return of the Ulama. After a series of negotiations between key merchants and Ulama, the Shah agreed to the creation of a national assembly, or *Majles*, on August 5<sup>th</sup>. After this agreement, the *bazaars* reopened, the *bast* ended, and the Ulama returned from Qum, ending the first phase in the revolution.<sup>102</sup>

Although the Shah had agreed to the creation of a national assembly, the details of the body still had to be determined. Therefore, the second phase of the revolution began when the Shah, members of the Ulama, and key merchants began to negotiate the details of a national assembly and constitution. Two issues in particular required several rounds of negotiations among the parties: the power of the courts vis-à-vis the Ulama, and the power of the shah relative to the national assembly. The Shah eventually agreed to the creation of a national assembly comprised of 200 members and elections were held on September 29<sup>th</sup>.<sup>103</sup> Through further negotiations, all sides agreed to the creation of a Senate with fifty seats appointed by the Shah and fifty elected members.

Following the construction of a legislative assembly, debates began over the drafting of a constitution. The constitution was modeled after Belgium's constitution, with the primary exception that it gave religion an important place in politics and named

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<sup>99</sup> Afary, pg. 84; Martin, pg. 89

<sup>100</sup> There is a debate on who approached the British and asked to take sanctuary in their garden. Abrahamian argues it was two prominent merchants while Afary claims it was Sheikh Bihbihani, see Abrahamian, "Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," pg. 406; and Afary, pg. 84, respectively.

<sup>101</sup> Martin, pg. 92; Afary, pg. 85; Abrahamian, "Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," pp. 406-407

<sup>102</sup> Martin, pp. 99-100

<sup>103</sup> Martin, pg. 101



Twelver Shii Islam as the official religion of Iran.<sup>104</sup> In addition, under the pressure of conservative members of the Ulama, the drafters created a set of Supplementary Fundamental Laws that included a “supreme committee” of five *mujtahids* to govern over all legislation, the right to ban non-Muslims from cabinet positions and provisions to stamp out heresy.<sup>105</sup> The Shah balked at the Supplementary Fundamental Laws, and called for provisions that would allow him greater control over the government and armed forces. This sparked demonstrations throughout several major cities, especially in Tabriz and Tehran.<sup>106</sup> Amidst these debates, a man believed to be connected with the newly formed Social Democratic Party assassinated the prime minister. In the face of growing unrest and political chaos, the Shah promised to uphold the constitution and signed a draft on January 1, 1907, just days before his death.<sup>107</sup>

The third phase of the revolution began with the coronation of the new Shah, Muhammad Ali, and struggles over implementation of the constitution. Despite the fact that the previous Shah had agreed to the Majles, allowed for elections to take place, and had signed the country’s first constitution, the nature and scope of the new government in relation to the authority of the Shah and the Ulama—the traditional keepers of power—were still not clearly defined. In particular, a debate continued within the Ulama over the scope and limits of the new constitutional government vis-à-vis Shari’a law and the compatibility of this new system with Islamic principles of authority. Three prominent *mujtahids* in particular debated these issues. On the one hand, Sayyed Abdullah Bihbihani and Muhammad Tabataba’i argued that a constitutional government was not

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<sup>104</sup> Abrahamian, “Causes of the Constitutional Revolution,” pp. 410-411

<sup>105</sup> Abrahamian, “Causes of the Constitutional Revolution,” pg. 411; Keddie, “Iranian Revolutions,” pg. 586

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*

incompatible with Islam and Shari'a law; the two could work together to promote justice and the tenets of the faith. These two *mujtahids* backed the newly elected members of the Majlis.

On the other hand, Sheikh Fazlallah argued that a constitutional government clashed with key components of Islam, particularly freedom of religion, freedom of press, and the right of non-clerics to discern the law.<sup>108</sup> Fazlallah aligned with the new Shah, whom he believed would continue to serve and protect Islam. In June 1907, Fazlallah organized a pilgrimage and *bast* at Hazrat 'Abd al 'Azim, a shrine outside of Tehran. The *bast*, believed to be funded by the Shah, consisted of conservative clerics who argued that constitutional law had no basis in Shari'a, and therefore should be resisted.<sup>109</sup> They called on the Shah to uphold his duty as protector of Islam and abolish the constitution. Members of the Majles attempted to negotiate with the conservative Ulama, promising that the Shari'a would be upheld and that the federal courts would only adjudicate over criminal and commercial cases. The conservatives, however, rejected this offer. However, in the face of dwindling support, Fazlallah ended the *bast* in September of that same year.

Throughout 1907 and 1908, the power struggle continued between the constitutionalists, backed by Bibihani and Tabatabai, and the conservative Ulama, led by Fazlallah and aligned with the Shah. The public grew disenchanted with the new government as it failed to balance the budget and improve the cost of living. Throughout 1908, the Majles continued to push for political power, backed by *anjumans*, grassroots organizations from various strata of society, and by the Shah's own royal family, which

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<sup>107</sup> Martin, pg. 107

<sup>108</sup> Martin, pp. 117-125

demanded that he support the Majles or be deposed.<sup>110</sup> Radical constitutional movements began to take root in Tabriz and later Gilan, challenging the authority of Tehran over areas outside of the capital.<sup>111</sup> In the face of rising discontent, the Shah left the city on June 4, 1908. In the Shah's absence, Bibihani and Tabatabai along with other constitutionalists attempted a coup d'état, but the Shah deployed his Russian-led Cossack Brigade, arrested the leaders and exiled the two clerics.<sup>112</sup> The Shah then disbanded the *anjumans* before returning to Tehran.

In November 1908, amidst popular discontent for the Majles and with the backing of the conservative Ulaman, the Shah banned the constitution in order to "protect Islam" and appointed a new legislative body.<sup>113</sup> His declaration received immediate condemnation from Russia and Britain, which froze their loans to the Iranian government.<sup>114</sup> The Shah's decision also sparked outcry from groups within the population, swinging sentiment back towards the constitutionalists. In December, merchants took *bast* in the Ottoman Legation and closed the *bazaars*. Around the same time, *mujtahids* and seminary students took *bast* in the Hazrat 'Abd al 'Azim. The *mujtahid's bast* was further supported by the Ulama in Najaf, who voiced their criticism of the Shah's decision.<sup>115</sup> The Shah's control over the country further deteriorated when tribes in the West and North rebelled, prompting Russian invasions to restore calm on their borders.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *ibid*

<sup>110</sup> Martin, pg. 160

<sup>111</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 75

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*

<sup>113</sup> Martin, pg. 170

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*

<sup>115</sup> Martin, pp. 167, 178, 180

<sup>116</sup> Martin, pg. 175

The country fell into civil war in 1909 when groups loyal to the constitution massed and moved in on Tehran, backed by popular support. The Shah fled his palace and took sanctuary in the Russian Legation. On July 25, constitutionalist forces arrested Sheikh Fazlallah. He was tried and executed on grounds of sedition. On August 17, the constitution was restored and the second Majles called. Russian troops withdrew from Iranian territory and granted the new government fresh loans.

Although the goals of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution were not saliently religious, religion still played a role in fomentation of revolution and subsequent debates over the nature of government in Iran. Specifically, the Ulama played a critical role in the revolution and the political struggles that followed. If the Ulama were involved, why was this revolution not religious?

Details of the revolution reveal, first, that members of the Ulama were not united on their opinions surrounding the national assembly and formation of a constitution and, second, that the ir backing of those for and opposed to the constitution changed over time. Three cycles of confrontation between the pro- and anti-constitutionalists are visible. Within each cycle, the relationship between the Ulama, the Shah, the Majles and groups in society formed different alliances depending on what was at stake.

In the first cycle, the initial bid for changes in the government appears to be driven by the merchant class and backed by the Ulama. The growing economic crisis in Iran, while ultimately affecting most all members of society, impacted the merchants the most. In particular, the government initiated increases in import and export taxes, tariffs that favored foreign goods, and foreign loans that further indebted Iran to investors and drove merchants into economic despair. The merchants responded by closing the *bazaars*

in protest and staging a *bast* in the British Legation. The Ulama supported these efforts by preaching against the injustices of the government and staging their own *bast* in Qum. Key *Mujtahids*, particularly Bihbihani, Tabatabai, and Fazlallah, all supported this protest and backed the merchants in their efforts for greater accountability of the government to the people.

The second wave of confrontation emerged through debates over the nature and limits of the newly formed national assembly and constitutional government, particularly over the relationship between the authority of the national assembly and the Shah, and the legislative powers of the assembly vis-à-vis the Ulama. In this conflict, the Ulama divided between those that believed a constitutional government was compatible with Shari'a law—argued by Bihbihani and Tabatabai—and those that believed that secular leaders did not have the right to judge and formulate law, headed by Sheikh Fazlallah. These two camps were backed by other members of society. For example, the guilds tended to side with the conservative Ulama whereas the merchants tended to side with the pro-constitutionalist Ulama. However, the relationship of government legislation to Shari'a law appears to have been driven by the interests of the Ulama.

The third wave of confrontation developed around the increasing polarization of the pro- and anti-constitutionalists camps. The pro-constitutionalists mobilized both within the Ulama and different stratas of society, especially through the creation of *anjumans*, to push for maintenance of the constitution and support for the national assembly. The anti-constitutionalist Ulama, on the other hand, formed an alliance with the Shah to push for protection of Islam. Fazlallah argued that, in the absence of the Imam, the best government was absolutism and that the notion of religious equality was

fundamentally at odds with Islam. In other words, the counter-revolutionary group had saliently religious goals—not the constitutionalists—and they lost this battle when constitutional forces, backed by popular support and the Ulama of Najaf, retook the capital in the summer of 1909 and demanded the return of the Majles and constitution.

### *The Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979*

This section considers, first, the antecedent conditions that helped fuel the rise of popular discontent against the Shah—specifically the domestic and international policies of Reza Shah (1921-1941) and Mohammad Reza Shah (1944-1979)—and, second, the process whereby groups organized to effectively challenge and overthrow the Shah’s regime in 1978. Furthermore this section considers why Islam became a salient factor in the revolution, both in its organization and the goals for which groups were rebelling. It argues, first, that new interpretations of Shia Islam, specifically the interpretations of Dr. Ali Shariati, offered Islamically-inspired motivation for revolution. Second, Islam provided bold leaders, particularly Khomeini, who were capable of mobilizing and uniting various groups for the common goal of ending the Shah’s regime. And third, Islam offered a salient distinction between Iranian and western identity, which was a popular mobilizing force against the perceived external threat of western cultural and economic corruption.

In order to understand the rise of mass discontent for the Shah during the 1970s, it is important to highlight controversial policies and events that occurred under the regimes of Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza, specifically the initial social reforms instituted by Reza Shah in the 1920s and 1930s, and the political restrictions imposed by

Mohammad Reza Shah following the 1953 popular uprising led by Mohammad Mossadeq and the Tudeh party.

The first set of antecedent conditions important for understanding the unpopularity of the Shah occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1921, after ten years of political and social instability, the military leader Reza Khan marched into Tehran, arrested sixty politicians and declared a coup d'état.<sup>117</sup> The new leader consolidated his authority through military force. Within his first year in power, he defeated the *Jangalis*, a Marxist/Islamic guerrilla organization on the western border with Russia, thereby establishing a monopoly on the use of force within Iran's borders.<sup>118</sup>

The new leader made economic and social modernization of Iran his priority. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Shah aggressively developed the country's infrastructure including roads, agriculture, and heavy industry. He created the first trans-national railroad system and oversaw the construction of power plants that spread electricity throughout the country.<sup>119</sup> He developed the government's bureaucracy and centralized authority through the creation of cabinets and taxation.<sup>120</sup> He also modernized urban centers and encouraged internal migration to cities to help support growing industries.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 117

<sup>118</sup> Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, (London: IB Taurus, 2000), pg. 11; Michael P. Zirinsky, "Imperial Power and Dictatorship: Britain and the Rise of Reza Shah, 1921-1926," pp. 639-663, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, (Nov. 1992), pg. 647

<sup>119</sup> Shahrugh Akhavi, "State Formation and Consolidation in Twentieth-Century Iran: The Reza Shah Period and the Islamic Republic," *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics*, edited by Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp. 204-205; Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 12

<sup>120</sup> Akhavi, pg. 208

<sup>121</sup> Akhavi, pg. 205

In addition to developing the infrastructure, Reza Shah pushed for changes in Persian society, modeled after the policies implemented by Attaturk in Turkey.<sup>122</sup> First, Reza made several changes aimed at stressing Persian over Islamic identity. In 1921, he drafted a bill to end the monarchy, which received staunch criticism, particularly from the Ulama, who saw this as an attack on Islam. He then proposed that the monarchy be changed from the Qajar family to the Pahlevis, of which he claimed his lineage. This bill passed and, in 1926, he ascended the Peacock Throne as the new Shah.<sup>123</sup> In 1925, he changed Persia's calendar from the Muslim lunar cycle to the ancient Persian solar calendar and reduced the status of Muslims religious holidays and holy sites.<sup>124</sup> He also attempted to use Persian identity as a means of bridging linguistic, ethnic, religious, and regional differences within society.<sup>125</sup> In addition, he strengthened the ministry of justice and asserted a civil code of law while reducing the presence of clerics in the national assembly.<sup>126</sup> He also worked to increase literacy rates by constructing secular schools throughout the country based on the French curriculum.<sup>127</sup>

Reza Shah's biggest and most controversial reforms, however, came with projects aimed at modernizing women. In the 1930s, he began the "Society for Women," which sought to educate women and encourage their presences in universities and the working world.<sup>128</sup> In 1936, the Shah enacted legislation that officially banned the veil in public places including schools and places of work and required women to wear western

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<sup>122</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 98

<sup>123</sup> Sabet, pg. 168

<sup>124</sup> Sabet, pg. 168; Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 141

<sup>125</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 140-141

<sup>126</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 95; Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 13

<sup>127</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 97; Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 145

<sup>128</sup> Sabet, pg. 171



dress.<sup>129</sup> This policy was rigorously upheld, leading to claims from women that their liberties were being violated.<sup>130</sup>

The policy to ban the veil, in particular, angered the masses. Coupled with increased taxation and further restrictions on organizations and publications, groups began to demonstrate against the government.<sup>131</sup> The main cleric in Mashad preached against the government's new policies, calling them "heretical innovations."<sup>132</sup> This was followed by demonstrations in the *bazaars*, which required military force to dispel.<sup>133</sup> In addition, intellectuals began to speak out against the Shah, claiming that his policies violated the constitution. This was backed by Persians abroad, who pushed for liberal reforms and the return of a popularly elected government.<sup>134</sup> In 1937, under increasing criticism, the Shah arrested fifty-three activists believed to be connected with communist movements; these activists would later form the backbone of the Tudeh Party in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>135</sup>

In the midst of these criticisms, the Shah began to embrace German interpretations of race and superiority, using these arguments to support Persian superiority as part of the Aryan race.<sup>136</sup> These arguments, along with increased German investments and trade in Iran, prompted the British and Soviets to invade in 1941 and

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<sup>129</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 108. Keddie notes that, although Turkey had similar reforms regarding the veil, Iran was the first country to officially ban it. See also Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 14

<sup>130</sup> Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran," *Women, Islam, and the State*, edited by Deniz Kandiyoti, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 54-58

<sup>131</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 154

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 152; see also Akhavi, pp. 208-209

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*

<sup>134</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 154

<sup>135</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 155, 162

<sup>136</sup> Sabet, pg. 176

occupy the country. The Shah abdicated in 1944 and his son, Mohammad Reza, ascended the throne in his place.<sup>137</sup>

During the 1940s, Iran was plagued with political turmoil. Between 1941 and 1953, the country held elections for five Majles, had one political assassination, declared martial law twice, and ended with a coup d'état and installation of the Shah as political head of state.<sup>138</sup> The country also experienced violent labor strikes surrounding the oil industry and mass demonstrations calling for maintenance of the constitution and nationalization of the nation's oil resources.<sup>139</sup>

Within this turbulent time, two political forces emerged that threatened the authority of the Shah and international investments in Iran's oil. First, the Tudeh party—a political party headed by twenty-seven of the infamous “Fifty-Three” arrested by Reza Shah in 1937—moved onto the political scene in the 1940s. The Tudeh party—which drew largely on socialist and Marxist ideals—promised to uphold the constitution, to improve the lives of the Iranian people, and to reduce foreign manipulation of economic and political life.<sup>140</sup> The party quickly spread throughout the country, setting up offices in all major cities and forming alliances with trade unions and other local organizations.<sup>141</sup> As part of the broader coalition formed under the *National Front*, the Tudeh party organized strikes and demonstrations, particularly in the oil regions of the country, demanding higher wages and the right to export oil to the Soviet Union. The party's activities provoked fears among the British and the US; they believed the party

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<sup>137</sup> Keddie, pg. 110, 113

<sup>138</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 225-280

<sup>139</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 263-273

<sup>140</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 281-282

<sup>141</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 300-302

was too Marxist in its orientation, a potential inroad for Soviet intrigue, and a threat to British and US oil interests.<sup>142</sup>

Second, the politician Mohammad Mossadeq also emerged on the political scene during the post-War period, gaining power through mass popularity. Although not formally aligned with the Tudeh party, Mossadeq held similar goals, particularly the nationalization of Iran's oil and the reduction of foreign influence in the country. In 1951, after the assassination of Prime Minister Razmara, Mossadeq became prime minister. While in office, he reduced the military budget, fired dozens of high-ranking officers, and pushed for reforms in land, education, and elections.<sup>143</sup> In 1953, after Mossadeq called for a national referendum, recently fired officers staged a coup d'état with the aid of the CIA. Mossadeq and key members of the Tudeh party were arrested and the Shah returned to power, imposing martial law until 1957. This marked the end of popular participation in Iranian politics and ushered in twenty-four years of royal dictatorship.

The second set of antecedent conditions that explain growing discontent for the Shah came after the 1953 coup d'état, particularly the Shah's dependence on US aid and his policies of political repression. Following the coup, the Shah was faced with the task of consolidating his power and asserting authority over a discontented public fraught with political, ethnic and class tensions.<sup>144</sup> To combat these challenges, the Shah entered into a formal alliance with the United States, ending Iran's historic posture as a state of non-alignment. The Eisenhower government offered immediate financial assistance of \$23.5

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<sup>142</sup> Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'état in Iran," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, (August, 1987), pp. 261-286

<sup>143</sup> Mansoor Moaddel, *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 44-50

<sup>144</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 47-48

million as “technical aid” and \$45 million in emergency funds.<sup>145</sup> US grants, loans, and aid continued to grow throughout the 1950s averaging around \$45 million annually by the end of the decade.<sup>146</sup> In addition to financial aid, the US government sent advisors to the country, numbering more than 900 by 1960.<sup>147</sup>

Immediately following the coup, the US also took action to resolve the status of Iran’s oil. Under the orchestration of Herbert Hoover, Jr. and J. F. Dulles, the Americans created an international oil consortium that involved American, British and French oil companies, which was approved in 1954.<sup>148</sup> Under the contract, Iran was to receive 50% of the revenue from oil sales for a fifteen-year period with the option to renew the contract for three additional five-year periods. This agreement did not nationalize Iran’s oil—as was planned under Mossadeq—but, rather, placed Iran at the mercy of the consortium, which often resulted to collusion to keep costs low and their profits high.<sup>149</sup>

Iran also became dependent on the US through military aid. The US first sent military advisors to Iran in 1942 with the aim of bolstering Iran’s defense against communist penetration.<sup>150</sup> After the coup, Congress passed the Mutual Security Act of 1953-1963, which gave Iran a total of \$535.4 million in military aid.<sup>151</sup> Also during this time, the US government sent more than 10,000 military personnel to advise the Shah. The result was that “American aid and personnel played a decisive role in helping the Shah’s regime, between 1953 and 1960, to reorganize and expand its army from about

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<sup>145</sup> Saikal, pp. 47-48

<sup>146</sup> Saikal, pg. 51

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*

<sup>148</sup> Saikal, pp. 48-49

<sup>149</sup> Saikal, pp. 51

<sup>150</sup> Saikal, pp. 53-54

<sup>151</sup> Saikal, pg. 54

100,000 men to 190,000, and build up a modern air force and navy with 8,000 and 4,000 trained personnel, respectively.”<sup>152</sup>

The degree of military build up allowed the Shah to suppress social, ethnic and political unrest in the country. Between 1953 and 1958, the government arrested more than 3,000 members of the Tudeh party, leading to its virtual extinction by 1959.<sup>153</sup> The Shah also shut down newspapers, journals and labor unions.<sup>154</sup> In 1957, with the help of the US and Israel, the Shah created Iran’s first secret service, the National Security and Information Services (SAVAK), which crack down on “dissidents” and other threats to the government.<sup>155</sup> The SAVAK, together with the military, became one of the key tools of political oppression and both “were used effectively in crushing and demoralizing opposition of all political coloring, manipulating the behavior of citizens, and controlling and redirecting public opinion for the benefit of the regime’s stability and security.”<sup>156</sup>

Beginning in 1960, two crises confronted the Shah’s government. First, the country faced an economic crisis from 1960 to 1963 based largely on deficit spending.<sup>157</sup> Second, the Kennedy administration began to push the Shah for political, social and economic reforms. In 1960, in response to these pressures, the Shah allowed independent candidates to run in elections but then canceled the results amid claims of election rigging.<sup>158</sup> Also under US pressure, the Shah appointed a Washington-favored prime minister, Dr. ‘Ali Amini.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *ibid*

<sup>153</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 325

<sup>154</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 420

<sup>155</sup> Green, pg. 565; Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 419-420

<sup>156</sup> Saikal, pg. 62

<sup>157</sup> Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 20

<sup>158</sup> Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 21

<sup>159</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 423

During this time, the Shah attempted to improve domestic life in Iran through implementing the “White Revolution,” which included reforms in land distribution, ownership of factories and profit sharing, improved literacy rates, and women’s rights.<sup>160</sup> However, by the 1970s, despite a soaring GDP, the White Revolution had largely failed to improve the living conditions of the average citizen, particularly of the working class.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, Iran had fallen into a state of political stagnation, denying citizens any opportunity to determine their government.

