

“BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE”:

RELIGIOUS TRADITION AND RELIGIOUS CIVIL WAR DURATION

by

SHELLIANN J. POWELL

(Under the Direction of Brock Tessman)

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to uncover the relationship between the religious affiliation of civil war combatants and religious civil war duration. I argue that religious civil wars involving Islamic groups last longer than conflict involving groups of other religious traditions due to the heightened role of issue indivisibility and the presence of structural factors specific to the Islamic religion. Although the statistical analyses yielded indeterminate findings that ran counter to my theory and hypotheses, qualitative analyses provided support for the mechanisms that I theorize result in wars involving an Islamic group to last longer than conflicts between groups of other religious traditions.

INDEX WORDS: Religious civil wars, issue indivisibility, *jihad*, *ummah*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Millennia of human history have shown that religion is not a “small difference” but possibly the most profound difference that can exist between people.

-Samuel Huntington 1996, 254

Since 1940 there have been a total of 133 civil conflicts¹ (Toft 2006a, 59). In a little less than half of these conflicts, at least one party justified both their use of violence and their reason for fighting in concretely religious terms (Toft 2006a, 59). Although domestic conflicts involving religious cleavages account for only 19 percent of all civil conflicts that started or were ongoing in the 1940s, by the end of the 1990s they had doubled to 43 percent, with the largest shift occurring in the 1970s (Toft 2006b, 9; Juergensmeyer 1993). Moreover, of the approximately 22 civil conflicts that began in the 1990s, almost 50 percent involved either religious issues, such as the adoption of *shari'ah* law, or parties aligned along religious tradition (Toft 2006a, 2006b). These findings attracted the research interest of many scholars, prominent among them being Samuel Huntington.

Huntington's “clash of civilizations” thesis drew attention to the role of identity in explaining the causes of interstate dispute (1993). However, he believed that these factors would only pose a threat to international peace after the end of the stability that characterized

¹ For the purposes of this project, I adopted Toft's (2006b, 8) criteria for determining whether a conflict was a civil war. These are: 1) the focus of the war was to control over which group would govern the political unit; 2) there were at least two groups of organized combatants; 3) the state was one of the combatants; 4) there had to be at least 1000 battle deaths per year on average; 5) the ratio of total death had to be at least 95 percent to 5 percent, meaning the stronger side had to have suffered at least 5 percent of the casualties; and 6) the war had to occur within the boundaries of an internationally recognized state entity at the start of the war.

the Cold war era (Huntington 1993). Although Huntington was correct in theorizing that language, ethnicity and religion would not cease to play a role in international conflict, empirical research, which will be presented in the next chapter, found that he was incorrect in his assumption that these trends post-date the Cold War (Fox 2004a; Tuscisny 2004). In fact, scholars have found that identity wars, meaning conflicts involving issues of race, language or religion, have been increasingly problematic in both intrastate and interstate conflict since the 1950s and 60s, indicating that these wars were not kept in check by Cold War tensions but that they were always a feature of the international landscape (Fox 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a; Gurr 1994; Ellingsen 2000; Henderson and Singer 2000; Russett, Oneal and Cox 2000; Henderson and Tucker 2001). Other scholars hold that religion, in contrast to other aspects of identity, has become an increasingly salient issue, especially in domestic conflict (Esposito 2000; Hasenclever and Rittberger 2000). Even though the how and why religion becomes involved in civil conflict remains in dispute, research has shown that once parties align themselves along religious lines, it has drastic effects on the conflict in several ways (Fox 1997, 17), for example empirical tests conducted by Toft (2006b) found that religious civil wars result in higher combatant deaths, are more likely to recur once “ended” and are four times as deadly for noncombatants.

I argue that the connection between religion and conflict is not limited to defending the religion against perceived enemies but also that using inflammatory religious collective action frames motivates people to engage in specified actions for a longer period of time. This paper will look at how differences in the framing of issues across religious traditions, particularly Islam, affect the duration of religious civil conflicts.