In response to these economic and political tensions, opposition groups resumed strikes and protests. Between 1960 and 1963, Iran witnessed over 20 strikes, compared to just three from the period of 1953-1957.<sup>162</sup> In 1963, during the holy month of Muharram, demonstrators poured into the streets to denounce the Shah. The demonstrations were organized through the *Liberation Movement*, a new group that included members of the Ulama, businessmen, and technocrats.<sup>163</sup> It was at this time that the Ayatallah Khomeini emerged as a charismatic leader and succeeded in mobilizing large numbers of people. The demonstrations, which lasted three days and required the military to restore order, left an estimated 1,000 demonstrators dead.<sup>164</sup> The protests ended with the arrest of key organizers, the abolition of the Liberation Movement, and the deportation of Khomeini to Turkey. Historian Ervand Abrahamian argues that the 1963 Muharram Uprising set in motion the wheels of the 1978 Islamic revolution. He states: “Just as the tobacco crisis of 1891-1892 had been a dress rehearsal for the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909, the

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<sup>160</sup> Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 21

<sup>161</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 448-449

<sup>162</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 422

<sup>163</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 462

<sup>164</sup> Willem M. Floor, “The Revolutionary Character of the Ulama: Wishful Thinking or Reality?” *Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi’ism from Quietism to Revolution*, edited by Nikki R. Keddie, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 73-100, especially pp. 89-93

Muharram upheavals of June 1963 were to be a dress rehearsal for the Islamic Revolution of 1977-1979.”<sup>165</sup>

The 1963 crackdown on the Muharram uprising sparked the formation of domestic and international organizations aimed at undermining the Shah’s regime. Within Iran, several militant groups emerged after the 1963 crackdown. First, the Marxist-based *Feda’i* took root in response to the 1963 uprisings. The *Feda’i* successfully challenged the state through a series of terrorist acts including attacks on the military, bank robberies, hijackings and assassinations.<sup>166</sup> Second, the Islamic-based *Islamic Mujahedin*, which was officially established in 1965 by members connected to the Liberation Movement, also successfully challenged the workings of the state through a series of terrorist acts.<sup>167</sup>

Although these groups were united in the objectives of challenging the authority of the Shah, they differed in composition of their members. The *Islamic Mujahedin* came almost primarily from Shii families, had few women in their ranks, and drew heavily from middle and upper class students studying engineering and the natural sciences.<sup>168</sup> The *Feda’i*, on the other hand, included other religious groups, had a significant number of women, made considerable inroads with recruits from the working classes, and drew from university students in the humanities and social sciences.<sup>169</sup> Although both groups suffered casualties and arrests by the SAVAK, they still managed to recruit new members, stay alive as organizations, and participate in the 1978 Revolution.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 426

<sup>166</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 488; Green, pp. 569-570

<sup>167</sup> Green, pp. 570-571

<sup>168</sup> Green, pp. 571-572

<sup>169</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 491-494; Green, pp. 571-572

<sup>170</sup> Green, pg. 572-573

Also in response to the 1963 crackdown, groups in the diaspora began to mobilize against the Shah. The Liberation Movement in particular formed chapters throughout Europe and North America. The organizational efforts of Dr. Ibrahim Yazidi, an oncologist living in Texas, were particularly important for energizing the diaspora and calling for revolution. He helped form the Islamic Student Society, which mobilized young Iranian Muslims in the diaspora with the aim of deposing the Shah. After the revolution, Yazidi returned to Iran in 1979 and became the minister of foreign affairs.<sup>171</sup>

In the face of rising militancy, the Shah imposed a one-party system in 1975, founding the Resurgence Party with the goal of “centralizing democracy.” The new party asserted its power with the help of the SAVAK and attempted to penetrate traditional organizations such as guilds, bazaars, and the Ulama.<sup>172</sup> As part of this move towards a one-party system, the Shah strove to “modernize” religious institutions. He discouraged the *chador*, the veil, and attempted to modify certain aspects of Shari’a law.<sup>173</sup> In response to these policies, students in Qum closed down the seminary and several key members of the Ulama spoke out against the formation of the Resurgence Party and the Shah’s reforms. The government arrested the protesters, drafting around 250 of the students into the army, and imprisoned several clerics including one who died mysteriously while in custody.<sup>174</sup>

In addition to domestic unrest, the Shah faced external pressure for social and political change. The newly formed Amnesty International issued a report in 1975 that criticized the Shah’s regime for its political and human rights violations. In 1977, the

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<sup>171</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 463

<sup>172</sup> Mansoor Moaddel, “The Shi’i Ulama and the State in Iran, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 15 (1986), pp. 519-556, especially pp. 540-546

<sup>173</sup> Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 25; Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 444-445



Carter administration threatened to end arms sales to Iran if the Shah did not allow for greater public participation in the government.<sup>175</sup> In response, the Shah agreed to relax the government's detention practices and to try political dissidents in civilian court, as opposed to military tribunals. This policy emboldened those opposed to the Shah to speak out against the government, setting in motion what would become a revolution.

From the revolution's beginnings in 1977, protesters had three consistent demands: the end of the Shah's regime, the return of a constitutional government, and the end of Iranian dependence on the West. The revolution, therefore, did not begin with the demands for the creation of an Islamic republic governed by clerics. Rather, these demands emerged amidst growing popular mobilization against the Shah and his policies. Two individuals in particular were responsible for turning the 1977-1978 Revolution into an Islamic revolution, Dr. Ali Shariati and the Ayatallah Khomeini.

Dr. Shariati was not a trained member of the Ulama but, rather, received his PhD in sociology from the Sorbonne. He attended university in Paris in the 1960s during political and social unrest surrounding Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam.<sup>176</sup> He was, therefore, immersed in the milieu of Marxism, revolution and radical philosophy. Upon his return to Iran in 1965, he took up teaching positions in Khurasan, Mashad, and the Husseinieh-i Ershad, a religious school founded by the Liberation Movement.<sup>177</sup> In 1972, the SAVAK cracked down on the school and arrested Shariati; he remained in prison and under house

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<sup>174</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 445

<sup>175</sup> Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pg. 26

<sup>176</sup> Hamid Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution in Iran: Four Lectures*, (New York: Oneonta Press, 2001), pp. 88-89

<sup>177</sup> Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, pp. 90-91; Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 466

arrest until he was granted permission to leave the country in 1977. He died that same year in London.

Through his knowledge of Marxism and radical philosophy, Shariati offered a revolutionary interpretation of Twelver Shii Islam. He argued, first, that the path to independence from imperialism lay not in a Marxist revolution but, rather, in the return to a country's unique cultural and religious identity; for Iran, this was a return to the teachings and practices of Shii Islam.<sup>178</sup> Shariati also pointed to particular incidents within Shii Islam as examples of model behavior, particularly the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbala, which he interpreted as a righteous leader that resisted corruption and false leadership at all costs. He argued that Shii Muslims today must follow this example and resist corrupt ideologies, particularly Marxism, false teachings of Islam propagated by members of the clergy, and the leadership of the Shah.<sup>179</sup> He further argued that true faith was not just belief (*kufur*) but taking action for the truth. Iranian scholar Hamid Algar summarizes Shariati's interpretation of Shii Islam by stating:

...he presented Islam not as a religion in the sense commonly understood by western usage, that is, a spiritual and moral matter concerning only or primarily the relations of the individual with his Creator—but rather as an ideology—that is, a comprehensive view of the world and reality and a plan for the full realization of human potential, individually and collectively, in such a way as to fulfill the whole purpose of man's [sic] being.<sup>180</sup>

Similarly, Historian Ervand Abrahamian argues that Shariati provided an inspiring religious ideology that “spoke the language of the masses and could inspire them to revolt against the Shah, the upper class, and the imperialists...”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 465

<sup>179</sup> *ibid*

<sup>180</sup> Algar, *Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, pg. 93

<sup>181</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 473

Shariati's interpretation of Shii Islam resonated particularly with university students and the educated middle class. Abrahamian argues that these groups were particularly receptive because they largely came from families of the *bazaars* and other middle class groups, they were religious, and they had education and training in western skills and ideas. Shariati's call for a return to the roots of Iran's identity—what he identified as its Shii Muslim tradition— and to shake off imperialism and corrupt leadership was an ideology that inspired and mobilized these groups. Furthermore, as a western educated elite, Shariati could affirm the positive elements of western education and technology and call for their application to a post-revolutionary Iran.

The second leader responsible for giving the 1978 revolution its Islamic salience is the Ayatallah Khomeini. Unlike Shariati, Khomeini received a cleric's education, studying at the prestigious seminary in Qum during the 1940s. He wrote his first book in 1944, which argued for the creation of an Islamic government and had hints of criticism towards the leadership of Reza Shah.<sup>182</sup> Khomeini did not become overtly outspoken towards the Shah until 1962, however, at which time he directed his criticisms towards the Shah's corrupt lifestyle, the government's failure to uphold the constitution, the current economic crisis, the sale of oil to Israel, the country's dependence on the West, and the government's failure to maintain its Islamic principles.<sup>183</sup> This approach, which covered a wide range of issues relating to many different groups and classes, earned Khomeini popular support.

Khomeini continued to be an influential figure in Iranian life and politics despite his deportation in 1963. He wrote prolifically and—as a teacher at the Muslim Shii

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<sup>182</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, pg. 206

<sup>183</sup> Keddie; *Roots of Revolution*, pp. 207-208; Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 425

seminary in Najaf, Iraq—he continued to inspire a generation of Shii clerics including Sheikh Nasrallah, who would later become a key figure in the Lebanese Shii uprising.<sup>184</sup> During the revolution, Khomeini remained outspoken and offered guidance to the demonstrators from exile. In October 1979, when Iraq expelled Khomeini to Paris, he worked with the expatriate community in France, uniting secular and religious groups against the Shah.<sup>185</sup> Abrahamian summarizes Khomeini's importance to the revolution by stating: "In brief, he was a charismatic revolutionary leader at a time when such leaders were in short supply and in great demand."<sup>186</sup> Lastly, he was the first to call for the formation of an Islamic government, *hukumat-i Islami*, which he helped to structure upon his triumphal return to Iran on February 1, 1979.

The revolution itself occurred in the span of just over a year—from the first demonstration-related death in November 1977, until the Shah's departure in January 1979—and included three major incidents. Although the beginning of the revolution could be dated to the Shah's decision to try political dissidents in civil and not military courts—which occurred in August of 1977—the first incident of violence between the police and demonstrating students occurred on November 19, 1977, in which a political poetry reading was violently broken up by the police, resulting in the death of one student. This death sparked three cycles of demonstrations, protests and death: the first occurring forty days after the first student's death—marking the end of the traditional mourning period in Islam—which resulted in the deaths of around 100 protesters in Tabriz; the second occurring forty days after the deaths in Tabriz and resulting in around

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<sup>184</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, *The Hizzb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 25-30

<sup>185</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 520

<sup>186</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 532

100 deaths in Yazd; and the third cycle, which occurred forty days after the deaths in Yazd and resulted in around 250 deaths in various cities.<sup>187</sup> This cycle of deaths, protests, and more deaths ended with the Shah offering measures to appease the merchant class and reduce the cost of living.<sup>188</sup>

The second major incident in the revolution was the publication of an article condemning Khomeini on January 7, 1978, written largely in response to unrest caused by the November 19<sup>th</sup> death in Qum. The article accused Khomeini of being a British spy, of “living a licentious lifestyle” and of writing erotic Sufi love poems. The article also accused the clergy in general of being “black reactionaries.”<sup>189</sup> The accusations caused outrage across the country and prompted protests by seminary students in Qum, leading to clashes with the police. Ultimately, the article galvanized support for Khomeini rather than weakening his influence.

The third key incident in the revolution involved a series of working class strikes that began in Mashad in July of 1978. Striking workers clashed with the military, resulting in the deaths of around forty demonstrators. The following week, memorial services led to mass demonstrations that required the government to call out the army and declare martial law.<sup>190</sup> Then in August, a mysterious fire in a working-class neighborhood cinema killed over 400 men, women, and children. Rumors spread that the SAVAK started the fire. The following day, a demonstration of 10,000 people demanded the Shah’s abdication.<sup>191</sup> This was followed by a series of mass demonstrations that coincided with *Ayd-i Fetr*, the end of Ramadan, in which over 500,000 people

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<sup>187</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 505-508

<sup>188</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 509

<sup>189</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 505

<sup>190</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 513

demonstrated in Tehran alone. It was during these protests that the first demands for an Islamic government were made.<sup>192</sup>

On September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1978, the worst clashes to date occurred, causing an estimated 4,000 deaths in what became known as “Black Friday.” The following day, workers in the oil refineries went on strike, effectively freezing Iran’s oil industry. Protests, strikes and demonstrations continued throughout the fall, culminating with mass demonstrations connected to the holy month of Muharram in December and particularly on the holy day of ‘Ashura, in which an estimated 2 million protestors turned out in Tehran.<sup>193</sup> At this point, the Shah made a few final attempts to appease demonstrators, such as promising free elections and ending oil sales to Israel, but these gestures yielded no concessions. Amidst chronic protests and strikes, the Shah and his family left Tehran on January 16, 1979.

### *Post-Revolutionary Iran*

The leaders of the revolution were faced with monumental tasks following the fall of the Shah including the creation of a government, the consolidation of military and police forces, and the realization of an Islamic republic. Prior to the departure of the Shah, local ad hoc organizations, *komitehs*, emerged in various regions to provide social services to their communities; these organizations became essential building blocs of the new government.

In March 1979, a referendum ended the monarchy and declared Iran an Islamic republic. In August of the same year, elections were held for a council of experts to create

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<sup>191</sup> *ibid*

<sup>192</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 515

<sup>193</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pg. 520

a new constitution, which was ratified in November. This was followed by presidential elections in March 1980, and parliamentary elections in May, which brought the Islamic Republican party to power with the majority of seats.<sup>194</sup> Khomeini was named the *velayat-e faqih*, “the ultimate legal authority and the supreme religiopolitical guide for state and society.”<sup>195</sup> By 1981, the new government and clergy had consolidated control of the state and suppressed domestic opposition.<sup>196</sup>

In addition to realizing an Islamic government, the architects of the new republic also made one of their goals the export of the revolution, which they wrote into the new constitution’s preamble, professing that “in the development of international relations, the Constitution will strive with other Islamic and popular movements to prepare the way for the formation of a single world community...and to assure the continuation of the struggle for the liberation of all deprived and oppressed people in the world.”<sup>197</sup> This foreign policy aim did not sit well with Iran’s neighbors, particularly with Bahrain and Iraq, which both had Shii majorities.<sup>198</sup> In December 1980, a failed coup d’état in Bahrain was blamed on the new Iranian government.<sup>199</sup> On September 21, 1980, Saddam Hussein launched a massive air and ground offensive against Iran, ushering in the Iran-Iraq War. One of Saddam’s motives for launching the attack was to defeat the new Islamic republic and “to rescue the Gulf Arab states from the menace of revolutionary Shi’i subversion,”

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<sup>194</sup> John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatori, “The Global Impact of the Iranian Revolution: A Policy Perspective,” *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*, edited by John L. Esposito, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), pp. 317-328, especially pg. 319

<sup>195</sup> Esposito and Piscatori, pg. 317

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*

<sup>197</sup> Quoted in Gary Sick, “Iran’s Foreign Policy: A Revolution in Transition,” pp. 355-374, *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, edited by Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), endnote 2, pg. 373

<sup>198</sup> David E. Long, “The Impact of the Iranian Revolution on the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf States,” pp. 100-115, *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*, edited by John L. Esposito, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), pg. 106; Esposito and Piscatori, pg. 321

particularly within his own borders.<sup>200</sup> While the war failed to defeat Iran, it cost the new republic more than 600,000 lives and depleted its material resources.<sup>201</sup>

The government, specifically Khomeini, also attempted to export the revolution through the 1989 *fatva* against Salam Rushdie for his composition of the book, *The Satanic Verses*, which Khomeini deemed blasphemous against the Prophet and God. The *fatva*, which called for the death of Rushdie and those connected with the book, culminated with the murder of several translators of the manuscript and of a European imam, who publicly disagreed with the *fatva*.<sup>202</sup> Despite Khomeini's death in 1989, international disturbances continued over the *fatva* until the Iranian government revoked the death warrant in 1998.

Perhaps Iran's best success in exporting the revolution came with the government's support of the Shii uprising in Lebanon, beginning in the 1980s. As previously mentioned, Ayatallah Khomeini taught Sheikh Nasrallah while in Najaf, Iraq, a tie that strengthened the connection between Iran and Lebanese Shii militants, who took Nasrallah as their spiritual guide.<sup>203</sup> Although difficult to prove, Iran has been credited with supplying the Lebanese *Hizballah* (the Party of God) with weapons, training, and money, including financial support for those killed in battle.<sup>204</sup>

Iran's hard-line foreign and domestic policies began to soften after the May 1997 election of moderate Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, "who campaigned on a platform of civil society, rule of law, and expanded personal liberty," an approach that won him 70%

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<sup>199</sup> *ibid*

<sup>200</sup> Sick, pp. 359-360

<sup>201</sup> Sick, pg. 363

<sup>202</sup> Long, pg. 109

<sup>203</sup> Ranstorp, pp.25-30



of the vote.<sup>205</sup> During Khatami's first few years in office, he achieved rapprochement with neighboring countries and made diplomatic visits to numerous states and the UN, improving the republic's image.<sup>206</sup> Khatami also set about reforming domestic policies, moving more moderates into various cabinet positions and supporting the election of a new generation of politicians in the 1999 and 2000 elections. Despite bouts of domestic tension—the greatest being the July 1999 student uprising in Tehran—the Islamic republic has continued to operate, holding elections and adapting to domestic and international changes.

There has been much academic disagreement on the causes of the 1978 revolution and its saliently Islamic character. Many scholars are quick to point out that participating individuals and organizations were not exclusively Shii Muslim, but rather included religious minorities such as Christians, Jews and Baha'i as well as Marxist and secular organizations.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, the revolution began with demands for the end of the Shah's regime, foreign influence in the country, and the government's maintenance of the constitution; it did not begin with the cry for an Islamic republic. However, the revolution ended with this demand along with the return of the Ayatallah. What explains this evolution towards saliently religious goals?

The causal argument for religious war proposed in this dissertation helps explain this evolution. First, the relationship between religious and political leaders underwent changes in the 1970s that created animosity between the two groups. The Shah instituted

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<sup>204</sup> Hilal Khashan asserts that these groups were united primarily by their hatred towards Israel. Hilal Khashan, "The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp. 5-24, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1997), pg. 15

<sup>205</sup> Sick, pg. 358

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*

<sup>207</sup> Abrahamian, *Between Two Revolutions*, pp. 532-533

several policies that threatened the influence and livelihood of the Ulama. This included reforms on Shari'a law and restrictions on religious practices such as wearing the *chador*. Moreover, the government disproportionately responded to protesting seminary students by conscripting them into the army, effectively ending their careers as clerics. The government also directly attacked the Ulama in its 1978 newspaper article, calling them "black reactionaries." The result was that the Ulama, in greater and greater numbers, aligned against the Shah, breaking the traditional tie between the two authorities. The Shah no longer stood as the protector of Islam, but had become a threat both to the faith and to the clerics who maintained it. In the end, only a very few remained loyal to the Shah; the rest sided with Khomeini to overthrow his regime.

Second, the public in general felt threatened by the policies of the state. Following the Shah's violent crackdown in 1963, militant groups—Marxist and Islamic—emerged with the goal of violently trying to dislodge the Shah through acts of terrorism. Furthermore, the Shah implemented policies in the 1970s that threatened different strata of society, especially the merchants and guilds, which he sought to penetrate and dismantle through economic policies and modernization of the *bazaars*. These policies helped to mobilize resistance against the Shah as intellectuals and the clergy began to openly criticize his policies in 1977.

Third, social resources played a critical role in the mobilization of society against the Shah. Social resources connected with Shii Islam were particularly important, especially its strong leaders and organizations. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but particularly from 1953, the Shah rigorously rooted out political parties, social organizations, networks and other forms of collectivity in Iran. The result was that few

social and political organizations existed in Iranian society by the 1970s. The Ulama, although also the recipient of this oppression, still possessed resources useful for mobilization such as schools, buildings, finances, and especially trained leaders. These resources became particularly important in organizing the opposition during the revolution.

The unfolding of the revolution and its unique Islamic character cannot be explained, however, without considering the role of the Ayatallah in mobilizing the masses and shaping the political outcomes of the national uprising. Other leaders existed in the revolution, but it was Khomeini who succeeded in uniting different movements and successfully propelling them towards the goal of overthrowing the Shah. The argument that, for many, the Islamic goals of the revolution were secondary still does not discount Khomeini's success in rallying the nation around the battle cry to depose the Shah *and* create an Islamic state.

Another key leader that gave the revolution its Islamic salience was Shariati. Although not a cleric, Shariati provided a new interpretation of Islam that combined western and Marxist concepts of revolution with Shii examples of faith in action. The result was a powerful religious ideology that inspired young intellectuals to rise up, shake off the West and assert their own identity in the form of an Islamic republic. Shariati's contributions, therefore, were two-fold; he offered a revolutionary ideology that was saliently Islamic and he encouraged young Iranian intellectuals to assert their unique identity as Shii Muslims. Although dead before the beginning of the uprising, Shariati's contributions towards shaping the Islamic Revolution are vital for understanding its religious character.

Finally, the revolution's Islamic character was the result of religious organizations, specifically the Liberation Movement. Despite the government's crackdowns after the Muharram uprising in 1963, the Liberation Movement still managed to survive. In particular, its branches in the diaspora—especially in the US and France—helped to keep the movement alive and draw in new recruits. Likewise, the Liberation Movement continued to function inside of Iran despite persecution from the government, including the creation of the militant *Mujahedin* and the formation of a religious school in Tehran, the Husseinieh-Ershad, both of which continued to draw recruits throughout the 1960s and 1970s. While there were other groups and organizations at this time, the Liberation Movement moved into the foreground and ultimately articulated the end goals of the revolution, giving it religious salience.

## **Conclusion**

Comparing the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 with the Islamic Revolution of 1978 provides an opportunity to test the explanatory value of the causal argument proposed in this dissertation and, specifically, to offer an explanation as to why religious goals—namely the creation of an Islamic republic—became a salient demand in the 1978 Revolution and not in 1906. These findings are summarized in Table 4.1.

The two revolutions share several similarities. First, both revolutions were in reaction to domestic threats, specifically threats posed by the Shah's rule. The timing of the Constitutional Revolution is best explained by policies of increased taxation that hurt several strata of society, including increased taxes on salaries, pensions, and a uniform 10% stamp tax issued in 1905. In response, merchants, guilds, the Ulama and students demonstrated against these policies and demanded greater representation in the

government. Likewise, the Islamic Revolution was in response to domestic threats posed by the Shah. Specifically, demonstrators took to the streets in response to the Shah's dictatorial rule including restrictions on political participation, freedom of press and other civil liberties.

Moreover, both revolutions were fought in response to perceived threats over the degree of foreign influence in the country. By 1906, British, Russian and Belgian investors had indebted the Shah and made him vulnerable to their economic preferences. This is most visible in the Russian loans issued to Iran at the turn of the century in return for tariff reductions on Russian imports, exposing domestic products to unfair competition. Likewise, the 1978 revolution was fought largely to end foreign—namely US—influence in the country. This included first and foremost US economic interests in Iranian oil, but also included the desire to end US cultural influences, which scholars like Shariati perceived to be undermining the strength of Iranian identity. Therefore, the threats facing the Iranian public in both revolutions were largely similar.

Second, religious leaders played a role in both revolutions, however in differing degrees. Although the Constitutional Revolution did not have saliently religious end goals, it still involved religion. Specifically, members of the Ulama actively participated in mobilizing the opposition and pressuring the Shah for greater reforms in political participation. In addition, there were members of the Ulama who backed the Shah, claiming that—in the absence of the Imam—the Shah's rule was the best substitute and constitutionalism was incompatible with Shari'a law and the tenets of Islam. Therefore, although the Ulama participated in the Constitutional Revolution, they were divided on the best form of government and different members supported both sides of the struggle.

#### 4.1 Iran's Constitutional and Islamic Revolutions

	<b>Political and Religious Leaders</b>	<b>Threat Perception</b>	<b>Material, Social, and Technological Resources of Religion</b>
1906 Revolution <i>Goals: Elections and Constitution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Authority intertwined</li> <li>▪ Ulama divided between pro-and anti-revolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic policies of the Shah: taxation, foreign debt, tariffs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primarily Social: trained leaders, ties to other groups in society</li> <li>▪ Material: mosques and shrines for <i>bast</i></li> </ul>
<b>Islamic Revolution</b> <b>Goals: Depose Shah</b> <b>Create Islamic Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ulama united against the Shah and pro-revolution</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Political oppression, foreign influence</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Primarily Social: trained leaders, networks, Islamic identity</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Material: schools, buildings</b></li> </ul>

In the Islamic Revolution, by contrast, the majority of the Ulama came to be united against the Shah. Beginning in the 1970s, the Shah implemented policies that directly harmed the Ulama, including efforts to modify religious customs and Shari'a law. Moreover, the Shah cracked down severely on protesters at the seminary in Qum, forcing hundreds of students to join the army and imprisoning members of the Ulama. Lastly, the Shah's imprisonment and deportation of Shariati in 1976 and his continued policy of exile for Khomeini, coupled with defamatory statements towards the Ayatallah, helped mobilize the Ulama against his leadership in the early stages of the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, the Ulama were more unified against the Shah in the second revolution than they were in the first.

The key difference that explains the move towards religious end goals, however, was the resources available during the Islamic Revolution, specifically the proliferation of organizations within Iran and the diaspora and bold leaders that brought groups together with the goal of deposing the Shah. Following the 1963 uprising, the Liberation

Movement continued to develop as an organization, despite facing chronic persecution from the state. It mobilized Muslims within Iran's borders and throughout the diaspora. The emergence of guerilla groups also helped to mobilize the population against the state and successfully challenged the political and military authority of the government. In addition, student movements, labor unions, and seminarians also began to organize in opposition to the state, mobilizing a wide array of the population.

Furthermore, the key leadership in the 1978 revolution managed to mobilize and unite different groups towards the common cause of deposing the Shah. In the Constitutional Revolution, the Ulama played a role in mobilization and pressuring the Shah for reforms. However, other leaders also played important roles, particularly influential merchants and young scholars. In the Islamic Revolution, however, the key leaders were clerics, specifically Khomeini, but also his students such as Shari'atmadari, Montezari, Mottahari, and Khamenehi, who succeeded Khomeini as *velayat-e faqih* in 1989. Khomeini in particular succeeded in the critical task of uniting secular and religious movements, minorities, the diaspora, and those at home for the common cause of overthrowing the Shah. In so doing, he also used their resources to implement his saliently religious goal of creating the first-ever modern Islamic republic.

Finally, the 1978 Revolution had its antecedents in the new and inspiring interpretations of Shii Islam. Dr. Shariati's interpretations of the faith in particular provided a compelling argument for rebelling not only against the corruption of the Shah, but also for throwing off the ills of imperialism and by asserting what he identified as Iran's unique identity—Twelver Shii Islam. His speeches and writings were widely circulated, particularly among young university students who, later, took to the streets *en*

*mass* to demand the overthrow of the Shah, the end of foreign influence in Iran and the creation of an Islamic Republic.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Marxism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Religious Revolution?**

Marxism has been blamed for numerous atrocities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its legacy includes incidents of mass killing—in the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin, in China under Mao, in Cambodia, and in Latin America<sup>1</sup>—in addition to being the ideology that sparked the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and the ensuing nuclear arms race that brought the world to the potential brink of extinction. In fact, little good can be attributed to the application of Marxist ideology that the world has seen. Are these outcomes of Marxism the intended goals of the ideology, or did something go very wrong in its real world application?

This chapter considers Marxist ideology and the revolutions it inspired in Russia, China and Cuba during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It argues that Marxism should be understood, first, as a program for realizing a revolution aimed at drastic social, political and economic changes; and second, as an ideology with the ultimate aim of liberating the world's masses enslaved by the ills of capitalism. Marxism, therefore, has salvific aims and corresponds to the concept of “earthly salvation” outlined in this dissertation. However, the application of Marxist principles in the three cases outlined—Russia and the Soviet Union, China and Cuba—has, in complete contradiction to its liberating goals, resulted in the profound suffering and death of millions. This chapter posits that the disastrous outcome of the communist experiment is due to the fact that, while Marxism contains elements that conform to this dissertation's definition of religion, such as texts,

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on these incidents of mass killing, see Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: The Causes of Mass Killing and Genocide*, (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Dissertation in Political Science, 2001 and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, forthcoming)

leaders, resources, and beliefs, it did not enjoy the support of the masses who identify with communism's beliefs and goals, thus prompting its leaders to use drastic measures aimed at forcing mass compliance with their Marxist programs.

The first section of this chapter offers a brief overview of Marx's theory, highlighting the program for the communist revolution and its ultimate goals. The second section considers the application of Marx's theory of revolution to three countries—Russia and the Soviet Union, China and Cuba—evaluating the application of Marx's theory for each context and leaders' successes and failures in bringing about the salvific aims of communism. The third section determines, given evidence from the case studies, if Marxism is a religion. And the fourth section offers concluding remarks.

### **Overview of Marxism**

Scholars from numerous academic disciplines have produced volumes of commentaries expounding on the writings, theories, and observations of Marx and those who adapted his thoughts. These works contain a lively debate on what defines “orthodox” Marxism—its core elements—and the application of these elements in specific Marxist movements, such as in Russia, China, and Latin America.<sup>2</sup> This section will not enter into this debate but, rather, will only provide a brief overview of two broad

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<sup>2</sup> A few examples of these debates include, Andrew G. Walder, “Marxism, Maoism and Social Change,” *Modern China*, Volume 3, No. 1, (January 1977), pp. 101-118. Walder argues that that criticisms of Mao's use of volunteerism fail to acknowledge Marx's own use of the superstructure in his theories and, furthermore, they operate on the assumption that the base and the superstructure and mutually exclusive and do not influence one another. Likewise, Nick Knight outlines debates over the orthodoxy of Mao's Marxist theories and concludes that these debates are inherently irresolvable because the scholars are arguing from different points of epistemology. See “The Marxism of Mao Zedong: Empiricism and Discourse in the Field of Mao Studies,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No 15 (July 1986), pp. 7-22. Wylie argues that the “Sinification of Marxism,” involved a two-stage process whereby Chinese scholars had to account for why China was ready for a Marxist revolution despite its lack of industrial development and to adapt a “foreign” theory of revolution to the Chinese context. This later point throws into question the universality of Marx's world-wide revolution. See Raymond F. Wylie, “Mao Tse-Tung,

elements of Marxism: the ultimate goals of Marxism; and Marx's program for achieving these goals, namely through revolution.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels raise the call for the *proletariat* of the world—landless, industrial workers forced to sell their labor for survival—to unite and overthrow their governments in order to create an entirely new political, economic and social system “in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”<sup>3</sup> Marx and his followers called for a proletariat revolution in response to what they believed to be a fundamentally unjust economic system produced by industrialized capitalism. Marx argues that advanced capitalism forces society into two classes: the *bourgeoisie*, a small minority that own the land, the factories, and the capital of production; and the proletariat masses, which are forced to sell their labor to the bourgeoisie at minimum wage in order to survive.<sup>4</sup> Marx further argues that advanced capitalism creates not only an unjust economic situation for the masses but that these dynamics are the source of conflict between husbands and wives, family members, classes within societies, and even nations.<sup>5</sup> Advanced capitalism, therefore, causes *immiserization*, the personal, social, and economic oppression of the masses.

Marx argues that the path to salvation from capitalism is a revolution of the masses that would destroy the economic and political system of the bourgeoisie. In its place, Marx envisioned a new and better system, one in which people reaped the benefits

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Ch'en Po-ta and the “Sinification of Marxism,” *China Quarterly*, Vol. 0, Issue 79, (September 1979), pp. 447-480.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto,” *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 221-247, quote taken from pg. 238

<sup>4</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 228-230, 232-233. Engels defines the Bourgeoisie as “the class of the great capitalists who, in all developed countries, are now almost exclusively in possession of all the means of consumption, and of the raw materials and instruments (machines, factories) necessary for their production,” *Principles of Communism*, taken from *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Second Edition, edited by Tom Bottomore, (London: Blackwell References, 1991), pg. 56

of their own labor and worked towards a collective good. For Marx, humans are defined by the ability to produce their own subsistence.<sup>6</sup> Marx further states that producing one's subsistence is not merely for survival, but "rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are."<sup>7</sup> Thus Labor is more than survival; it is the very expression of an individual's humanity. A just political, social and economic system therefore must allow individuals the right to their labor.

Marx identifies such a system in communism.<sup>8</sup> In Marx's definition, communism would be grounded on the abolition of private property, the redistribution of land, and the communalization of production and other forms of capital.<sup>9</sup> Because the property and production would be owned by the collective whole, class divisions based on economic distinctions would disappear.<sup>10</sup> As land and labor are redistributed more evenly between industry and agriculture, the distinctions between urban and rural would dissolve.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as differences between individuals and groups disappear, antagonism between nations would also dissolve:

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 234-235

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, "The German Ideology," *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 159-191, pp. 159-191, especially pg. 160

<sup>7</sup> *The German Ideology*, pg. 161

<sup>8</sup> The term communism first appeared in Parisian secret revolutionary societies in the mid-1830s. The term came to have two meanings: "an actual political movement of the working class in capitalist society, and a form of society which the working class, through its struggle, would bring into existence," *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, pg. 102

<sup>9</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 237-238

<sup>10</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 237

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 236

Furthermore, children would no longer be forced to work in factories but, instead, attend school.<sup>13</sup> Women would be liberated from their confining roles as “slaves to their husbands” and mere producers of more workers.<sup>14</sup> Marx’s communist revolution, therefore, is the path to human salvation from economic greed and the demise it produces; in its place would be a totally new system that realizes the full potential of individuals, families, societies and nations.

Marx outlines a revolutionary program for transforming the world from the ills of capitalism to the utopia of communism. Marx contends that the proletariat revolution would be aided by the inevitable demise of capitalism. In *The German Ideology*, he argues that industrialized capitalism is one in several stages in the development of history. Capitalism is preceded, first, by tribalism, in which the family is the primary organizing principle, the division of labor is simple, and private property is minimal.<sup>15</sup> As population grows and the “latent slavery” of the family increases, tribalism is replaced by the “ancient communal state,” which is defined by tribal alliances and the emergence of private property.<sup>16</sup> As private property increases, “feudal or estate property” develops, which is classified by sparse populations scattered over vast territory in which the principle form of production is agriculture.<sup>17</sup> As the division of labor becomes more complex and new modes of production emerge—most notably industry—this gives way to more and more advanced forms of capitalism. Capitalism, like its preceding stages, is doomed to its own demise through the rapid concentration of private property into fewer

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<sup>13</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 234-235

<sup>14</sup> *The German Ideology*, pg. 168; *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 235

<sup>15</sup> *The German Ideology*, pg. 161

<sup>16</sup> *The German Ideology*, pg. 162

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

hands and the alienation of the masses from the fruits of their own labor. The crisis sets the stage for the proletariat uprising.

However, in order for a complete break with history to occur, a revolution is required. Marx lays out a program for effectively executing a communist revolution. First, the proletariat needs to realize its potential as a force in history. This is achieved through the organization and unity of various proletariat movements—aided by their concentration in factories and urban centers—and particularly through the formation of labor unions, which are inherently at odds with the bourgeois factory owners.<sup>18</sup> Through increased organization and the formation of political parties, the proletariat recognizes its power as a class and asserts itself in the political arena. As the proletariat's strength increases, other disenfranchised groups, such as the small business owners and tradesmen, join the movement in opposition to the bourgeoisie.<sup>19</sup>

It is this increase in numbers, organization and power that eventually allows the proletariat to become the dominant class and to assert its will over the bourgeoisie. As a political force, it then will “wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.”<sup>20</sup> Marx does not state that the process of “wresting” power from the bourgeoisie requires violence but, rather, leaves open other means for seizing the state.

Once in control of the state and its production, Marx outlines a series of actions to create a communist system including the abolition of private property and inheritance; the centralization of credit, banking, transportation, and communications; the

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<sup>18</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 228

<sup>19</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 229

communalization of factories, agriculture and all other forms of labor; and free education for all in public schools.<sup>21</sup> The communist revolution is complete when, having destroyed the old system and establishing a new order, classes altogether disappear. The *Manifesto* states:

...if; by means of a revolution, [the proletariat] makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.<sup>22</sup>

In sum, Marx's vision for a communist utopia is defined by the liberation of all people to pursue their potentials as human beings and to possess the fruits of their own labor. Marx lays out a program for achieving this liberation—through a revolution that “sweeps away” the old system—and establishes a new order based on equity and cooperation.

### **Marxism in Practice: Russia, China, and Latin America**

Marxism in practice has been extremely diverse, producing different and often contradictory applications. These varying interpretations have spurred lively debates in academia on the “orthodoxy” of Marxism and the degree to which its interpreters have adhered to true Marxism or have strayed. This section considers three examples of Marxism applied in specific revolutions: Lenin's interpretation of Marxism for the Russian revolution of 1917; Mao's use of Marxism for the Communist Revolution in China; and Ché Guevara's interpretation of the Marxist Revolution for the overthrow of regimes in Latin America. It argues that all of these interpretations of Marxism have

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<sup>20</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 237

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pg. 238

focused on *programmatic Marxism*—how to foment a revolution with the aim of deposing the government—but none of these revolutions have succeeded in realizing the salvific aims described by Marx.

### *Lenin and the Russian Revolution of 1917*

This section considers the interpretations of Marx that helped foment the Russian Revolution of 1917 and shape the succeeding government. It assesses, first, the writings of Lenin and Trotsky and considers how they interpreted Marxism to fit the Russian context. Second, it outlines the events leading up to the 1917 revolution and the strategies and tactics of the Bolshevik party in precipitating the revolution. Third, it compares the results of the revolution with the salvific goals of Marxism to create a more equitable political, social and economic system. It argues that, while the Lenin and the Bolsheviks defined the 1917 revolution as Marxist, the results of the revolution do not resemble Marx' communist utopia but, rather, a system based on oppression and intimidation.

As outlined in the previous section, Marx named a set of criteria necessary for a communist revolution to occur, specifically the presence of an advanced, industrial capitalist system in which the proletariat makes up a critical mass of the population. In his writings, Marx identified three countries that were ripe for revolution given their economic and social conditions: Germany, Hungary, and Austria.<sup>23</sup> Of these three countries, Germany, in particular, was the country that would ignite a global revolution

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<sup>23</sup> Peter J.S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pg. 50, quoting an article written by Marx in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1849.



and save the world. Marx claimed that, “the emancipation of the German is the emancipation of the human.”<sup>24</sup>

Russia, on the other hand, did not fit the economic and social conditions identified by Marx as necessary for a communist revolution. First, early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia was not an advanced industrialized capitalist economy. Second, the majority of Russians were not industrial laborers but, rather, worked as farmers. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 80% of the Russian Empire’s population was comprised of peasants.<sup>25</sup> Third, Russian scholar Richard Pipes argues that the majority of the population was not alienated from their labor but, rather, were isolated into small disconnected communities and largely politically neutral.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, Russia resembled more the latter stages of a feudal system or the early stages of a capitalist system than it did advanced, industrialized capitalism.

Nevertheless, intellectuals argued that Marxism spoke to the ills of Russian politics and society and offered a revolutionary path to liberation. Marx’s texts and articles were first translated into Russian in the 1870s, followed by the formation of a Marxist party, the Social Democrats, in the 1890s.<sup>27</sup> Russian expatriate Marxists in London, Paris, Germany and Brussels aided the spread of Marxism back in Russia, including Alexander Ivanovich Herzen, who was a member of the International Association of Workingmen.<sup>28</sup> Herzen argued that Russia, while not possessing an advanced state of capitalism, still contained a unique combination of social and economic

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<sup>24</sup> Taken from “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of the Right,” quoted in Duncan, pg. 49

<sup>25</sup> Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), pg. 3

<sup>26</sup> Pipes, pp. 8, 385

<sup>27</sup> Henry Eaton, “Marx and the Russians,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 41, Issue 1, (January-March, 1980), pp. 89-112, especially pp. 89-90

<sup>28</sup> Eaton, pg. 93

elements within its peasant population that would allow it to implement a communist revolution and lead the rest of Europe to rise up and overthrow their capitalist chains.<sup>29</sup>

This particular argument created a movement in Russia known as “Populism.”

However, it was the writings of Lenin and Trotsky that became the foundations on which the Russian Revolution was realized. In 1902, after being arrested and exiled to Siberia for attempting to organize workers in St. Petersburg, Lenin wrote *What is to Be Done?* From his failed attempts to politicize workers, he argued that industrialized laborers, by themselves, could not realize the revolution. Left to their own devices, they would simply learn to negotiate with the bourgeoisie for marginal gains. Lenin further argued that, in order for the revolution to be realized, a select minority of leaders had to be entrusted with orchestrating the revolution. These leaders, the “vanguard” of the revolution, could actually accelerate the necessary conditions for the revolution, making the stages more subjective than objective forces of history.<sup>30</sup> Lenin identified Russia’s vanguard in the Social Democrats, which adhered to the Marxist principle that the only true revolutionary class was the proletariat.<sup>31</sup>

Lenin further argued that the Social Democrats needed to work with non-Marxist groups in order for the revolution to be successfully implemented. In Lenin’s opinion, a revolution could only succeed if a critical mass were organized against the ruling power and this required mobilization of all forces opposed to the state, regardless of their ultimate objectives.<sup>32</sup> Lastly, Lenin asserted—drawing from Marx’s observations of the

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<sup>29</sup> Duncan, pp. 48-49

<sup>30</sup> Kermit E. McKenzie, “Lenin’s Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry,” *Essays in Russian and Soviet History: In Honor of Geroid Tanquary Robinson*, edited by John Shelton Curtiss, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1963), pp. 149-163

<sup>31</sup> Pipes, pp. 105-106

<sup>32</sup> Pipes, pg. 107

failed 1871 Paris Commune—that it was not enough for the proletariat to assume control of the state; rather, they had to smash the system in order to effectively establish communism. This could only be done by force. Lenin asserted: “The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the *entire* theory of Marx and Engels.”<sup>33</sup> Lenin’s call for a violent revolution was in direct contradiction to the German Marxist scholar Karl Kautsky, who argued that the communist revolution could be realized peacefully through parliamentary elections.<sup>34</sup>

Just after the fall of the Tsar in 1917, Lenin outlined the creation of a communist government in his book *State and Revolution*. In it, Lenin argued that an interim phase—the proletarian dictatorship—was necessary in order to destroy the preexisting system of the former regime. Once this goal was achieved, the government would no longer be necessary: “Under socialism, all will govern in turn and quickly become accustomed to no one governing.”<sup>35</sup> However, although the political and social system of the former regime required total destruction, Lenin advocated for maintaining the capitalist system’s form but adapting its content to the socialist agenda.<sup>36</sup> This combination of elements would produce the communist utopia described by Marx and Engels.<sup>37</sup>

Lenin also developed a theory to explain why the Marxist revolution had not occurred in the industrially “ripe” countries. In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, he argued that, as industrialized capitalist economies continue to expand,

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Alfred B. Evans, “Rereading Lenin’s *State and Revolution*,” *Slavic Review*, Volume 46, Issue 1, (Spring, 1987), pp. 1-19, especially pg. 5

<sup>34</sup> Evans, pp. 5-7

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Pipes, pp. 136

<sup>36</sup> Pipes, pg. 136

<sup>37</sup> Evans, pp. 2-3

they are forced to export their capital to compensate for a decline in domestic rates of return. Western economies, therefore, turn to colonies and developing countries to export their products for greater profits. Lenin further argued that imperialism has impeded the proletariat revolution because increased profits from exports have benefited the leaders of the working class—the vanguard that should be fomenting the revolution—who are, in effect, bought off by the profits. Lenin concluded, however, that as export markets shrink, causing profits to decrease, the vanguard will assume its role and organize the proletariat to rise up and revolt. Imperialism, therefore, was not a solution to the decline of capitalism but merely a slowing in its inevitable doom.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to Lenin's writings, the Russian Leon Trotsky also interpreted Marx and applied his ideas to the Russian case. In his 1906 book *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky maintained that the Russian proletariat was still the true revolutionary class. However, drawing from others that argue for the uniqueness of Russians, he believed that the Russian working force, although small, would succeed in accelerating the development of the necessary conditions for a communist revolution. Furthermore, not only would they realize Russia's revolution, but they would also have to inspire revolutions outside its borders in order for the new system to survive.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, like the Populist argument, Trotsky believed that Russians—the proletariat instead of the peasant—were uniquely positioned to foment a domestic and international communist revolution.

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<sup>38</sup> James W. Roberts summarizes Lenin's theory of imperialism and tests it against empirical data, see James W. Roberts, "Lenin's Theory of Imperialism in Soviet Usage," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, (July 1977), pp. 353-372

<sup>39</sup> Duncan, pg. 51

With these interpretations of Marxism in mind, Lenin and Trotsky set about realizing a Marxist revolution in Russia. Prior to 1917, Russia had undergone a series of uprisings with the goal of overthrowing the Tsar. Beginning in 1879, several radical political groups formed with the aim of assassinating the Tsar, ending the monarchy in Russia, and triggering a popular revolution. The most aggressive of these groups, the People's Will, succeeded in assassinating Tsar Alexander II, but his assassination failed to inspire a revolution.<sup>40</sup> Despite this, the People's Will and other groups that used terrorist tactics continued to function into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Alongside these groups, intellectuals formed political organizations with the goal of overthrowing the Tsar. The most notable of these was the formation of the Social Democrats in the 1890s, which—in line with Marxism—argued that the only true revolutionary class in Russia was the proletariat.<sup>41</sup> These groups, along with the less radical Constitutional-Democrats, formed political parties around the turn of the century in the hopes of forcing greater popular representation in the political process.

Russian university students and industrial laborers played a critical role in demanding changes in Russia's political system. Student protests, beginning around 1900, challenged the authority of the Tsar's government, often leading to violent clashes between students and police. Also around this time, the Russian Orthodox Priest Father Gapon began organizing labor unions in St. Petersburg with the aim of asserting workers rights in the political arena.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For more on the People's Will, see Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 16-19; and Pipes, pg. 26

<sup>41</sup> Pipes, pp. 26-28

<sup>42</sup> Pipes, pp. 38-39; see also Walter Sablinsky, *The Road to Bloody Sunday: Father Gapon and the St. Petersburg Massacre of 1905*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976)

In addition to domestic unrest, Russia also suffered from conflicts with its neighbors. At the turn of the century, Russia entered into a territorial dispute with Japan over Manchuria. On February 8, 1904, Japan attacked the Russian naval base at Port Arthur, on the Sea of Japan. Japan succeeded in taking the fort after ten months of protracted struggle and demolishing nearly the whole of Russia's naval fleet.<sup>43</sup> This war forced Russia to draw its forces away from the capital and deploy them on its eastern border, thus presenting a window of opportunity for the various groups agitating for political change.

In January of 1905, Father Gapon's labor unions organized a march through St. Petersburg's streets, determined to present a list of demands to the government. Police and army forces opened fire on the demonstrators, killing 200 and wounding 800.<sup>44</sup> The event, which became known as "Bloody Sunday," sparked waves of protest and further strikes throughout the country. The unrest eventually forced the Tsar to agree to the "October Manifesto," which called for greater civil liberties, the creation of a popularly elected lower house of parliament (the Duma), and restrictions on legislation proposed by the Tsar.<sup>45</sup>

Not all parties were satisfied with these reforms, however, and radical groups continued to use terrorism as a means of toppling the Tsar. In particular, certain members of the Social Democrats were unsatisfied with the reforms brought about by the 1905 uprising. The majority within the party believed that governmental reforms and the creation of labor unions was the best means through which to organize the working class

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<sup>43</sup> For more details on Russia's military defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, see *A Dictionary of Military History*, edited by Andre Corviser, (Oxford, Blackwell References, 1994) pg. 825.

<sup>44</sup> Pipes, pg. 38-39 and Sablinsky

<sup>45</sup> Pipes, pp. 42-44

for political and social change. However a minority, led by Lenin and Trotsky, believed that this aided the existing regime instead of undermining it and that the only path to revolution lay in smashing the current political system. To this end, they began to organize clandestine groups that would prepare workers and intellectuals for a violent revolution.<sup>46</sup> These divided factions within the Social Democrats became known as the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, respectively.

The outbreak of World War I further challenged the viability of Russia's government. At the height of the war in 1917, the Tsar abdicated in the face of popular unrest and a military revolt. In his place, two rival political systems were created: a provisional government; and the first "soviet" in Petersburg, an elected council that sought to implement Marxist inspired changes to society and economics.<sup>47</sup> The Mensheviks argued for working with the provisional government to affect change, largely because they believed the conditions for a true Marxist revolution were not yet ripe.<sup>48</sup> The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, called for undermining the interim government and fomenting the revolution immediately. To this end they employed two strategies. First, they tried to encourage popular and military unrest through subversion, strikes, theft and terrorism. Second, they claimed to intervene in the midst of this chaos in order to save the newly formed soviets and with the greater intention of dissolving the government.<sup>49</sup>

Although they were fewer in number, the Bolsheviks succeeded in orchestrating a coup d'état that effectively toppled the interim government in October 1917. Lenin's coup was aided by a secret alliance with Germany in which it funded the Bolsheviks in

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<sup>46</sup> Pipes, pp. 26-27; 107-108

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Rabinowitch, "The October Revolution," pp. 81-92, *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution: 1914-1921*, edited by Edward Acton, (London: Arnold Publishers, 1997), pg. 81

<sup>48</sup> Pipes, pg. 114

exchange for Lenin's efforts to close the Eastern Front, allowing Germany to concentrate its troops on the Western Front.<sup>50</sup> In October, Germany further aided the coup by coordinating an offense in the Gulf of Riga.<sup>51</sup> Once the coup was complete, the Bolsheviks claimed to offer a "democratic peace," allowing elections to be held in November, but then immediately disbanding the new government.<sup>52</sup> Post facto, Trotsky and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union produced an official story of the "October Revolution" in which the Bolsheviks led the proletariats in the uprising, making the event more consistent with the Marxist program for the communist revolution.<sup>53</sup>

Following the coup, Lenin and the Bolsheviks then began to implement a totally new political system. Russian scholar Richard Pipes describes the new government as "...a dual authority: an extreme dictatorship exercised by a private body—the "party"—behind the façade of popular self-rule represented by the soviets."<sup>54</sup> The one party government, led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, quickly pushed out all other political parties from the government, including the Mensheviks. These radical changes prompted riots, strikes and rebellions. In order to counter these challenges, the new government imposed the "Red Terror," a program based on the post-French Revolution terror aimed at eliminating those hostile to the new regime. The Red Terror targeted peasant and urban uprisings, political parties other than the Bolsheviks, the royal family, and other

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<sup>49</sup> Pipes, pp. 113-114

<sup>50</sup> Pipes, pp. 122

<sup>51</sup> Pipes, pg. 140

<sup>52</sup> Rabinovitch, pp. 88-90; Pipes, pg. 160

<sup>53</sup> For example, see Leon Trotsky, "Bolshevik Workingmen Led the Revolt," pp. 53-68; and "The Bolshevik Party Led the Masses," *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, pp. 186-191, in *The Russian Revolution and Bolshevik Victory: Causes and Processes*, edited by Arthur E. Adams, (Lexington, MA: DC Heath and Company, 1972).

<sup>54</sup> Pipes, pg. 150



individuals believed to be subversive to the communist agenda.<sup>55</sup> Thousands were executed, put in camps or exiled as a result of this campaign.<sup>56</sup>

In conjunction with the Red Terror, the country disintegrated into civil war, a development that Lenin welcomed in hopes that the violence would effectively smash the existing social and political system.<sup>57</sup> The Russian civil war of 1917-1921 was fought on three fronts—in the North, West and South—and included four fighting factions: Whites, forces that strove to preserve a democracy; Blacks, the anarchists; Greens, peasant partisans; and Reds, which were the communist forces. The Reds enjoyed numerous advantages including material assets gained from the state and from the Bolshevik's relationship with the Germans, greater ethnic cohesion, and the direction of unified leadership.<sup>58</sup> Although the Whites had some international backing, most notably from Britain and Poland, they suffered from internal political divisions, lack of strong leadership, and incongruous multi-ethnic constituents.<sup>59</sup> They, therefore, ultimately lost out to the Reds after three years of struggle.

The end of the civil war sparked pogroms against minorities, particularly against Poles and Jews in the Ukraine, with an estimated 1,236 incidents of anti-Jewish violence alone.<sup>60</sup> The civil war's conclusion was also followed by widespread famine. In 1921, the Party implemented the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the hopes of revitalizing Russia's economy, devastated by the war. The NEP—a combination of radical land, labor, and

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<sup>55</sup> *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution*, edited by Harold Shukman, (London: Blackwell References, 1988), pp. 182-184

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*

<sup>57</sup> Pipes, pp. 233-234

<sup>58</sup> David S. Foglesong, "Foreign Intervention," pp. 106-114, *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution: 1914-1921*, edited by Edward Acton, (London: Arnold Publishers, 1997); Pipes, pp. 235-236

<sup>59</sup> Fogleson, pp. 111-113; Pipes, pg. 235-236; 249

<sup>60</sup> Pipes, pg. 262

fiscal reforms—proved to worsen the famine. Both peasants and city dwellers rebelled under increasingly bleak circumstance, which the Party put down with brutal force.<sup>61</sup>

In the midst of this domestic turmoil, the Party did attempt to implement reforms geared at realizing the communist utopia. Following the coup, the Party formed the *Prolekt*, whose goal was to aculturize the working class to Marxist ideals and rid them of bourgeois influences. The *Prolekt* argued that art and culture should reflect the corporate nature of society, not the individual: “Culture grew out of economic relations among human beings and their never-ending struggle with nature. In a socialist society, based on the principle of collectivism, culture would necessarily assume a collective character.”<sup>62</sup> To this end, they created studios where workers could draw, paint and compose poetry. The movement quickly faded, however, when it insisted on independence from political institutions.<sup>63</sup>

The party also attempted to create free education for all. However, it lacked funds to face the overwhelming task of introducing universal education in a linguistically diverse region in which less than 45% of children attended school prior to the revolution.<sup>64</sup> The Party also attempted to implement a universal literacy program. However, despite the fact that around five million people went through this program between 1920 and 1926, it did little to raise the overall literacy rate.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, education remained a unique privilege in the first decades of the Soviet Union.

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<sup>61</sup> For more on the NEP, see Sergei V. Iarov, “The Tenth Congress of the Communist Party and the Transition to the NEP,” pp. 115-127, *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution: 1914-1921*, edited by Edward Acton, (London: Arnold Publishers, 1997); Pipes, pg. 344-346

<sup>62</sup> Pipes, pg. 314

<sup>63</sup> Pipes, pg. 315

<sup>64</sup> Pipes, pp. 324-325

<sup>65</sup> Pipes, pg. 328

Likewise, the Party—in keeping with Marxist themes—sought to liberate women from their traditional roles as wives and mothers. The Party attempted to create collective daycares and kitchens in the hopes of allowing women to join the workforce. These programs were coupled with relaxed divorce laws, allowing women to leave relationships in which they were unhappy. The Party also legalized abortion with the aim of giving women greater choices over the size of their families.<sup>66</sup>

However, most of these efforts to realize the communist utopia quickly lost out over efforts to manipulate the masses. Alongside programs to free citizens from bourgeois culture, the Party implemented a rigorous propaganda campaign, aimed at conforming the masses to the Party's program. They used a variety of mediums to spread their message including books, posters, newspapers, cinema and “agitational-propaganda,” a form of street-theatre that parodied the pillars of bourgeois society.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the Party implemented a rigorous campaign that sought to destroy the Russian Orthodox and Catholic churches. Russian historian Richard Pipes argues: “Next to economic hardship, no action of Lenin's government inflicted greater suffering on the population at large than the profanation of its religious beliefs, the closing of the houses of worship, and the mistreatment of the clergy.”<sup>68</sup> Beginning in 1922, the Party confiscated land and church property—including its sacred objects—put thousands of its priests on trial or in prison, and abolished church festivals.<sup>69</sup> These efforts, however,

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<sup>66</sup> Pipes, pp. 330-331

<sup>67</sup> Pipes, pp. 316-320

<sup>68</sup> Pipes, pg. 333

<sup>69</sup> Glennys Young, *Power and the Sacred in Revolutionary Russia: Religious Activists in the Village*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), pp. 79-110; Pipes, pp. 336-340

largely backfired; Russians, particularly the peasantry, clung to their faith with greater tenacity.<sup>70</sup>

Also in keeping with Marxist principles, the Party made one of its primary goals the export of the revolution. The Party created an organization expressly for this purpose, the Communist International, or Comintern. In 1919, Lenin dispatched the Russian Karl Radek to Berlin as the Soviet Union's ambassador. Radek, together with Germans Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, used his position as ambassador to foment a workers' revolt. The uprising, which broke out shortly after Radek's arrival, lasted only ten days and resulted in the arrest of all three leaders and the execution of Liebknecht and Luxemburg.<sup>71</sup> The Soviets encouraged subsequent revolts in Bavaria and Hungary, both of which ended in failure. The Comintern also took an interest in China's social and political unrest, establishing the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow in 1925, for the purpose of educating Chinese communists in Marxist doctrine and practices.<sup>72</sup> Overall, however, the Comintern failed in its efforts to export the revolution, particularly to the countries deemed ripe: Germany, Austria and Hungary.

The Bolshevik's rise to power in Russia and the creation of the Soviet Union was Marxist to the extent that Lenin and Trotsky drew their inspiration for the revolution from the writings and theories of Marx and Engels. Despite the fact that Russia did not meet the level of capitalist development specified by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky continued to agitate for a communist revolution that would sweep aside the injustices of the existing

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<sup>70</sup> Young, pp. 147-192; Pipes, pg. 340

<sup>71</sup> Pipes, pg. 288

<sup>72</sup> Warren Lerner, "Karl Radek and the Chinese Revolution, 1925-1927," *Essays in Russian and Soviet History: In Honor of Geroid Tanquary Robinson*, edited by John Shelton Curtiss, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1963), pp. 270-282

government under the Tsar and create a more equitable economic and political system. Both Lenin and Trotsky's writings called not only for revolution, but revolution with the express purpose of realizing the communist utopia. To this end, they attempted—both domestically and internationally—to spread communist ideas. However, disastrous economic and social reforms at home, coupled with thwarted attempts to foment revolutions abroad, failed to bring about better conditions under the new political system. This, in turn, presented a crisis for the legitimacy of their rule, prompting the Bolsheviks to maintain power by force. Russian historian Richard Pipes argues that “the Bolsheviks ceased to be utopians when, once it had become obvious that the ideal was unattainable, they persisted in the attempt by resorting to unrestrained violence.”<sup>73</sup>

The ultimate result of the Bolshevik experiment, therefore, was a totalitarian system based on oppression and fear, which is incompatible with the Marxist vision of liberation. Determining, therefore, as to if the Bolsheviks succeeded in creating a truly communist state, Pipes states: “Judging in terms of its own aspirations, the Communist regime was a monumental failure; it succeeded in one thing only—staying in power. But since for the Bolsheviks, power was not an end in itself but a means to an end, its mere retention does not qualify the experiment as a success.”<sup>74</sup>

### *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*

This section considers the spread of Marxism to China and interpretations of Marxist literature that helped fuel the Chinese Revolution and shape the succeeding government. It assesses, first, the writings of Mao and considers how he interpreted Marxism to fit the Chinese context. Second, it outlines the events leading up to the

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<sup>73</sup> Pipes, pg. 393

Chinese Revolution and the strategies and tactics of Mao in precipitating the revolution. Third, it compares the results of the revolution—specifically the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution—with the salvific goals of Marxism to create a more just and equitable political, social and economic system. This section argues that, although Mao self-identified as a Marxist, his theory of revolution follows Lenin’s model more than Marx’s. Likewise, while Mao aimed to create a more equitable and just society, the radical means through which he attempted to do so—particularly via the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution—had disastrous effects. Similar to the Soviet Union, the results of the revolution did not resemble Marx’s communist utopia but, rather, a system based on oppression and intimidation.

China, like Russia, was not an advanced industrial capitalist society at the time of its civil war and revolution. Therefore, many of the same debates occurred surrounding the applicability of Marx’s program of revolution to the Chinese case. This debate, although rich and complex, will only briefly be touched on in relation to two elements of Marxist thought—the program for the Proletariat Revolution, and the ultimate goals of that revolution, a communist utopia.

The Chinese Revolution, and the social, political and economic system that followed it, are largely the philosophical and strategic thinking of Mao Tse-tung. Mao’s writings, therefore, are central to understanding how Marxism has been interpreted and applied in the Chinese context. In addition, several preceding scholars’ writings exposed Mao to Marxist thinking and, therefore, are important for understanding Mao’s own interpretations of Marxist texts and doctrine.

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<sup>74</sup> Pipes, pg. 404

One of the first Chinese scholars to embrace Marxism was the philosopher Che'en Tu-hsiu. He argued that democracy and science had failed to produce a system that would bring about the redemption of Chinese society. Marxism, on the other hand, "was a view of life marked by drastic, melodramatic contrasts and hopes of total redemption. What was more, the drama it envisaged was a global drama which finally brought China onto the stage of world history."<sup>75</sup> His 1920 essay, "The Value of Historical Materialism in Modern Historical Science," extolled the virtues of Marxism and denounced other theories of reform as bourgeois thinking aimed at keeping the masses down.<sup>76</sup> Another Chinese scholar that embraced Marxism was Li Ta-chao, who argued that China could regenerate itself as a great society and political force, given the right philosophical framework. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, he wrote "The Victory of Bolshevism," citing it as the path to China's liberation.<sup>77</sup> He was instrumental in the founding of the Society for the Study of Marxism at Peking University in 1918.<sup>78</sup> Mao—a librarian at Peking University during this time—learned from these early discussions on Marxism.

Mao faced similar problems as Lenin in his interpretation of Marx and Engels' program for realizing the communist revolution; specifically, China had not achieved the state of advanced capitalism necessary for a successful proletariat uprising. Like Lenin, Mao argued that, despite its lack of industrialization and the absence of a proletariat class, China was ready for a communist revolution. He believed that the conditions for revolution could be accelerated given the presence of dedicated leaders and human will. This argument, known as "volunteerism," stands in tension to Marx's program of

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<sup>75</sup> Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), pg. 23

<sup>76</sup> Schwartz, pg. 24

<sup>77</sup> Schwartz, pp. 12-14

materialist history, which requires objective stages of development and necessary preconditions for the proletariat revolution to occur. In his form of volunteerism, Mao stresses the importance of human will in affecting history and fomenting revolution. He argued, "...man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible. But to do that man must be a leader, and not only a leader but a hero as well, in a very sober sense of the word."<sup>79</sup> Mao further claimed that, "all things can be successfully achieved, if you are resolute, if you only have the will."<sup>80</sup> Therefore, despite the lack of industrial development and the absence of a strong proletariat, China could realize the revolution through sheer force of will.

Also similar to Lenin, Mao believed that imperialism was largely responsible for China's ills. China's immediate imperialist threat came from Japan. At the end of World War I, western powers transferred the Chinese province of Shantung from German authority to the Japanese, despite China's claims to the territory. The Paris Peace Conference and Treaty of Versailles, therefore, became examples of western intentions to carve up the world for its own designs, ignoring the wishes of those that inhabit the land.<sup>81</sup> Mao argued that the people of China needed to form "The Great Union of the Masses" in order to counter the threat of imperialism.<sup>82</sup> Unification would be achieved by forming unions, associations, societies, and professional organizations that would then join forces and create national cohesion.<sup>83</sup> Mao named the Communist Party as the organization that would bring about this national unity and shake off China's imperialist

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<sup>78</sup> Schwartz, pg. 16

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Samuel Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pg. 61

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Kim, pg. 61

<sup>81</sup> Robert A. Scalapino, "The Evolution of a Young Revolutionary—Mao Zedong in 1919-1921," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XLII, No. 1, (Nov. 1982), pp. 29-61, especially pg. 34

<sup>82</sup> Which was the title of one of his earliest articles, Scalapino, pg. 35



vultures: “The force at the core leading our cause forward is the Chinese Communist Party. The theoretical basis guiding our thinking is Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>84</sup>

Consistent with Marx’s goals for a communist utopia, Mao also stressed the importance of liberating society from domestic and international obstacles in order to create a more just way of life. Some of Mao’s earliest writings describe the plight of women in Chinese society and called for a new social order that would liberate them from a “bitter life.”<sup>85</sup> Mao also wrote about the difficult conditions faced by China’s workers, peasants, policemen, primary school teachers and university students, who were subject to “backward pedagogical methods, and arrogant, unfeeling teachers.”<sup>86</sup> In Mao’s mind, a communist revolution would sweep away both the detrimental structure of society and defend China from imperialist aggression.

From these theoretical foundations, Mao developed a strategy for realizing the communist revolution. Mao, like Lenin, believed that the revolution had to be violent because only force could effectively sweep away the old political, social and economic system; the communist movement, therefore, had to prepare for war. This strategy called, first and foremost, for communist leaders to mobilize and politicize the peasant class, the largest percentage of China’s population. The Party would win the peasant’s support by introducing land reforms and redress their grievances.<sup>87</sup> Alongside mobilizing peasants, the leaders would form a strong, well-organized party. Through Mao’s personal experience as a guerilla warrior in the 1920s and 1930s, he determined that the best

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<sup>83</sup> Scalapino, pp.36-37

<sup>84</sup> Mao, *The Little Red Book* “On the Party,” pg 1, taken from, <http://art-bin.com/art/omao1.html>, downloaded on 6/16/03

<sup>85</sup> Scalapino, pg. 36

<sup>86</sup> Scalapino, pp. 35-36

<sup>87</sup> Schwartz, pg. 189

strategy of fomenting a nation-wide revolution would be by establishing rural bases, “soviets,” and using these bases to attack and encircle the cities.<sup>88</sup> This strategy became the blueprint for realizing the revolution and eventually succeeded in defeating the Kuomintang in 1949.

The rise of Mao and his call for a communist revolution occurred during a period of protracted political, social and military unrest. In 1911, after decades of political and social unrest, the Tongmenghui—the forerunner to the Kuomintang—sparked a revolt in Wuhan that spread to neighboring provinces, created dissent in the army, and eventually overthrew the Qing dynasty. Sun Yat-sen, the leader of the Kuomintang, promised a republic ruled by a democratic government. Elections were held in 1913 and 1914, but the republic quickly collapsed after Yuan Shikai assassinated Kuomintang politician Song Jiaoren and imposed a military dictatorship.<sup>89</sup> After Yuan’s death in 1916, the country fell into the hands of battling warlords.

The failures of the 1911 Revolution prompted many scholars to look outside of Chinese philosophy for ideas on human nature and governance. Historian Suzanne Ogden argues that, “the Chinese desperately wanted to believe in someone, to feel someone could offer them a panacea.”<sup>90</sup> The American philosopher John Dewey visited China in 1919, giving a series of lectures on the importance of science and democracy for the progress of humanity.<sup>91</sup> In 1920, the scientist and philosopher Bertrand Russell was also

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<sup>88</sup> Schwartz, pg. 190

<sup>89</sup> Hans van de Ven, “Recent Studies of Modern Chinese History,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, Issue 2, (May, 1996), pp. 225-269, especially pg. 245

<sup>90</sup> Suzanne P. Ogden, “The Sage in the Inkpot: Bertrand Russell and China’s Social Reconstruction in the 1920’s,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 16, Issue 4, (1982), pp. 529-600, especially pg. 532

<sup>91</sup> Schwartz, pg. 19

invited to China. Both of these western scholars, however, left intellectual circles disillusioned by the vagueness and complexity of the path to improvement.<sup>92</sup>

Also during this time, Marxism became one of many potential philosophies considered as a solution for China's political and social ills. Chinese scholars took interest in Marxism because of the successes of the Bolshevik Revolution in shaking off imperialism and the Tsar. Unlike Russia, which had expatriate scholars connected to Marxist movements in Europe and had easy access to Marx's texts, Marx's writings had not made inroads into China prior to the 1920s.<sup>93</sup> Likewise, Lenin's *State and Revolution* was not translated into Chinese until 1927.<sup>94</sup> Mao himself notes: "Before [Russia's] October Revolution we Chinese knew nothing about Lenin and Stalin, nothing about Marx and Engels."<sup>95</sup> Therefore, it was the Bolshevik revolution that drew Chinese scholars to Marxism, not the writings of Marx and Lenin per se.

Debates over which political model to adopt for China created a rift between the liberals and Marxist in 1921, which were previously joined in an organization know as the Progressive Party. The Party, headed by Liang Chi'i-ch'ao, sparked the "May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement" in 1919, a series of boycotts and demonstrations that called for radical changes in the existing government.<sup>96</sup> During this time, liberals and Marxists were united by the desire for change in China: "They wanted to break with the past and 'progress' in a new direction. And both groups were preeminently nationalists, so that in spite of ideological differences, they agreed that China's major problems were economic

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<sup>92</sup> Ogden, pg. 531

<sup>93</sup> Laszlo Ladany, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism, 1921-1985: A Self-Portrait*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1988), pp. 3-4. *The Manifesto* was published in Chinese in 1920, and all three volumes of *Das Kapital* by 1938.

<sup>94</sup> Ladany, pg. 4

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*

<sup>96</sup> Schwartz, pg. 17

backwardness, political disunity, and bad government.’<sup>97</sup> However, they disagreed on the solutions to these problems. The liberals argued for a system based on democratic reform while the Marxists called for revolution. After their split, the Communist Party of China was formally founded at the Third Communist International, held in Moscow in October 1921.<sup>98</sup>

Despite China’s lack of industrial development, the Soviet Union took an interest in its political and social turmoil during the 1920s. After failing to foment revolution in Germany, Austria and Hungary, Lenin turned his attention to “backward areas” undergoing national unrest as potential soil in which to plant communism.<sup>99</sup> Lenin and the Party identified China as a country where the Communist revolution could be exported. To this end, it sent advisors to China to meet with the burgeoning communist party. The Party also opened a school in Moscow with the aim of educating Chinese communists on Marx and Lenin. Mao, the principle architect of the Chinese Communist Revolution, however, did not attend the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and, later, purged the communist party of those who had received training there.<sup>100</sup>

In addition to encouraging the Chinese Communist Party’s growth, the Soviet Union also attempted to orchestrate its political moves. Under the encouragement of Moscow, the newly formed Chinese Communist Party joined forces with the Kuomintang, headed by Chiang Kai Shek, with the goal of unifying the country and seizing control of the government. To this end, Moscow helped build and train forces in

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<sup>97</sup> Ogden, pg. 537

<sup>98</sup> Landany, pg. 10

<sup>99</sup> Schwartz, pg. 21

<sup>100</sup> Ladany, pg. 5

the south of China.<sup>101</sup> In 1927, however, after the Kuomintang effectively staged a coup d'état, Chaing Kai Shek expelled the communists from his ranks. In return, the communists staged uprisings in several provinces, which the government violently quelled.<sup>102</sup>

The following decade saw increased efforts by the communists to establish independent bases from which to operate. They succeeded in creating several 'soviets' including Mao's base in Jiangxi, which was eventually overrun by the Kuomintang in 1934.<sup>103</sup> As soviets collapsed, communist troops undertook "Long Marches" to other communist enclaves, eventually putting the bulk of communist forces in Shaanxi province in the north of the country.<sup>104</sup> The Kuomintang attacked these forces in 1937, destroying the base.

Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1937 dramatically changed the political and military dynamics in China to the communists' advantage. Mao, who had moved his headquarters to Ya'an, began to consolidate forces opposed to the government. The Japanese attacked and destroyed governmental structures in the north, paving the way for communist forces to move in and win the loyalty of the local populations. To this end they defeated bandits and warlords that sprang up in the absence of centralized authority and secured the support of local inhabitants through gradual land reforms and more equitable economic activity.<sup>105</sup> Also during this time, the Party underwent a period of internal consolidation, resulting in the purge of many members as part of the 'Rectification Campaign.' At the close of World War II, the Communists and their Red

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<sup>101</sup> van de Ven, pg. 245

<sup>102</sup> Ladany, pp. 18-19

<sup>103</sup> Ladany, pp. 27-30; van de Ven, pg. 247

<sup>104</sup> Ladany, pp. 29-30

Army were poised to challenge the Kuomintang. Through a series of fiercely fought battles, particularly in Manchuria, the Red Army succeeded in pushing the Kuomintang to the South and eventually driving them to Taiwan, where they set up their government.

Once in power, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party sought to achieve the communist utopia through economic, social and cultural transformation. From 1958-1960, the government launched “The Great Leap Forward,” with the goal of rapidly transforming China’ mode of production into an advanced industrial nation. The program succeeded in increasing heavy industry by 68% and steel production by 36%; these successes, however, came at an enormous price.<sup>106</sup> Increased industrialization coupled with drastic agricultural reforms and rapid communalization resulted in a massive famine that claimed an estimated 15 to 30 million lives.<sup>107</sup> Although the Party later called the Great Leap Forward a mistake, it nevertheless maintained the era in which it was launched as one of building the communist state, which involved some setbacks and sacrifices in order to achieve its ideals.<sup>108</sup>

Also around the time of the Great Leap Forward, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party began to assert its independence from the tutelage of the Soviet Union. In the 1950s, Mao and other Chinese party leaders attended Moscow’s annual Party Congress. Likewise, leaders in the Soviet Union visited Peking on a regular basis and sent advisors to govern China on its communist path. However, there had always been disagreements between the two Marxist powers. Tensions increased between China and the Soviet Union during the Cuban missile crisis in 1961 and China’s military

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<sup>105</sup> van de Ven, pg. 248

<sup>106</sup> William A. Joseph, “A Tragedy of Good Intentions: Post-Mao Views of the Great Leap Forward,” *Modern China*, Vol. 12, Issue 4, (October, 1986), pp. 419-457, especially pg. 422

<sup>107</sup> Joseph, pg. 420

intervention in Ladakh and Assam, India in 1962.<sup>109</sup> In response to these tensions, Mao announced that China was the true keeper of Marxist-Leninism and unveiled his intentions to create the “A-A-A” alliance between Asia, Africa and [Latin] America with the goal of fostering the worldwide Marxist revolution.<sup>110</sup> Ultimately these plans failed to realize a global revolution or to supplant the Soviet Union as the premier Marxist state. However tensions continued, in varying degrees, between both powers throughout the existence of the Soviet Union.

Again, from 1966 to 1976, Mao and the Party instituted radical reforms aimed at cleansing China of its bourgeois elements in what became known as the Cultural Revolution. From 1966 to 1967, members of the ‘Revolutionary Young Generals’ of the Red Guard destroyed Buddhist temples, historical sites, books, music, furniture—anything deemed to be bourgeois.<sup>111</sup> Alongside the destruction of property, individuals and families believed to be sympathetic to bourgeois ideals were killed or sent to labor camps including schoolteachers, Party members, professionals and peasants. The bloodshed prompted revolts, which led to more bloodshed, spiraling the country into a state of chaos. Before the Party had succeeded in regaining control of the country, an estimated one million were killed.<sup>112</sup>

The Chinese Communist Party’s rise to power and creation of a communist state was Marxist to the extent that Mao and other key leaders self-identified as followers of Marx and drew some of their inspiration from the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and

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<sup>108</sup> Joseph, pp. 421-422, citing the 1981 Resolution on the Party History

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*

<sup>110</sup> Ladany, pg. 268-269

<sup>111</sup> Ladany, pg. 289

<sup>112</sup> Joseph, pg. 420

Stalin. In particular, Mao and other communists called on Lenin's adaptations of Marx's program for the revolution and on Lenin's causal argument for imperialism as a barrier that must be overcome in order to realize the revolution. Mao was also motivated by the ultimate end-goals of communism—a self-reliant, more equitable society in which people were free to reap the benefits of their own labor. Furthermore, the Soviet Union recognized the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party as initially conforming to the Marxist agenda of the worldwide revolution. Moscow, through the Comintern, took measures to educate Chinese communists on Marxist teachings and supply financial, military and technical aid to Chinese communists. However, disagreements between Mao and Stalin over China's independence as a Marxist state led to a rift in Sino-Soviet relations, one in which Mao ultimately labeled the Soviet Union as an imperialist force alongside the United States.

Similar to Russia, China faced the problem of applying Marx's program for a proletariat revolution to a country that did not meet the level of development outlined by Marx and whose population was not significantly composed of a working class. Mao argued, rather, that the peasantry was the class for realizing the revolution and that human will and spirit could overcome obstacles and accelerate the necessary stages of history. China scholar Benjamin Schwartz summarizes Mao's approach to the Marxist Revolution by stating: "Essentially, the Maoist strategy involves the imposition of a political party organized in accordance with Leninist principles and animated by faith in certain basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism onto a purely peasant mass base."<sup>13</sup>

Also similar to Russia, the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to liberate the masses and create a communist utopia resulted in intimidation, mass slaughter, starvation



and pervasive suffering. These results, therefore, are a far cry from the harmony that Marx predicted would arise after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie's cultural, political, and economic system. Like the Soviet Union, therefore, China's attempt at realizing the communist dream can only be measured as a failure.

### *Ché Guevara and the Marxist Revolution in Latin America*

This section considers Ché Guevara's interpretations of Marxist literature to call for revolution through guerilla warfare in Latin America. It assesses, first, Guevara's writings and considers how he interpreted Marxism to fit the Latin American context. Second, it outlines the events leading up to the series of Marxist-inspired armed insurgencies in Latin America, particularly Cuba, and describes the strategies and tactics of Marxist groups in precipitating popular revolts. Third, it compares the results of the Cuban Revolution with the salvific goals of Marxism to create a more just and equitable political, social and economic system. This section argues that, while Guevara was committed to realizing the Marxist utopia, the results of the revolution do not resemble the communist dream but, like Russia and China, the Cuban government uses oppression and intimidation in order to stay in power.

Similar to Lenin and Mao, Ernesto Ché Guevara came from a stratum of society that allowed him to pursue a university education. Born in Argentina, he attended medical school in Buenos Aires beginning in 1948. While in medical school, he began to travel throughout Latin America, visiting such countries as Chile, Venezuela, Peru, Trinidad and Guatemala. Guevara's travels exposed him to the poverty and suffering of the masses in these countries and the lack of basic needs such as nutrition and medical

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<sup>113</sup> Schwartz, pg. 189

services. Also while traveling throughout Latin America, he met several prominent Marxists including the Peruvian scientist Hugo Pesce and Fidel Castro, who encouraged him in his studies of Marx.

From these experiences, Guevara began to interpret Marxist texts and create his own strategy for realizing a revolution. Similar to Russia and China, Guevara was faced with the challenge of justifying a Marxian revolution in countries that lacked developed industry and were predominantly composed of peasants. Guevara drew heavily from the writings of Mao, who had already grappled with this tension in Marxism and had presented an argument for a Marxian revolution in a peasant-based society. Like Mao, Guevara formulated his own brand of volunteerism, positing that the necessary conditions for revolution could be created through a highly dedicated, tight-knit band of guerilla fighters that he called the *foco*.<sup>114</sup> The *foco* differed from Lenin and Mao's strategy for realizing the Marxist revolution in that the band of guerilla fighters was not acting under the command of the vanguard of the Party or a few key leaders but, rather, it was the vanguard; it combined the military means for accelerating the conditions for a revolution, sparking the revolution, and directing the revolution's outcome.<sup>115</sup> The *foco*, therefore, was responsible for winning the peasant population to its side, gaining their moral and material support for a revolution, and mobilizing them for the overthrow of the existing regime. The *foco* gained its support and legitimacy not merely through its ideas and goals, but also through its successful military challenge of the state.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> José A. Moreno, "Ché Guevara on Guerrilla Warfare: Doctrine, Practice and Evaluation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Volume 12, Issue 2, (April, 1970), pp. 114-133, especially pg. 115

<sup>115</sup> Moreno, pp. 116-117, 119

<sup>116</sup> Moreno, pg. 117

Furthermore, like Lenin and Mao, Guevara blamed imperialism—particularly US imperialism—for the ills affecting Latin America. He argued that US economic interests in Latin American, particularly in the areas of agriculture, were corrupting the local governments and preventing them from caring for their people. While in Chile, he wrote:

The most important effort that needs to be done is to get rid of the uncomfortable ‘Yankee-friend’. It is especially at this moment an immense task, because of the great amount of dollars they have invested here and the convenience of using economic pressure whenever they believe their interests are being threatened.<sup>117</sup>

Guevara expanded this argument as the fault of the capitalist system in general:

In El Paso [Costa Rica] I traversed the vast domains of United Fruit [a US owned company]. Once more I was able to convince myself how criminal the capitalistic octopuses are. On a picture of our old and bewailed comrade Stalin, I swore not to rest before these capitalistic octopuses are destroyed.<sup>118</sup>

Disagreements with the Soviet Union and China later led Guevara to conclude that not only was capitalism a cause of imperialism but, more broadly, countries in the northern hemisphere—regardless of their political system—sought to dominate “southern” countries.<sup>119</sup> Guevara, therefore, championed Marxist revolutionary movements in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia with the aim of destroying North-South imperialism.

Finally, it is important to note that Guevara’s call for armed revolution against governments in Latin America and beyond was inspired by his desire to bring about a more just political and social system in these countries. As a doctor, Guevara devoted the early part of his adult life to working in medical clinics throughout Latin America and took a particular interest in aiding those with leprosy and other infectious diseases.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> “Biography of Ernesto Ché Guevara,” pg. 1, *The Ché Store*, [www.thechestore.com](http://www.thechestore.com), downloaded on 6/11/03

<sup>118</sup> “Biography of Ernesto Ché Guevara,” pg. 2

<sup>119</sup> Technically, however, many of these countries such as Cuba, Guatemala and Vietnam are in the northern hemisphere. See Bjorn Kumm, “Guevara is Dead, Long Live Guevara,” *Transition*, Vol. 0, Issue 75/76 (The Anniversary Issue: Selections from Transition, 1961-1976, 1997), pp. 30-38

<sup>120</sup> “Biography of Ernesto Ché Guevara,” pg. 2

While working as a doctor in Peru, he wrote: “I want to link my destiny to that of the poor of this world.”<sup>121</sup> Through the course of his travels and meetings with various Marxists, and especially through his experiences during the 1954 US-inspired coup d’état in Guatemala, Guevara turned toward Marxist theory and practice as a viable path of liberation for Latin America.

From these theoretical foundations, Guevara devised a strategy for realizing the revolution. He argued that certain general conditions had to be present in order for the *foco* to succeed as a catalyst for the revolution: a lack of legitimacy of the existing government; political and social tensions that cannot be resolved through existing mechanisms; and the perception that all legal means of redressing these grievances are closed to the population.<sup>122</sup> These conditions alone, however, did not ensure the success of the revolution. Rather, a successful revolution depended on the cohesion, training and commitment of the *foco*. Guevara specified that the *foco* should be comprised of around 25-30 men unified under the authority of one leader. In order to rally the peasants to their cause, a substantial number of these men should be local peasants that understand the conditions and needs of the population in which they operate.<sup>123</sup> As the *foco* succeeds in challenging the authority of the state and winning more and more of the population to its side, the small band then transforms itself into a rebel army that engages in large-scale battles against the government’s army, making the guerilla war a people’s war.<sup>124</sup> Once the army is thoroughly demoralized and the war won, the conditions for revolution are

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<sup>121</sup> *ibid*

<sup>122</sup> Moreno, pg. 115

<sup>123</sup> Moreno, pg. 117

<sup>124</sup> Moreno, pg 118

ripe. The leadership works with other groups and organizations to depose the government and then to create a communist state.

The theories and strategies of Guevara, as in the other cases presented in this chapter, were borne out of political, social and economic circumstances. Most Latin American countries of Guevara's generation were hindered by weak central governments that could not provide services to its citizens outside the capital city.<sup>125</sup> Peasants were usually dependent on local *hacendados*, plantation owners, for their subsistence as well as for social and security services, making these landlords like semi-autonomous governments within the state.<sup>126</sup> This system was most often beneficial to the central government and the *hacendados* but not to the peasants. The *foco* sought to challenge this system by not only agitating for land reforms, which was the central demand, but also by providing social services to the peasants including health care, education, and security from government and *hacendado* police forces.<sup>127</sup> Latin American scholar Timothy Wickham-Crowley states: "A model for guerrillas was Ché Guevara, who carried a rifle in one hand and a medical kit in the other..."<sup>128</sup>

Coupled with domestic injustices towards the peasantry, many Latin American countries were also affected by the interests of foreign countries, particularly the United States. In Guatemala, a teacher-led revolt in 1945 succeeded in overthrowing the existing dictatorship and creating a constitutionally governed democratic system. In the 1950s, increased efforts by the government, headed by Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, to implement land reforms and nationalize portions of the agricultural and transportation sector

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<sup>125</sup> Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, "The Rise (and Sometimes Fall) of Guerrilla Governments in Latin America," *Sociological Forum*, Volume 2, No. 3, (1987), pp. 473-499, especially pg. 478

<sup>126</sup> Wickham-Crowley, pg. 479

<sup>127</sup> Wickham-Crowley, pp.484-486

threatened to undermine US investments in the country, particularly United Fruit.<sup>129</sup>

These reforms coupled with Soviet aid to the country prompted the US to support a coup d'état against the Arbenz government in 1954, citing communist infiltration as the primary motive for action.<sup>130</sup> Guevara was in Guatemala at the time of the coup, helping resistance forces. It was this experience that prompted him to conclude that imperial interests, particularly from the US, need to be expelled from all of Latin America in order for a more just system to emerge. The means through which to do this was by organizing highly trained, devoted guerilla forces armed with Marxian ideology.<sup>131</sup>

In the late 1950s, Cuban peasants in the eastern part of the country also began to rebel under internationally backed injustices of the Batista regime. In 1956, after being expelled from Mexico, Fidel Castro and Guevara set up base in the Sierra Mastre mountains in eastern Cuba. In 1957, Castro and Guevara's guerilla forces won their first victory in an ambush of the military barracks at La Plata. Through an alliance with the peasants of the region and the urban underground, Castro and Guevara succeeded in creating a people's army that defeated the military in the country and the police force in the city.<sup>132</sup> In January 1959, in the face of mass uprisings throughout the country, Batista fled Cuba. Castro and Guevara then set about completing the revolution. The Castro regime seized control of Cuba's sugar industry and established a monopoly over imports, exports and foreign financial transactions with the aim of ending its dependence on the

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<sup>128</sup> Wickham-Crowley, pg. 484

<sup>129</sup> Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999)

<sup>130</sup> Richard J. Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution: America's Confrontation With Insurgent Movements Around the World*, (New York: World Publishing Press, 1968), pg. 242

<sup>131</sup> "Biography of Ernesto Ché Guevara," pg. 2

<sup>132</sup> Matt D. Childs, "An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Ché Guevara's Foco Theory," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 27, Issue 3, (October 1995), pp. 593-624. Childs argues

US market.<sup>133</sup> Guevara became head of the National Bank and the Ministry of Industry.<sup>134</sup> By 1961, Cuba and the United States had cut all diplomatic ties.

Cuba and other Latin American Marxist guerilla movements received encouragement from China and the Soviet Union, particularly after the Cuban revolution. As early as 1949, China began reaching out to Latin American countries, citing an affinity with their anti-imperialist struggles against the US.<sup>135</sup> In 1959, Chou En-Lai asserted: “The Latin American peoples are standing in the forefront of [the] struggle against United States imperialism.”<sup>136</sup> During the 1960s, they encouraged armed struggle against domestic and international capitalism with the hope of creating a regional communist revolution.<sup>137</sup> In particular, they advocated the theories and examples of Mao: “The road taken by the Chinese people in seizing political power by force of arms under Chairman Mao’s leadership is of general and practical significance for Latin America, and is the only correct road of revolution for the Latin American people...”<sup>138</sup>

The Soviet Union also took interest in Latin America’s rebellions in the 1950s and 1960s. Prior to the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, Beijing and Moscow worked together to encourage potential communist revolutionaries in Latin America, including cooperative training camps.<sup>139</sup> After the Sino-Soviet split, Moscow began to argue for multiple paths to realizing the communist revolution in Latin America, including by both

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that the urban underground, the *llano*, was critical to Castro and Guevara’s success in Cuba but that subsequent writings on the revolution have only focused on the peasant forces and the *foco*.

<sup>133</sup> Susan Eckstein, “The Impact of the Cuban Revolution: A Comparative Perspective,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 28, Issue 3, (July 1986), pp. 502-534, especially pg. 504

<sup>134</sup> Kumm, pp. 36-37

<sup>135</sup> William E. Ratliff, “Communist China and Latin America, 1949-1972,” *Asian Survey*, Volume 12, Issue 10, (October, 1972), pp. 846-863, especially pg. 848

<sup>136</sup> Ratliff, pg. 849

<sup>137</sup> *ibid*

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Ratliff, pg. 850

<sup>139</sup> Ratliff, pg. 851

violent and peaceful means. This was in direct contradiction to China's position that the only correct path was through Mao's model of armed rebellion. Both China and the Soviet Union competed over influence with communist parties in Latin America, in many cases prompting schisms within Marxist movements, such as in Brazil and Paraguay.<sup>140</sup> In most cases, however, the Soviet Union succeeded in asserting its influences over the communists in Latin America. Cuba, in particular, became a stronghold of Soviet influence in the region, particularly after 1964, when Castro called for an end to China's spread of anti-Soviet propaganda in Cuba.<sup>141</sup>

In addition to Soviet and Chinese efforts to export their particular brand of the communist revolution to Latin America, Guevara also made an effort to spread the theories and strategies of the *foco* throughout the developing world. In the early and mid-1960s, Guevara is believed to have traveled throughout Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia offering encouragement and advice to guerilla movements in these regions.<sup>142</sup> In 1966, Guevara and a small band of Cuban guerillas attempted to spark a revolution in southeastern Bolivia. Guevara's forces, however, were not welcomed by the peasants in the region, who largely supported Bolivia's popularly elected President René Barrientos.<sup>143</sup> Guevara failed to convince the peasants to support their revolutionary efforts, ultimately isolating the movement and leading to his capture and execution in October of 1968.

Did the introduction of Marxism improve the lives of the masses and bring about a communist utopia in Latin America? Cuba was the only country that succeeded in

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<sup>140</sup> Ratliff, pg. 852

<sup>141</sup> Ratliff, pp. 854-855

<sup>142</sup> Kumm, pp. 37-38; "Biography of Ernesto Ché Guevara," pp. 5-7



transforming a guerilla insurgency into a revolution that deposed the existing regime and set about transforming the economic and social makeup of the country. Social Scientist Susan Eckstein argues that, overall, post-revolutionary Cuba improved equitable distribution of income and land, and increased the populations' access to healthcare, nutrition and education. These improvements, however, came at the cost of continued dependence on foreign trade and investment, particularly from the Soviet Union.<sup>144</sup> When the Soviet Union disbanded in 1991, Cuba lost a critical source of financial support, plunging the country into an economic crisis.<sup>145</sup> This, in turn, has led to social unrest, most notably riots in Havana in 1994.<sup>146</sup>

However, despite post- revolutionary improvements in Cuba's distribution of wealth and social services, many of its citizens have risked everything to flee its borders, usually to the United States. Cuba has experienced three enormous waves of emigration—in 1965, 1980, and 1994—in addition to a steady stream of émigrés since the revolution.<sup>147</sup> These waves of refugees suggest that there are substantial numbers in the country who do not feel their lives improved by the Marxist revolution.

It is also important to note that other Latin American countries have gone through non-Marxian revolutions that have succeeded in implementing social, economic and political reforms. Bolivia, as previously mentioned, underwent a peasant-led guerilla revolt in 1952 that successfully overthrew the existing regime and prompted land redistribution in the country. However, Bolivia continued to maintain private property

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<sup>143</sup> Wickham-Crowley, pg. 490

<sup>144</sup> Eckstein, pp. 502-534

<sup>145</sup> Kelly M. Greenhill, "Engineered Migration as a Coercive Instrument: The 1994 Cuban *Balseros* Crisis," *Working Paper #12, The Rosemary Rogers Working Paper Series*, (Cambridge: The Inter-University Committee on International Migration, 2002), pg. 5, footnote 22

<sup>146</sup> Greenhill, pg 14

<sup>147</sup> Greenhill, pp. 8-22

and did not attempt to rapidly industrialize the country or implement any of the other stages associated with communism.<sup>148</sup> Likewise, Mexico underwent similar changes but, like Bolivia, these changes were not accompanied by the Marxist program for realizing communism.

Despite its lack of successes, however, Marxist inspired insurgencies have persisted in Latin America. Guatemala underwent a Marxist inspired insurgency beginning in 1960. The insurgency resulted in one of the worst cases of government-sponsored mass killings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ultimately ending through a process of increased democratic practices and an Oslo-sponsored peace agreement between the government and the rebels, signed in 1996.<sup>149</sup> Columbia has had Marxist-based guerilla groups, specifically the ELN, which has continued to agitate for the end of imperialism in the country and the creation of a Marxist regime, with little success on either front.<sup>150</sup> In addition, Nicaragua underwent a Marxist-inspired insurgency against the Somoza-led government beginning in 1961, which ultimately resulted in the pro-Marxists Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) taking control of the government in 1979. After a decade of bloody civil war and economic deterioration in which “Nicaragua’s per capita income had fallen by 33.5% from its 1980 level, its infrastructure was in tatters, and its modest tourism industry had all but collapsed,” the Sandinistas were defeated in popular elections held in 1990.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, these movements may have succeeded in pressuring

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<sup>148</sup> Eckstein, pg 502, footnote 2

<sup>149</sup> For a discussion on the effects of the government’s counterinsurgency strategy, see Valentino, pp. 229-244. For a discussion on elections and the peace process, see Schlesinger and Kinzer, pp. 258-262

<sup>150</sup> “Columbia: Human Rights Developments,” *Human Rights Watch*, [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org), downloaded on 6/16/03

<sup>151</sup> “Country Profile: Nicaragua,” *BBC News Online*, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), downloaded on 6/17/03, pg. 1

for reforms and regime change, but they have not realized a revolution and the implementation of a communist system.

Thus, the communist dream has not fared much better in Latin America than it has in China or the Soviet Union. Castro and Guevara succeeded in realizing a revolution in Cuba, which did achieve some of communism's greater goals, specifically more equitable distribution of land and social resources. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba has sunk into an economic and social crisis punctuated by increased waves of migrants to the US. Likewise, other countries that had Marxist-inspired insurgents may have contributed to political and economic changes, but none of these insurgencies have succeeded in fomenting a communist revolution. Finally, Cuba, like the Soviet Union and China, has had to resort to violence and intimidation in order to compel its citizens to comply with the communist agenda, prompting thousands to flee. Cuba, therefore, is far away from the communist dream.

### **Is Marxism a Religion?**

In light of the previous discussion on the principles of Marxist thought and its application in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba; has Marxism functioned as a religion? Marxism is not typically thought of as a religion, although religious studies scholar Ninian Smart does include it in his survey of world religions.<sup>152</sup> Considering Marxism as a religion is problematic for a number of reasons. First, Marx's writings are saturated with claims that religion is one of the tools used by the bourgeoisie to keep the masses pinned down and, therefore, its abolition is necessary in order to realize a communist

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<sup>152</sup> Ninian Smart, *The World's Religions: Old Traditions and Modern Transformations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 24-25. Smart also considers nationalism as another ideological force similar to religion, pp. 21-22

system. Describing Marxism as a religion, therefore, would be accusing its principles and programs of the very ills it desires to overthrow.

Second, in practice, Marxist ideas and strategies have often worked alongside religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. For example, Liberation Theology—a revolutionary interpretation of Christian Gospels that influenced popular resistance to governments in Latin America—has fused together Christian and Marxist ideals.<sup>153</sup>

Likewise, Sinhalese Buddhists drew from Marxist arguments to help organize labor unions in Sri Lanka in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>154</sup> Therefore, Marxism in practice has not always been distinct from religions.

However, in theory, Marxism contains components that are similar to the six elements used to define religion in this dissertation: beliefs, texts, leaders, a community of practitioners, identity, and material resources. Marxism has a core set of beliefs, most notably the belief in the corruptive nature of industrial capitalism led by the bourgeoisie and the need for a proletariat-led revolution that will set the stage for a new economic, social and political order, which will ultimately save the world. Marxism also has texts, particularly those written by Marx and Engels, but also later Marxist scholars such as Lenin, Mao, and Ché Guevara, as this chapter has outlined. Furthermore, key leaders have defined Marxism such as Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, and Guevara. In countries where Marxist governments have assumed authority, they also have had considerable material resources with which to defend their regimes and spread Marxism abroad. This

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<sup>153</sup> For an introduction to Liberation Theology, see *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, edited by Trevor A. Hart (Grand Rapids: Patler Noster Press, 2000) pp. 318-320; and *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, edited by Adrian Hastings et al, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 387-390

<sup>154</sup> For more on Buddhist-Marxist Trade Unions in Sri Lanka, see Stanley Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics and Violence in Sri Lanka*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), pp. 12-13

is particularly true of the Soviet Union and China, but also true of Cuba after the 1959 revolution.

In addition, Marxism has had a community of practitioners, but the number of “true believers” in Marxism is debatable. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Marxism attracted intellectuals from all over the world who self-identified as Marxists, and made efforts to spread the tenets of Marxism around the globe. After the 1917 Revolution in Russia, Moscow became an intellectual center for Marxism. However, unlike other religions, Marxism never attained broad-based community of practitioners from the masses. This undoubtedly has impacted its success and survival as a global movement aimed at saving the world.

Furthermore, Marxism has served as a form of governmental and state identity but less so with members of society. The Soviet Union identified itself as Marxist as have China and Cuba. However, Marxism did not succeed in supplanting regional, ethnic, linguistic and religious forms of identity in these countries. The Soviet Union never achieved a uniform “Soviet” identity but, rather, throughout its seventy-odd years of existence continued to be fraught with ethnic, regional, linguistic, and religious difference. These different forms of identity led to the Soviet Union’s fractionalization at the end of the 1980s and in certain republics—most notably in Russia and Georgia and between Armenian and Azerbaijan—this fractionalization erupted into violence. Cuba has also had difficulty shedding its pre-revolution identity, particularly its popular devotion to Roman Catholicism. In 1998, Pope John Paul II visited Cuba and presided over mass for tens-of-thousands of enthusiastic Cubans including Castro, who sat in the

front row.<sup>155</sup> Clearly Catholicism remains a salient aspect of Cuban identity in post-revolutionary society.

In addition to its definitional qualities, Marxism adheres to the function of religion proposed in this dissertation. Specifically, the communist revolution corresponds to the concept of “earthly salvation.” Marxism, in theory, has as its ultimate goal the salvation of the earth and humanity in the here-and-now. For Marx, revolution was only a means to greater ends—the sweeping away of the former corrupt economic, political and social system in order to bring about a more just order that would benefit and redeem the masses. In practice, however, the salvific aims of Marxism have hardly been realized. It is truly ironic that, in many cases, Marxist inspired revolutions have led to the deaths of millions, as was the case in the Soviet Union, China and Guatemala. This is a far cry from earthly salvation.

Marxism, therefore, while possessing many of the trappings of religion in theory and perhaps holding the potential of becoming a religion, is lacking in practice one of religion’s most important components: a broad-based community of practitioner that identify themselves with its beliefs and goals. Furthermore, the failure of Marxist leaders to convert the masses to its social, economic and political agenda and to implement its vision of the communist state prompted the use of terror, violence, mass murder and other forms of intimidation to force mass compliance. In the end, therefore, the application of the Marxist program for a better world was a far cry from the communist utopia in which all people could live free of capitalist exploitations and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

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<sup>155</sup> “Pope Advocates Peace, Freedom in Final Mass,” *CNN Online*, January 25, 1998, [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), downloaded on 6/16/03

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Marxism is not merely a program for realizing a revolution aimed at drastic social, political and economic changes, but that it also includes a salvific element, specifically the desire to improve the lives of the world's masses enslaved by the ills of an advanced, industrialized capitalist system. Therefore, the “orthodoxy” of specific Marxist revolutions should be judged both by the interpretation and application of Marx's program for revolution *and* by the success of these revolutions in improving the lives of masses that they claimed to liberate.

Each of the three cases presented—the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Communist Revolution of 1949, and the Cuban Revolution of 1959—have interpreted Marx's program for the revolution to fit specific circumstances. Lenin argued that the objective, materialist phases of history outlined by Marx could be accelerated—via a party of trained and devoted Marxists—to create the necessary conditions for the revolution in a primarily agrarian society. Mao built on Lenin's theory to argue that human will and determination could also accelerate the necessary conditions for a revolution in a peasant-based society. And Guevara posited that the *foco*—a small cadre of highly trained, disciplined guerilla Marxists—could act as the vanguard of the revolution, winning peasants over to the Marxist cause.

In all three cases, these leaders succeeded in realizing a revolution followed by drastic social, economic and political changes. However, in none of these cases did revolution lead to the lasting improvement of the masses' lives. In Russia, the early Bolshevik government attempted to create reforms that would free the masses from the shackles of the previous system, including land reforms and social programs aimed at

liberating women and increasing literacy. However, with the onset of civil war, the Party instituted the Red Terror, slaughtering thousands of believed resisters to the communist agenda. The end result was a one party system that used death and intimidation to keep the masses in tow. In China, Mao's successful capture of the government following the Chinese civil war led to aggressive campaigns aimed at realizing the communist dream. This included the Great Leap Forward—designed to rapidly develop China's heavy industry—and the Cultural Revolution, aimed at cleansing the country of bourgeois cultural elements. Both of these programs resulted in the suffering and deaths of millions in China.

Initially, Cuba may have had the greatest success in realizing the communist dream, particularly through its achievements in creating a more even distribution of wealth and land among the masses and through its improved programs in healthcare, education and nutrition. However, its inability to create a self-reliant economy forced it to become dependent on the Soviet Union for trade and finance. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba's economic gains quickly dwindled. Despite its successes, however, Cuba has experienced chronic emigration, suggesting that its achievements have not inspired many within its borders to stay and help realize the communist dream.

Lastly, Marxism contains many elements that make it similar to religion, particularly beliefs, texts, leaders and material assets. However, Marxism in practice has lacked key components vital to the application of its beliefs and goals: a broad-based community of practitioners who identify themselves with the beliefs and goals of the system. Furthermore, Marxism's ultimate goals correspond with the notion of "earthly salvation" presented in this dissertation; it seeks to end the misery of the masses and



create a more just and equitable economic and social system. However, Marxism in practice has been a far cry from these goals. Rather, leaders who self-identified as Marxists have been responsible for the death and suffering of millions.



## **Chapter 9**

### **Concluding Remarks and Policy Implications on the Not-So-Peaceful Disposition of the World's Major Religions**

The previous six case studies have shown that all of the world's major religions have motivated, engaged in, or condoned violent conflict at some point in history. This includes Islam, the religion perhaps most strongly associated with religious violence, but also Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism. No religion, therefore, has a clean slate when considering its contributions to violent conflict and war. This chapter begins by offering some general conclusions on religious violence and war. It then summarizes findings on the three variables considered in this dissertation as causes of religious wars: threat perception; the amount of material, social and technological resources; and the relationship between religious and political leaders. Lastly, this chapter offers policy implications for these findings and focuses, in particular, on US foreign policy.

#### **General Observations on Religious Violence and War**

This dissertation has argued, first, that all the world's major religions have gone through periods of violence as a means of attaining specific goals. This is true for Islam, the religion that most people associate with religious violence today. Bellicose interpretations of Islam have played a role in battles over Jerusalem and Ayodhya, bids to defend the *dar al Islam*, and Iran's Islamic Revolution. However, other religions have perpetrated religious violence with the same goals in mind. Jews and Christians have also fought for possession of Jerusalem and Hindus have used violence to gain control of Ayodhya. Buddhists in Sri Lanka have justified the use of force to preserve the *dhammadipa*, a holy Buddhist nation divinely mandated to protect and propagate the

teachings of the Buddha. And, likewise, in addition to Islam's role in the Iranian Revolution, other ideologies have fomented revolutions—including Marxism and Liberalism—calling for the overthrow of political and social institutions with the aim of creating a new system. Therefore, Islam is not unique in its use of force to achieve saliently religious goals.

Second, this dissertation has argued that none of these religions has been consistently violent; rather, all have gone through periods of bellicosity and periods of peace. This suggests that something within religion changes, making it violent at some points and places but not others. To answer this puzzle, this dissertation has argued that religious violence is the result of *interpretations* of a given faith, which are the product of individuals grounded in specific circumstances. Therefore, religious beliefs, doctrines, scriptures and rituals are not the cause of violence *per se*, but rather specifically interpretations, which vary according to individuals, time, and place. Thus, in order to understand religious violence, it is important to look at bellicose interpretations of the faith and the conditions that are fueling these interpretations. The three specific conditions tested in this dissertation—threat perception; the prevalence of material, social and technological resources; and the relationship between political and religious leaders—will be discussed further below.

In the cases provided in this dissertation, bellicose interpretations of religions have accompanied waves of religious violence. For example, 19<sup>th</sup> century Muslim violence against Hindus occurred in the milieu of calls for jihad to defend Islam in South Asia, perpetrated by Muslim leaders such as Saiyid Ahmad of Bareilly. Likewise, more recent Hindu violence against Muslim sites in Ayodhya followed the rise of bellicose

interpretations of Hinduism, most notably the works of K.B. Hedgewar and the RSS, which stresses physical strength, discipline and power in Hindu national identity. This is also true of Buddhist violence in Sri Lanka, which can be traced back to the interpretations of Dharmapala and Walpola Rahula. The same pattern is visible in Jewish militancy, particularly after the 1967 “Six-Day” war in which the organization *Gush Emunim* argued that seizing the West Bank and Gaza Strip would hasten the coming of the messiah. Likewise, Christian calls to liberate Jerusalem from “heathen” hands during the crusades was inspired by the interpretations of clerics and lay religious leaders, who argued that it was a Christian duty to take back the Tomb of Christ.

Third, this dissertation has argued that bellicose interpretations of the faith by themselves are not enough to cause religious violence. Rather, it is necessary for these interpretations to be accepted as true by practitioners. In other words, the ideas of religious leaders require followers in order for these interpretations to matter. Bellicose interpretations *and* their acceptance by practitioners are a visible cause of violence in all the cases described in this dissertation. Religious battles over sacred space in Ayodhya and Jerusalem involve not only religious leaders but also practitioners willing to take up arms in defense of these religious sites. Likewise, religious violence to defend holy nations in Islam and Sri Lanka has occurred amid a religiously motivated call to arms and an answer from the masses, which has created the necessary peoplepower for these violent campaigns. This is particularly important when considering the call to arms by Bin Laden; it is not only that he has produced a bellicose interpretation of Islam but, rather, that this interpretation has resonated with Muslims across the *ummah*, the world wide community.

Fourth, these observations also confirm another important dimension of religion; while one can speak of religion in theory, in practice religions do not exist as a monolith. In other words, one can speak of a religion such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism in theory, but the manifestation of religion in practice is never singular. All the religions discussed in this dissertation have gone through major changes and divisions in their histories. Second-Temple era Judaism looks very different from the types of Judaism that are practiced today. Likewise, Ashkenazi Jews have different customs from Sephardi Jews, which is the result of the regions and cultures in which these branches of the faith developed and the different interpretations these contexts have produced. This is equally true for Islam, which contains two major branches—Sunni and Shia Islam—in addition to different forms of Shari'a law. Likewise, the same holds true for Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism. Therefore, while Islam, Christianity or Buddhism may be violent at one point in time, it does not mean that this incident of violence represents the religion as a whole.

Fifth, this dissertation has demonstrated that religious violence and war, in general, is not a new phenomenon. There are incidents of religious violence that reaches back several millennia. This observation is not new or perhaps even controversial; however, by looking back in time and across space, this dissertation has shown, first, that religious violence and peace varies across time and, second, religions that may not currently be involved in religious wars, such as Christianity, have been belligerent in the past. Moreover, this dissertation has elucidated the similarities and differences between past and current religious wars. Therefore, as will be further discussed, the argument that

religious “fundamentalism” and its violent offshoots are uniquely modern is not supported by the findings of this research.

Lastly, this dissertation has argued that religious wars are defined and differentiated from other wars by their end goals. Specifically, this dissertation has identified three saliently religious end goals: the defense of holy nations, battles over sacred space, and the desire to foment religious revolutions with the goal of creating a religious government. While these goals do not cover the aims of all religious wars, they touch on history’s most bloody religious conflicts. This includes Christian Crusades, Muslim Jihads, and Jewish battles over Jerusalem; one cause of Hindu and Muslim riots in South Asia; the civil wars in Sri Lanka; the current rise of global jihads, and the Iranian Revolution. Therefore, understanding the conditions under which groups choose violence as a means of attaining these goals is important for moving towards possible ways in which to mitigate major religious wars.

### **The Conditions That Fuel Religious Wars**

This dissertation has tested three variables as potential causes of religious wars: threat perception, the amount of resources available to a given group, and the relationship between religious and political leaders. These variables have been tested against the case studies for their strength in explaining the conditions under which religious wars arise. Overall, this research has found that social resources, particularly charismatic leaders and well-structured organizations, are present in all of the cases of religious violence. However, no one variable adequately explains the conditions under which religious wars arise and, moreover, each of the three types of religious wars—defense of holy nations,

battles over sacred space, and religious revolutions—arise under different combinations of these variables, which will be discussed below.

### *Threat perception*

Three predictions were posited in this dissertation on the role of threat perception as a cause of religious wars. First, if sacred sites are threatened, then religious groups will use force to defend these sites. Second, if the status of religious authorities is challenged, then they will use force to defend their status. And third, if co-religionists are threatened, then religious groups will use force to defend their fellow religionists.

The case studies reveal that, while threat is present in all incidents of religious violence described, it is overdetermined as a cause of religious wars. In other words, generally speaking, it is a necessary but not sufficient cause of religious wars. Therefore, other variables in combination with threat perception determine the rise of religious wars. Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that the second prediction—if the status of religious leaders is threatened then they will use force to defend that order—does not adequately explain the conditions under which religious leaders and their constituents engage in religiously motivated bellicosity. Rather, religious violence, particularly in defense of holy nations, occurs under threats to *both* religious leaders and wider society. Therefore, a new hypothesis is proposed: If the structure and norms of society are radically threatened, then religious groups will use force to defend that order. As the discussion will show, this hypothesis better explains the nature of threat that produces a religious reaction.

Threat is chronically present in nearly all the cases described. For example, in battles over sacred space, Jews, Christians and Muslims have had to share Jerusalem



since the seventh century CE. Rarely have all three religious groups shared the space equally; instead, one group has typically governed over the city, presenting the possibility of expulsion for the other religious groups. Therefore, the threat of restricting access to Jerusalem is a fear that all three groups have experienced. Despite this, attempts to cleanse Jerusalem of religious groups have occurred infrequently. This same pattern is visible in religious dynamics in Ayodhya. Therefore threat perception alone does not explain the rise of religious wars to defend sacred space.

Likewise, threat perception alone does not explain the timing of religious revolutions. Iranian citizens had lived for over fifty years under the oppression of the Pahlevi dynasty. Both Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza introduced policies that threatened religious institutions and religious norms in society. However, it was only after a variety of organizations were formed in Iran *and* united under the leadership of the Ayatallah Khomeini in 1978 that Iranians became emboldened to challenge the government and overthrow the Shah, creating an Islamic republic in its place. Threat alone, therefore, does not explain the timing of this uprising.

However, the case studies reveal that threat perception is a salient cause of religious wars in defense of holy nations. For example, Buddhist Sinhalese in Sri Lanka existed peacefully with their non-Buddhist neighbors for centuries. This peaceful dynamic was shattered, however, with the advent of British colonialism to the island in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The British, unlike their Portuguese and Dutch predecessors, introduced radical changes to the island including land reforms, Christian missionary-led mass education, and a bureaucratic government. These changes undermined the social and political order of Sinhalese society—which was based on Theravada Buddhism—

prompting calls by religious and secular leaders for Sinhalese to reconnect with the Buddhist identities and distinguish themselves not only from the British but also from their other non-Sinhalese Buddhist neighbors.

Likewise, the two waves of jihad outlined in this dissertation correspond to radical changes introduced to society via colonialism and globalization. The Muslim world underwent a rash of calls for jihad beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century following the incursion of western powers into South Asia, East Asia, and Africa. These calls to holy war were issued not only against Islam's external enemies but also to purify the faith from within in order to defend the holy nation of Islam against these external threats. Again, beginning in the 1970s, the call for jihad was reissued, this time initially in the Middle East following the creation of the state of Israel and the defeat of its neighbors in the 1967 and 1973 wars. Jihad movements spread throughout the Muslim world as a result of the Soviet-Afghan war and the creation of trans-national jihad movements, most notably Al Qaeda. These movements claim to be reacting against specific threats, most notably US support of the state of Israel, its military presence in Saudi Arabia, sanctions against Iraq, and the spread of western culture and values in Muslim society.

Thus the source of threat against holy nation has not necessarily been religious or even military in nature nor has it been directed merely at religious authority; rather, it has involved challenges to the structure of society, politics and group identity. Colonialism did introduce western Christianity to the lands that colonists occupied and converted people to the faith. However, these new converts were rarely a source of religious wars; rather, colonialism introduced more radical changes to society than converts. In the case of Sri Lanka, Christian missionary-led schools were a particularly strong source of threat,

especially to the Buddhist clerisy, which were the traditional educators in Sinhalese society. However, the threats posed by colonialism also included radical changes in the structure of government and the order of society. For example, in 1815, the British disbanded the Sinhalese monarchy and, in its place, began to construct a bureaucratic government. Likewise, increased access to education created the foundations of a middle class that were neither peasants nor merchants. This new class demanded employment that the traditional Sinhalese socio-economic structure could not provide, creating competition between the educated class for limited jobs. Finally, the presence of colonialism prompted a search for identity in Sri Lanka that drove both the Sinhalese and Tamils to differentiate themselves from their occupiers and, in so doing, differentiate themselves from one another in new ways. For the Sinhalese, religion played a salient role in that process.

Similarly, the call for jihad to defend the *dar al-Islam* has not been in reaction to a religious threat. This is particularly true with the current wave of jihads in which Al Qaeda has called for a global war against the West, particularly the US, for its foreign policy decisions. Al Qaeda has perceived US foreign policy as threatening not only to holy sites in Islam—most notably the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem—but also to the *dar al Islam*, the territory and people deemed central to the faith. Moreover, Al Qaeda has reacted both to the perceived threats posed by US foreign policy and to the spread of western culture and values into the *dar al Islam*, a threat they believe to be undermining the health of their holy nation. In addition, the call for jihad has not only been raised against foreign threats but also threats from within the *dar al Islam*. Specifically, many militant Muslim groups have named secular governments in the

Muslim world as a threat to the health of the *dar al Islam* and, therefore, a legitimate target of force. This is true with militant groups in Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Pakistan. These observations have important policy implications, which will be discussed below.

Thus, threat perception is a necessary but not sufficient cause of religious wars. Threat perception is particularly important for understanding the timing of wars to defend holy nations, particularly threats to the structure and norms of society.

#### *Material, social and technological resources*

One empirical prediction was proposed in this dissertation on the role of resources as a cause of religious wars: the greater the resources—material, social and technological—the more likely the religious group is to use force to attain their goals. Alongside this prediction, this dissertation has asked if one of these resources is more critical for determining the conditions under which religious wars and violence arise or not.

The case studies reveal that, while all three types of resources are important conditions for religious wars, social resources are the most important, and strong leadership and organizations in particular. Nearly all of the incidents of religious violence within and across the case studies presented in this dissertation contain important leaders that are both charismatic *and* highly educated. Not all of these religious leaders have been trained as clerics; in fact one of the growing trends with more recent religious bellicosity is that leaders have come from *outside* the trained clerisy. For example, K.B Hedgewar, who was educated as a medical doctor, produced militant interpretations Hindu “culture”—calling broadly on religious symbols and rituals—which formed the basis for

the RSS in India. Likewise, the Sinhalese leader Dharmapala was not part of the Buddhist clerisy, but drew from their texts in order to create a list of practices and customs that all Sinhalese Buddhists should follow in order to strengthen society. Similarly, more recent bellicose interpretations of Islam have come from leaders educated outside the clerisy. Bin Laden received training in business administration, Dr. Abdul Rantisi of Hamas was trained in medicine, and Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri—the second in command in Al Qaeda, was also trained as doctor.

Evidence from the case studies further reveals that social resources are the most important variable for causing religious revolutions. The Iranian Revolution occurred under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini, a highly respected religious cleric. Moreover, Khomeini succeeded in uniting different groups, movements and organizations both in Iran and the Iranian diaspora with the common goal of deposing the Shah. This included bringing together trade unions, student organizations, civic groups, the clerisy, the military, merchants and peasants to engage in civil disobedience against the state. Khomeini did not create these different organizations; rather, they developed independently with their own leaders and goals. However, Khomeini's leadership was able to bring these groups and their various members together to mobilize the masses against the state. It is worth noting that the Iranian Revolution occurred despite the fact that the masses lacked material assets relative to the state such as finances and weapons. Instead, the masses defeated the Shah through the sheer numbers of participants in their demonstrations—ranging in the millions—that succeeded in bringing the government to its knees. This mass mobilization was the product of leadership and organization. Therefore, the timing and success of the Iranian Revolution can be explained by the

strong leadership of Khomeini and his success in uniting preexisting organizations under the common goal of deposing the Shah.

Social and material resources are also important for battles over sacred spaces. Effective organizations, in particular, have been an important asset for groups wishing to challenge the status quo. The 1949 and 1992 Hindu attempts to claim the Babri Mosque followed the creation of Hindu nationalist organizations, particularly the RSS but also the VHP and the BJP in the latter case. These organizations mobilized Hindus throughout the country in a series of *yatras*—religious processions—with the call to liberate Ram’s birthplace from Muslim hands. These mobilization efforts ultimately resulted in the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992 at the hands of an estimated 300,000 Hindu militants. In contrast, the Muslim attempt to expel Hindus from Ayodhya in the 1850s ultimately failed due to its lack of organization relative to its opponents, specifically British and local authorities.

It is also worth noting that the overwhelming failure of the Christian Crusades to seize and keep areas in the Holy Land was largely the result of poor leadership and organization. The First Crusade succeeded in capturing Edessa, Antioch, Nicea, and Jerusalem, despite the troops’ lack of strong leadership, organization, and material resources; their success was aided by the element of surprise and the weakened military strength of Muslim dynasties in the region. However, subsequent attempts to gain greater territory and defend captured land suffered from continued lack of leadership and organization. The absence of these resources, particularly as the Muslim dynasties in the region joined forces under the command of Saladin, ultimately led to the collapse of the western Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Finally, it is important to note that the current wave of jihads has benefited particularly from all three types of resources. As previously argued, threat perception best explains the timing of religious wars to defend holy nations. However, the effectiveness of these calls to holy war is dependent on assets. The current wave of jihads has benefited from material, social and technological resources. Material resources include money from various sources such as drug trafficking, Islamic charities, states, and individuals; “safe havens” from various states including Afghanistan, Sudan, Pakistan, the UK and the US; in addition to hospitals and clinics, schools, and mosques around the globe. Social resources have also aided the rise of global jihads including educated and charismatic leaders, as previously mentioned, in addition to a host of organizations such as charities, youth groups, banks, and groups committed to recruiting and training fighters. Lastly, the current wave of jihad has managed to link together different movements from around the globe through its use of transportation and communications technologies, most notably the internet and email, but also through electronic bank transfers, cell phones, faxes, and via airplanes, which have allowed members of different movements to congregate quickly and easily.

Thus resources, particularly strong leaders and well-structured organizations are a salient cause of religious wars. Technical and material resources increase the scope and intensity of groups’ bellicose aims.

### *Religious and political leaders*

One prediction was generated on the role of the relationship between religious and political leaders as a cause of religious wars: If religious and political leaders’ authorities are intertwined, then the greater the chances that they can use each other’s resources to

justify and call for war, including both “religious wars,” wars with saliently religious goals, and “wars with religion,” wars that use religious rhetoric and symbols for secular goals. Conversely, if religious and political leaders’ authorities are separated, then the lesser the chances that they can use each other’s resources to justify and call for war. In other words, this variable operates along a continuum where, on the one extreme is the fusion of religious and political authority with the prediction of more wars, and on the other extreme is the separation of religious and political authority with fewer wars.

The case studies reveal that this prediction only holds as an explanation for religious wars under certain conditions. Therefore, two new hypotheses are proposed that specify these conditions: First, if religious and political authority can offer a *quid pro quo* to further specific goals, then the greater the chances that they will form an alliance that could result in religious violence. And second, if the state is a source of threat for religious groups and their goals, then the greater the chances the state will become a target of religious violence.

The case studies demonstrate that the presence of religious leaders within the political sphere, *ipso facto*, does not produce religious violence. Religiously-based monarchies have existed for millennia but religious violence has only occurred sporadically within this time frame. Likewise, beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, religious political parties have existed in several countries such as Israel, Jordan, India, and Sri Lanka but only with inconsistent incidents of religious violence. Therefore, the intertwining of religious and political authority, by itself, does not explain the timing of religious violence.



The rise of religious violence over sacred space in Ayodhya and Jerusalem reveals a condition under which the intertwining of religious and political leaders can produce religious violence. As argued in the previous section, the creation of effective religious organizations is important for mobilizing masses to achieve specific goals. This is visible in the creation of the RSS and VHP in India, and various Jewish militant groups in Israel including *Gush Emunim* and *Kach*, all of which have been instrumental in bids to capture sacred space.

However, religious violence has occurred in both of these countries only after these organizations have formed conditional alliances with certain political parties. In India, the RSS encouraged its ranks to vote for Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress Party in the 1984 elections after Congress' claims to support RSS goals, particularly concerning the status of Ayodhya. When the Congress Party failed to produce visible changes, the RSS then backed the BJP in the 1991 elections, in which they won 119 seats in national elections—nearly 20% of the overall vote—in addition to winning elections in four states. It was under BJP rule that Hindu nationalists destroyed the Babri Mosque.

Similarly, the right-wing Likud Party joined forces with secular and religious Jewish militants to defeat the Labor Party in Israel's 1977 elections. Once in power, Likud began an aggressive program of seizing land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and building settlements, which the government deemed legal despite international condemnation of the program. The confiscation of all land in the occupied territories was the goal of secular and religious Jewish militants. In addition, Gush Emunim and Kach made several attempts to blow up Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, all of which were thwarted. Therefore, both Hindu and Jewish militants had preexisting designs on sacred

land and sites. It was an alliance with political parties, in exchange for voter support, that aided the implementation of these plans.

In addition, it is important to note that in both of these case studies, the relationship between religious groups and political leaders has been fraught with tensions. Following the destruction of the Barbur Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992, the BJP governments were dismissed in the four states in which they ruled in addition to being censured at the federal level. Militant Hindu groups were also outlawed, including the RSS. Likewise, the Likud party was forced to reign in Jewish militants, particularly after failed attempts to destroy Muslim sites in Jerusalem. Moreover, Kach was banned from elections in Israel after deemed racist by Israel's supreme court. These events demonstrate, therefore, that the relationship between political leaders and religious groups has limits.

Violence in defense of holy nations further reveals conditions under which dynamics between religious and political leaders lead to bellicose ends. As argued in the previous section, threat perception is a salient cause of religious wars for holy nations; however, the case studies further reveals that the source of threat matters for determining the relationship between political and religious authorities. In cases where the threat comes from outside of the holy nation, then religious groups and political leaders are likely to work together to counter this threat. This is visible in Sri Lanka, where Buddhist monks and politicians worked together to implement policies that they believed would preserve the *damadipa*, the Buddhist nation of the Sinhalese, and to undermine the non-Buddhists, non-Sinhalese on the island. This dynamic is also visible in the current wave of jihads in which Muslims from across the *ummah* have joined forces to repel what it

perceives as an imminent threat posed by US foreign policy and the export of western culture and values abroad, as previously mentioned.

However, another dynamic is also visible in both Sri Lanka and battles to defend the *dar al Islam*. Alongside the call to violence to expel external threats, both holy nations have also experienced religiously motivated violence *against* the state, naming the government as the source of threat. In Sri Lanka, the JVP—a militant Buddhist organization—launched attacks against the Sri Lankan government beginning in the 1970s with the hope of fomenting a Buddhist revolution. This fratricidal conflict is blamed for the deaths of between 40,000 to 60,000 Sri Lankans. Similarly, militant Muslim groups have risen up in various countries and attacked their governments, which they believe to be corrupt and undermining the faith. This is true in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia, as previously mentioned.

Lastly, the success of religious revolution *results* in the mixing of political and religious authorities; therefore, it is not a cause of religious revolutions. This is visible in the one successful religious revolution studied in this dissertation, Iran. In addition, it is also worth noting, however, that post-revolutionary Iran has engaged in religious violence in order to preserve the Islamic republic, particularly in its eight-year war against Iraq. Moreover, post-revolutionary Iran is named as a principle financier of Islamic terrorist groups attempting to overturn their governments and create further Islamic revolutions. Iran has been tied to the Lebanese Hizbollah, which is Twelver Shia like the state of Iran, and also to militant Sunni movements in Palestine, Egypt, and beyond. Therefore, Iran's success in realizing a religious revolution followed by the creation of an Islamic republic, which has fused religious and political authority, has

resulted in its attempts to export the revolution through alleged finance, training and safe havens.

The findings of the three variables as causes of religious wars and the new hypotheses are summarized below in Table 2.1.

### 2.1 Variables Tested as Causes of Religious Wars

Type	Threat	Resources	Fusion of Authority
<i>Holy Nations</i>	<b>External—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ colonialism, globalization</li> </ul> <b>Internal—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Secular or corrupt state</li> </ul>	<b>Social—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leaders and orgs.</li> </ul> <b>Material—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increases intensity</li> </ul> <b>Technological—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increases scope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State works with to counter external threat</li> <li>▪ State the target in internal threat</li> </ul>
<i>Sacred Space</i>	General and constant—doesn't explain timing	<b>Social—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organizations</li> </ul> <b>Material—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assets of the state</li> </ul> <b>Technological—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not salient</li> </ul>	<b>Limited quid pro quo between political parties and religious groups</b>
<i>Religious Revolutions</i>	General and constant—doesn't explain timing	<b>Social—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Charismatic Leaders and coordinated orgs.</li> </ul> <b>Material—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not salient</li> </ul> <b>Technological—</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not salient</li> </ul>	Religious and political mixing the <i>result</i> of religious revolution, not the cause

### New Hypotheses

4. Threat perception:
  - a. If the structure and norms of society are radically threatened, then religious groups will use force to defend that order.
5. Religious and political leaders:
  - a. If religious and political leaders can offer a *quid pro quo* to further specific goals, then the greater the chances that they will form an alliance that could result in religious violence.
  - b. If the state is a source of threat for religious groups and their goals, then the greater the chances the state will become a target of religious violence.

### Policy Implications

The findings outlined in the previous section have important implications for US foreign policy-making in relation to religious violence in general, and the current wave of terrorist threats to the US. These policy implications will be outlined according to findings from the three variables tested as causes of religious wars: threat perception, the prevalence of material, social and technological resources, and the relationship between governments and religion.

*Policy implications for threat perception*

The previous section argued that, generally, threat perception is an overdetermined cause of religious wars; in other words, threat is chronically present in all the cases studied but religious violence and war has occurred only sporadically. This is particularly true of battles over sacred space and religious revolutions. In battles to defend religious nations, however, threat perception is a salient cause of religious wars. Therefore, this section will consider the policy implications that stem from particular threats that provoke religious wars in defense of holy nations.

The cases studies have revealed that two types of threats provoke holy nations to war: threats from sources external to the holy nation and threats that come from inside the nation, particularly leaders or governments believed to be threatening the faith. The former type of threat is of particular importance to US foreign policy making. The case studies reveal that external threats are not usually in the form of one religious group attacking another or even one state attacking another. Rather, external threats to holy nations have often come in the form of radical changes to the structure of society. This is most visible in the arrival of colonialism in South Asia, East Asia, and Africa.

Colonialism introduced radical changes to the societies they occupied. This included major changes to the form of government, types of economic production, and access to education, as previously mentioned. For the most part, these changes appear to have been motivated by economic gain to the colonizer and not with the intention of undermining the traditional structure of society. However, these structural changes were based on western models of society, economics and governance and therefore contained pieces of western culture and values, including norms on efficiency, materialism, the purpose of government, and the status of individuals.

In both Sri Lanka and most parts of the Muslim world, these radical changes sparked a religious reaction aimed at defending the pre-colonial structure of society. Both holy nations offered up new interpretations of their faith aimed at distinguishing themselves from their occupiers and, in so doing, other groups within society. For both nations, religion became the salient tool of exclusion and, moreover, religious texts and symbols—reinterpreted in light of this new threat—became the foundation for the call to violence as a means of defending the holy nation. In the case of Sri Lanka, this call to violence persisted beyond the departure of colonialist rulers and extended to the non-Buddhist, non-Sinhalese population on the island.

This dynamic between colonial policies on the one hand, and the unintended religious reaction they produced on the other, holds important lessons for US foreign policy making. In the post-Cold War world, the US has made the spread of democracy one of its foreign policy priorities.<sup>1</sup> However, as with colonial policies in the 1800s, these

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<sup>1</sup> The US government has initiated several projects aimed at promoting democracy abroad. For example, in the 1970s, the Carter administration made human rights and “reconstituted democracy” one of its foreign policy pillars. This aim continued under the Regan administration in the 1980s, which began “Project Democracy” in 1981 under the National Security Council. Also under the Regan Administration, an

programs for governance carry inherently western values. The democratic model in the US is liberal democracy; this model of democracy is based on structural principles for governance along with values and norms that undergird this structure. The structural principles of democracy include universal suffrage, division of authority, checks and balances on that authority, and transparency in decision-making and allocation of resources.<sup>2</sup> The liberal values undergirding this structure are, first and foremost, the right of all citizens to choose the leaders of their government. Implicit in this value is the supremacy of the individual in asserting his or her rights. Second, the US model of democracy is also founded on an acute separation of church and state. Third, liberal economic values also tend to accompany norms surrounding the US model of democracy, including open markets, private enterprise, and economic competition. Thus, liberal democracy is about much more than holding elections.

Some of these values are essential for a healthy democracy while others may not be. For example, the right of citizens to elect their government is an inseparable value of democracy; it is its very *raison d'être*. However, does this value automatically preclude the presence of a king or tribal chief within the political system? What if it is the will of the people to have such a leader play a role in the government? Would the US still recognize that government as a democracy? Likewise, does a political system have to be

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academic-governmental cooperative, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), was created in 1983 with the express purpose of understanding and promoting democracy abroad. In addition, the US State Department's aid program, US Agency for International Development (USAID) makes democratic reforms a condition for lending. See William I. Robinson, "Globalization, the World System, and Democracy Promotion in US Foreign Policy," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, (1996), pp. 615-665

<sup>2</sup>For example, Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset define democracy as "a political system, separate and apart from the economic and social systems to which it is joined," meeting three conditions: competitive, free and fair elections between multiple parties; highly inclusivity of the population and the right of all adults to vote; and a meaningful level of civil and political liberties including freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. They also add a fourth condition, "the notion that rulers will be held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens..." See, *Politics in Developing Countries*:

secular in order to be recognized as a democracy? What if it is the will of the people in a country to have religious political parties within their system? While this would surely clash with the American model of liberal democracy, it may be a value that is not essential to a healthy democracy.

In light of the colonial experience and the current wave of jihads against America, US foreign policy, therefore, needs to consider the cultural underpinnings of its attempts to spread democracy around the world. Scholars and policymakers should, first, more clearly define the essentials of structural democracy from non-essential western values and, second, seriously investigate the adaptability of structural democracy to other cultures and value systems. Some work has been done on the compatibility of Islam with democracy ranging from theoretical comparisons to specific case studies.<sup>3</sup> The US, therefore, should sort out structural democracy from its cultural, liberal values and seek to promote the former without the latter.

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the current form of liberal democracy in the US is the result of an evolutionary process. For example, the right of all individuals to choose their leaders has not always been the norm in the US. The presence of slaves in the US for over 200 years, ended in 1865, was followed by former (male)

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*Comparing Experience with Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), pp. 6-7

<sup>3</sup> A theoretical example includes Thomas M. Franck, "Is Personal Freedom a Western Value?" *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 91, No. 4, (October, 1997), pp. 593-627; Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishers, 2002); Ahmad Mawsilili, *The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); 'Abd al-Karim Surush, *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of 'Abdolkarim Souroush*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). A few examples of specific case studies on Islam and democracy include: Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Egypt, Islam and Democracy: Critical Essays*, (New York: American University In Cairo Press, 2002); Forough Jahambakhsh, *Islam, Democracy, and Religious Modernism in Iran, 1953-2000: From Bazargan to Soroush*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill Press, 2001); *Islam and Democracy*, edited by John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)



slaves' right to vote.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, women were not given the right to vote in the US until 1920.<sup>5</sup> Thus the US has only enjoyed true universal suffrage for 80-odd years.

Furthermore, the voting age has not always been 18; this age was federally agreed to in 1970 in order to give those eligible for the military draft (at age 18) the right to vote.<sup>6</sup> In addition, debates persist at the state and federal level over the right of prisoners and ex-convicts to vote.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the US continues to evolve on the most fundamental value of democracy.

US policymakers' efforts to spread democracy around the world should keep in mind, therefore, that democracies are rarely born whole; rather they evolve over time. Diamond, Linz and Lipset acknowledge this by identifying different hybrids of "less than democratic" systems that have adopted some aspects of democracy but not all.<sup>8</sup> Their argument is that, while these democracies are not complete, they are useful first steps on the road to a full-fledged, healthy democracy. Therefore, democracies require time and practice in order to adjust and evolve. This, in turn, requires patience. The US should allow time and flexibility for emerging democracies to evolve and incorporate their own values to structural democracy.

Moreover, it is also worth noting that countries undergoing the transition to a democratic system are two-thirds more likely to go to war—either domestically or

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<sup>4</sup> Slavery was officially abolished in the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ratified in 1865.

<sup>5</sup> Women were given the right to vote in the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ratified in 1920.

<sup>6</sup> Voting age was lowered to 18 in some states in 1965. It became a federal law with the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Laws forbidding incarcerated convicts and former felons from voting are known as the disenfranchisement laws. Only Maine and Vermont currently allow incarcerated convicts the right to vote. See, *Losing the Vote: The Impact of Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States*, Human Rights Watch and The Sentencing Project, (Washington, DC and New York: Human Rights Watch and the Sentencing Project, 1998); see also "Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States," [www.sentencingproject.org](http://www.sentencingproject.org), downloaded on 6/24/03

internationally—than countries not experiencing any change in their political system, including totalitarian regimes.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, if the US is committed to spreading democracy around the world, this foreign policy aim will take time and most likely be accompanied by violent instability.

In addition, it is also important to note that the spread of liberal values is not the only US foreign policy aim perceived as threatening to other countries. In particular US military action in the Muslim world and US support of Israel are perceived as threatening to the *dar al Islam*, as described in chapter four. US military action in Muslim countries is particularly problematic and may be fueling the call for jihad against the US. First and foremost, US military action is helping to fulfill radical Islamic prophecies about US intentions towards Arabs and the Muslim world. Bin Laden has stated in his various *fatwas* and television broadcasts that the US aims to conquer the Muslim world and eradicate Islam.<sup>10</sup> In his list of examples, he has cited US policies towards Iraq as proof of US intentions to the region and to Islam. The United States should heed these claims because polls to the Muslim world reveal that recent US military actions appear to resonate across the *ummah* as hostile and aggressive to Islam as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> They identify five hybrids from closest to furthest from full democracy: semi-democracies, low-intensity democracies, hegemonic party systems, and pseudo-democracies. See Diamond, Linz, and Seymour, pp. 7-9

<sup>9</sup> Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (Summer, 1995), pp. 5-38.

<sup>10</sup> For example, see "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," *World Islamic Front Statement* (Bin Laden), 23 February, 1998, [www.fas.org/irp/world/para/dpcs/980223-fatwa.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/dpcs/980223-fatwa.htm), downloaded on 6/27/02; and "Bin Laden's Warning: Full Text," *BBC Online*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, downloaded on 10/11/01

<sup>11</sup> This point is elucidated in *The 2002 Gallup Pole to the Islamic World: Tuesday Briefing*, (Princeton: The Gallup Pole, 2002). In response to US military actions in Afghanistan, the Executive Summary states: "There is some recognition on the part of sizable percentages of the respondents that the United States is engaging in the actions in Afghanistan in reaction to Sept. 11 and in the attempt to shut down Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. But numerous others in the Islamic world say that the main motivation is power grabbing, attempts to take over and control additional peoples or lands, or an effort to corner Afghanistan's resources, including uranium," pg. 6.

Likewise, the United State's unconditional alliance with the state of Israel needs to be seriously considered in light of the rise of Islamically motivated violence against the US. Radical Islamic groups across the *ummah* cite an American-Jewish conspiracy to destroy Islam as grounds for jihad against the US and Israel. While this conspiracy theory is not true, US policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict drive this perception. In particular, a tight alliance with Israel fuels the perception that the US imposes a double-standard on human rights, criticizing Muslim states for their human rights violations but then looking the other way at Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. More generally, the suffering of the Palestinians is an emotional topic that resonates across the *ummah* and is usually tied to the United States via its unconditional support for Israel.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, internal threats to holy nations and the religious wars they provoke are also of importance to US foreign policy making. In particular, US support for the governments in Egypt and Saudi Arabia appear to be producing a religious backlash motivated at the United States. While the US undoubtedly incurs benefits from its high level of political, financial and material aid to both of these countries, this support is making the US a target with Islamic groups hostile to the regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, US support of these countries also contradicts the aim of promoting democracy abroad; neither of these countries permits free and fair elections and both countries practice limitations on civil society and other elements important to creating healthy democracies. Therefore, the US government should weigh the costs and benefits of aid to Egypt and Saudi Arabia in light of the religious violence that it may be producing.

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<sup>12</sup> This is also mentioned as a salient perception in the Executive Summary of the 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, pg. 4.

Likewise, the US should also be concerned about regional instability caused by internal threats to holy nations. In South Asia, heightened tensions between Hindus and Muslims resulted in an estimated 2,000 to 5,000 killed in the state of Gujarat in 2002. While these deaths have not directly impacted the US, they have exacerbated tensions in the region. Coupled with continued violence in Kashmir, India and Pakistan—as two nuclear powers—remain a global concern for the possibility of nuclear confrontation. Therefore, these internal battles hold potential for affecting US and global interests as well.

*Policy implications for resources*

This dissertation has argued, first, that social resources—particularly well-organized groups and strong leaders—are an important cause of religious wars. As with threat perception, organization and strong leadership is a necessary but not sufficient cause of religious wars. Therefore social resources in combination with other variables explain the rise of the three types of religious wars presented in this dissertation: wars to defend holy nations, battles for sacred space, and religious revolutions.

The case studies reveal that two analytically distinct yet empirically connected social resources are a salient cause of religious wars: effective organizations and strong leadership. Neither of these variables are uniquely religious; one can find strong leadership and effective organizations in Marxist, nationalist, and other ideological movements bent on challenging the status quo. However, religions do offer some advantages over other movements in the prevalence of these two resources. First, as argued in chapter one, religions are unique in that they are corporate phenomena. Chapter one also argued that religions come in three forms of collectives—groups, movements

and organizations—with organizations being the most highly structured and possessing a political agenda. Moreover, religious groups—unlike ethnic, national or material interest groups—come readymade with a set of beliefs, practices and texts, which form the pretext for the group’s existence. Often times with ethnic, national, or material interest groups, these resources have to be constructed in order to create a common definition of the group, its interests, and its distinction from other groups. Therefore religions are, by the definition proposed in this dissertation, corporate phenomena that are organized around a common set of beliefs and texts, potentially giving religious groups a head start in forming an organization.

Second, as also argued in this dissertation, religions do not exist without leaders. In most cases, these leaders are not merely charismatic figures that develop a following; rather, they are trained and educated both in the texts and traditions of their religion and in the role of leading their constituents. Therefore religions, unlike ethnic groups or material interest groups, come both with leaders and a structure organized around leaders and followers, which may also give religion the advantage in mobilizing constituents with political goals in mind.

The importance of well-structured organizations and strong leadership as causes of religious wars offer several policy implications. First, if belligerent organizations and leaders can be identified within a religion, then policies can be created to undermine their efforts to recruit and deploy combatants. Not all religious organizations are clearly belligerent, but some are. Bin Laden and Azzam created the organizations Maktab al-Khidamat and Al Qaeda with the specific aim of recruiting and training militants for jihad. Likewise, the Sudanese leader al-Turabi founded the Islamist International and the

Armed Islamic Movement (also known as the International Legion of Islam) with the express purpose of coordinating various jihad movements around the globe and recruiting fighters. These organizations are clearly belligerent.

Other Muslim organizations, however, are less clear-cut. The Palestinian Islamic organization Hamas contains political, social and military wings. Some argue, specifically the current Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, that the entire organization must be disbanded, while others assert that only the military wing needs to be neutralized.<sup>13</sup> Destroying the entire organization could have adverse social and political consequences. First, it could anger Palestinians that benefit from services provided through their social branch, particularly medical aid. Second, it is also important to note that Hamas currently holds the greatest potential for an opposition party to the PLO, particularly Fatah, the political party of Yassar Arafat. Dismantling Hamas as a whole could hinder the development of oppositional parties, thus affecting a necessary condition for competitive, multi-party elections. Third, trying to take out the whole organization could anger and radicalize the organization, providing fuel for increased violent operations. Therefore, attacking organizations should be undertaken with extreme caution for both immediate and long-term effects.

In addition to dismantling belligerent organizations, US foreign policy should concern itself with encouraging organizations that can compete with belligerent groups. These groups need not be secular in order to undermine belligerent organizations. As

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, "Ha mas Ready to Lead Palestinians," *Herald News Services*, February 7, 2003; James Bennet, "The Mideast Turmoil: Jerusalem; Sharon and Abbas Weigh Concessions for Mideast Peace," *The New York Times*, May 30, 2003; Ian Fisher, "Social Service With a Vengeance; Ha mas, Extreme in Terror and Charity, is Key to Road Map," *The International Herald Tribune*, June 17, 2003; Greg Myre with Ian Fisher, "Sharon Vows to 'Hound' Hamas, Which Rejects a Cease-Fire Bid," *The New York Times*, June 17, 2003

mentioned in the previous section, civil society is an important component of a healthy democracy and associations are one component of civic society. Also as argued in the previous section, religion in the social and political sphere is not *ipso facto* a bad thing. In fact, several scholars have noted the importance of America's Christian civic associations in the US in forming its political, economic and civil landscape.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, competing organizations need not be secular in order to effectively challenge belligerent religious organizations. Rather, a variety of religious organizations would present a "marketplace of ideas" regarding theological responses to social and political challenges. Religious organizations, therefore, should be encouraged as a healthy function of civil society.

Second, US foreign policy should consider strategies aimed at undermining leaders that purport belligerent interpretations of religions, particularly those that have the intent and capabilities of targeting the US. First and foremost, this strategy must emerge out of an understanding of the popular appeal of such interpretations. As previously argued, belligerent interpretations of a religion alone do not create religious wars; rather, they require followers that accept these interpretations as true and take up the call to arms. Therefore, undermining belligerent interpretations of the faith requires considering not merely the specifics of the message but the greater worldview in which it is being received. If Bin Laden's argument that the US is engaged in a Christian-Jewish conspiracy to destroy Islam is clearly false to those in the US, why, then, is it resonating

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<sup>14</sup> For example, Alexis de Tocqueville mentions the importance of Christianity as a belief system and a social system in forming US civil society and democracy. See Alex de Tocqueville, *Democracy In America: Part II, The Social Influence of Democracy*, (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), especially Chapter 1: "Philosophical Method of the Americans," pp. 3-12; and Chapter V: "How Religion in the United States Avails Itself of Democratic Tendencies," pp. 20-28. Likewise, Max Weber hypothesizes that Protestant work ethics are largely responsible for America's entrepreneurial success. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Stephen Kalberg, (Los Angeles: Roxbury Press, 2002). See also, Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986)

with millions of Muslims around the world? Answering this question requires academic inquiry into the perceptions held by those in the Muslim world and the sources of these perceptions.

In addition to leaders and organizations, it is also worth noting that material and technological resources play a role in the scope and intensity of religious violence. Both of these resources are somewhat easier to dismantle than social resources are and US foreign policy has made considerable strides in denying these assets to religious belligerents, particularly Islamic terrorists targeting the US. Both prior to and especially after September 11<sup>th</sup>, the US government has frozen bank accounts connected with terrorist groups, including not only Islamic terrorists but also Jewish terrorist groups such as the Jewish Defense League and its Israeli organizations.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the US has taken measures to end “safe havens,” states that provide sanctuary to terrorists. This has included military action against Afghanistan, training and operations with troops in the Philippines, and missile strikes in Yemen. In addition to these efforts, the US government should also take measures to shut down militant organizations in the West, particularly those operating out of London, as argued in chapter four. Lastly, the US has also aimed to shut down technological resources of terrorist groups, including websites of Islamic and Jewish militant, in addition to using technology as a resource to monitor movements and conversation of militant groups.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, it is worth considering if military action is the best means of taking out belligerent religious groups, their leaders and their resources or if non-violent approaches

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Dean E. Murphy, “Terror Label No Hindrance to Anti-Arab Jewish Group,” *The New York Times*, December 19, 2000; Greg Winter, “Two Held in Plot to Attack Mosque and Congressman,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 2001



would be more effective. One of the tactics of the US is to use covert and overt military force as a means of fighting the Global War on Terror, which is primarily targeting Islamic terrorists. The state of Israel has also used this approach, including assassinating leaders of Hamas and other militant organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The use of military force may not be the best means with which to fight these groups for several key reasons. First, military strikes against Muslim nations supports bin Laden's argument that the US seeks to attack and destroy the Muslim world. Polling in the Muslim world confirms this perception, as previously mentioned. Following on this point, reinforcing misperceptions about US intentions can become useful propaganda for groups wishing to mobilizing new recruits. To avoid these problems, the US may benefit from non-military actions, such as encouraging states around the world to outlaw overtly belligerent groups and use domestic and international law enforcement agencies to arrest leaders and members.

Second, past examples of attempts to defeat guerilla and terrorist groups militarily have proven time consuming and costly. The jihadist movement in the Northwestern Frontiers of India took the British roughly seventy years to defeat, as described in chapters four and five. Likewise, efforts to defeat Marxist-inspired insurgency groups in Latin America proved equally as difficult to defeat militarily in addition to creating some of the worst incidents of mass-killing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as described in chapter eight. Therefore, military solutions to the current wave of religious violence will most likely cost time, lives and resources.

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Dean E. Murphy, "Two Unlikely Allies Come Together in Fight Against Muslims," *The New York Times*, June 2, 2001

Third, assassinating leaders also could be aiding belligerent groups' recruitment. Those who fall in battle are honored as heroes; this is as true for countries as it is for ethnic groups and religious warriors. Rather than assassinating leaders, the US should arrest these leaders and put them on trial, threatening an ignoble and unglorious life imprisonment sentence to those found guilty of violent acts against US property and citizens. Such punishment undermines a martyr's death on the battlefield. Likewise, the US could demoralize these organizations by buying off certain members with "golden parachutes"; the US could offer money and other material incentives for members to defect from the ranks of the organization. This option would not work with "true believers" but may work with those who have joined up for material gains.

*Policy implications for religious and political authority*

This dissertation initially proposed that the intertwining of religious and political authorities would allow each to use the other's resources to further their agendas, including violence and war. However, the case studies have reveals that religious and political mixing, *ipso facto*, does not increase the likelihood of religious wars. Rather, certain conditions create this possibility. First, if religious and political authorities can offer a *quid pro quo* to further specific goals, then the greater the chances that they will form an alliance that could result in religious violence. And second, if the state is a source of threat for religious groups and their goals, then the greater the chances the state will become a target of religious violence.

Of these two additions, the latter condition—the state as a source of threat for religious groups and their goals—is currently of greater policy concern to the US. The case studies reveal that illegitimate governments have inspired, in part, the current wave

of jihads around the globe. Most states across the Muslim *ummah* have been plagued by unstable and often corrupt leadership. Coupled with this, civil liberties are often restricted in Muslim countries. Freedom of speech, for example, is rarely upheld. This prevents individuals and groups from voicing grievances against the state, further frustrating popular participation in the destiny of the country. Freedom of association is also often restricted. This includes bans on the creation of political parties, such as in Egypt and most of the Gulf States.<sup>17</sup>

In many countries, radical Islamic leaders have spearheaded critiques against corrupt regimes and have called for better leadership, often at the risk of imprisonment and even death.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, radical Islamic groups have stepped in to provide social services that governments have failed to give their citizens. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Palestine have opened clinics and schools aimed at meeting these social needs.<sup>19</sup> Hamas in Palestine has also opened clinics, particularly in the Gaza Strip where the PLO has failed to provide for the densely populated Palestinian exclave.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the Hizbollah has provided social services to Lebanon's Shia population, often neglected by the government.<sup>21</sup> These services are

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<sup>17</sup> Egypt has gone back and forth with allowing political parties to form, see Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 27, (1995), pp. 321-339 especially pp. 320-329; see also Nora Bensahel, "Political Reform in the Middle East," *Security Trends in the Middle East and Their Implications for the United States*, edited by Nora Bensahel and Daniel Byman, pp. 15-51, (Santa Monica: RAND, forthcoming), pg. 27.

<sup>18</sup> This is particularly true of the Brotherhood in Egypt. Thousands of its members were imprisoned by the Egyptian government between 1954 and 1982, see "The Muslim Brotherhood—Egypt," *Encyclopaedia of the Orient*, [http://i-cias.com/c.o/mus\\_br\\_egypt.htm](http://i-cias.com/c.o/mus_br_egypt.htm), downloaded on 6/24/02.

<sup>19</sup> John L. Esposito, *Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 131-133

<sup>20</sup> Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 20-27

<sup>21</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis*, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pg. 36

cited as strengthening popular support for these radical groups, often at the expense of support for the state.

Given the popular support of many Islamic groups, governments are faced with two broad options: either to clamp down on Islamic groups or to bring them into the political arena as political parties. The general consensus among political scientists and policy makers in the US is that allowing Islamic groups to form political parties will undoubtedly lead to disaster along the lines of the Iranian Revolution or the cancelled 1991 Algerian elections that plunged the country into civil war.<sup>22</sup> However, other examples suggest that allowing religious political parties to participate in elections can produce a largely beneficial outcome. For example, in the face of riots over governmental corruption and increases in the price of basic necessities, King Hussein of Jordan called for elections to the House of Representatives in 1992.<sup>23</sup> The elections resulted in a strong victory for Islamic political parties and the Muslim Brotherhood, which together won 34 of the 80 seats.<sup>24</sup> Allowing Islamic groups to participate in elections exposed them to legal restrictions such as bans on receiving foreign money for campaigning and services.<sup>25</sup> It also forced these groups to compete with other parties for support; when the Islamic groups failed to deliver on their promises, they suffered at the following elections in 1993 and won only 16 seats.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> As argued in S.V.R. Nasr, "Democracy and Islamic Revivalism," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (1995), pp. 261-285

<sup>23</sup> Abla Amawi, "Democracy Dilemmas in Jordan," *Middle East Report*, (January-February 1992), pp. 26-29; Beverly Milton-Edwards, "Façade Democracy In Jordan," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, (1993), pp. 191-203; Anoushira Van Ehteshami, "Is the Middle East Democratizing?" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 26, No. 2, (1999), pp. 199-217

<sup>24</sup> Milton-Edwards, pg. 195

<sup>25</sup> Milton-Edwards, pg. 199

<sup>26</sup> Milton-Edwards, pg. 202

A similar pattern is visible in Pakistan. The Islamic group *Jama'at-i Islami*, formed in India prior to Partition, has participated in Pakistan's elections in addition to mobilizing opposition during Pakistan's periods of military rule.<sup>27</sup> Despite its rhetoric to take over the political system in Pakistan and affect an Islamic revolution, Jama'ati has never succeeded in gaining the necessary votes to form a critical mass within the government and to implement its agenda. Rather, Jama'ati, like any other political party in the system, has had to modify its platform to secure votes, form alliances with other political parties, and deliver on its promises. Jama'ati has even been credited with mobilizing votes across ethnic, regional and class groups, forming an important crosscutting cleavage in Pakistani politics.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, Jama'ati, like Islamic parties in Jordan, have contributed to evolving democracy in Pakistan.

These examples illustrate that allowing religious political parties to run for elections offers several benefits. First, elections provide these groups with a legitimate means of voicing their grievances and attempting to change the status quo non-violently. Second, it puts these groups to the test in delivering their promises and goals. Like any other political party, if they fail to deliver, they are voted out of office. Third, it forces these groups to compete for their constituents, further holding them accountable to their promises. Fourth, it compels these groups to act within the limits of the law and disavow violence against the state and other illegal activities. Fifth, if elected to government, Islamic party members are forced to work with other political parties, most likely resulting in compromise. And finally, the success (and failures) of political parties at the polls reflects the will of the people, thus making democracy more genuine.

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<sup>27</sup> Nasr, pg. 266

<sup>28</sup> Nasr, pg. 268

It is worth noting that allowing religious political parties to run in elections is not a uniquely Muslim phenomenon. Israel has experienced a growth of religious parties participating in its elections in the past few decades. Israel's first religious party, formed in 1956, was the National Religious Party. In the 1980s, several new parties emerged including Shas, Moledet, Tzomet, Tehiya and Kach, which was banned from elections in 1992 after the courts determined its rhetoric to be anti-Arab.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Sri Lanka and India have also allowed religious political parties to run in various elections in its past, as mentioned in chapters three and five, respectively. Therefore, religions other than Islam seek to form political parties and run in elections.

It is also important to note, however, that allowing religious political parties to run in elections carries certain risks. As elucidated in the chapters on Jerusalem and Ayodhya, the presence of religious groups and parties in the political sphere could result in collusion for specific end goals. In both Israel and India, religious groups wishing to change the status quo on sacred land used the political system to create a more permissive environment. However, in both cases, the system has also imposed restraints on these activities. In Israel, the government has allowed settlers to build throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip but has clamped down on activities aimed at destroying Muslim sites in Jerusalem. Similarly, following the destruction of Ayodhya's Babri Mosque in 1992, the BJP—the party believed to have created a permissive environment for activities in Ayodhya—was dismissed from the states they governed in addition to being censured

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<sup>29</sup> Samuel C. Heilman, "The Orthodox, the Ultra-Orthodox, and the Elections for the Twelfth Knesset," *Elections in Israel: 1988*, edited by Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, pp. 135-154, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); Etta Bick, "Fragmentation and Realignment: Israel's Nationalist Parties in the 1992 Elections," *Israel at the Polls: 1992*, edited by Daniel J. Elazar and Shmuel Sandler, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 1995); Aaron P. Willis, "Shas—The Sephardic Torah Guardians: Religious "Movement" and Political Power," pp. 121-143, *The Elections in Israel: 1992*, edited by Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995)

at the federal level. Therefore, the system does provide some limits on the activities of religious groups wishing to violently change the status quo.

Perhaps the biggest danger with religious political parties is that they may carry the risk of excluding or endangering minorities; in other words, if they function like ethnic parties. As with ethnic parties, religious political parties must be formed with crosscutting cleavages in mind to reduce the possibilities of these parties “capturing” the state. However, as both the Islamic parties in Jordan and *Jama’at-i Islami* in Pakistan have shown, religious political parties can cut across ethnic, regional and class differences, forming cross cutting cleavages. Thus, the presence of religious parties does not necessarily result in religious or ethnic tension.

## **Conclusion**

The good news about religious wars is that they are not constant, they are fought with specific goals in mind, and they have identifiable causes. This dissertation has sought to identify the conditions under which religious groups and their leaders choose violence as a means of attaining specific goals. In so doing, it has demonstrated that religious wars function, in many ways, like any other war; they are a response to perceived or actual threats and they are undertaken to preserve resources deemed valuable to religious adherents.

However, the bad news about religious wars is that they are often the unintended product of policy aims. In particular, waves of religious violence occurred in the wake of drastic changes to society brought on by colonialism. These changes were introduced with the aim of making society more efficient, not more violent; however the result was religious violence within Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu societies. This historic lesson is

of particular importance to US foreign policy-making, particularly in light of its efforts to spread democracy and liberalize economies around the globe, which could be inadvertently producing a religious backlash. The good news, again, is that the US can make choices that will help mitigate the possibility of a religious backlash. But this requires soul-searching honesty both in US foreign policy motives to non-western countries and rigorous assessment of these policies' effects. If not, history will most likely repeat itself.



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