Theoretical Distinction between Religious and Non-Religious Ethnic Wars

Religious civil wars are a subset of all identity-based civil wars. In some cases religion can be the defining characteristic, while in others it may be overshadowed by other aspects of ethnicity, for example language or race/color. The key factor that determines the salience of religion, over another aspect of ethnic identity, is perception (Fox 1997). Religion is salient to ethnic identity when an ethnic group perceives it to be so and is salient to a conflict when one or both sides of the conflict consider it to be salient (Fox 1997). Toft argues that any civil war can become a religious civil war if any of the four conditions hold:

1. The rule of the state's leaders is threatened
2. The society has pre-existing religious cleavages
3. The state monopolizes information and communications; and
4. Key resources needed for continued rule—small arms, cash, skilled fighters, and logistical support—lie beyond the geographic boundaries of the conflict itself, thus making transnational appeals more necessary and more attractive (2006b, 19-20).

A religious civil war is one in which religious belief or practice is either a central or peripheral issue in the conflict. For religion to count as 'central,' combatants have to be fighting over whether the state or a region of the state should be ruled according to a specific religious tradition e.g. Sudan (1983-2005) or Nigeria (Toft 2006b, 37). For religion to count as 'peripheral'², combatants have to identify with a specific religious tradition and group themselves accordingly, but the rule of a specific religious tradition could not be the object of contention³ e.g. the break-up of the former Yugoslavia (Toft 2007, 97).

² In addition to religious issue emphasis, Toft (2006b) utilizes empirical indicators for war intensity to differentiate the role that religion plays in religious civil wars. She measures the intensity of the religious civil war by looking at war duration, war termination type, recurrence, and noncombatant deaths.

³ Although this may seem a very broad characterization of religious civil wars, the dataset included 133 civil conflicts but only 42 wars were identified as religious civil conflicts (Toft 2008). In other words, religion, whether centrally or peripherally, does not play a major role

Civil wars in which religion is either a central or peripheral issue denote a conflict over social and/or political⁴ values. Conflicts over values are often more prone to violence than conflicts over other issues, for example interests, because they affect the foundation upon which the political community is based. Furthermore, religious communities are one of the primary political socialization and value-formation mechanisms in any society. Due to the fact that individuals identify with the values of their group or community, if these values are jeopardized, then it is perceived as an existential threat (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 118). Group members are then more willing to mobilize resources for the defense of those values and to use force if necessary.

However, in civil wars where religion is a central issue, the use of violence is regarded as morally and religiously justified. The adversarial group is not viewed as pursuing their interests, but as rebels who violate the fundamental norms of social conduct and has therefore forfeited their right to fair and nonviolent treatment (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 118). But, I argue that regardless of whether religion is a central or peripheral concern, the issues that are fought over in religious civil wars lend themselves to indivisibility because of their intangible nature. In other words, if parties are aligned according to religious identity and issues are framed using religious rhetoric, indivisibility causes the cessation of hostilities

in most civil conflicts. As I later argue, in order for elites to frame a conflict in religious terms, there must be some pre-existing tensions in which to exploit, if religious tensions are not a feature of the political landscape, then religion will neither become a central or peripheral issue.

⁴ Religion can still feature peripherally in conflicts over political values if the parties are aligned according to religious groupings but are fighting over a non-religious issue such as whether the country should break-up or stay together, for example, the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, in empirical analyses conducted in this paper, resources were not significant in any model lending credibility to the idea that religion can play either a central or peripheral role in these conflicts.

to be less likely and the conflict to continue indefinitely. Conflicts over value-systems are reinforced by the belief that compromises are impossible and that a defeat is equivalent to an attack on one's beliefs (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 118).

Additionally, in religious conflict, parties are more likely to distrust each other deeply as one cannot expect sincerity from members of another religious tradition⁵ (Hasenclever and Rittsberger 2003, 121). The adversary is seen either as a religious fanatic, who cannot be appeased, or irreligious and will use strategy to achieve their goals by any means necessary (Hasenclever and Rittsberger 2003, 122). Therefore, the conception of the other side as an enemy to both justice and one's religious tradition are reinforced and the prospects for peace are eliminated.

There are two main reasons that religious differences significantly alter the dynamics of civil wars. The first is the exclusivity of religion. Put more plainly, it is possible for a person to be half-French and half- Belgian but it is difficult to be half-Muslim and half-Christian (Reynal-Querol 2002). Therefore, religious civil wars are even more difficult to resolve and hence last longer, since the issue, religious identification, that separates the warring parties will not disappear as a result of settlement (Reynal-Querol 2002, 32; Walter 1997, 356; Toft 2006b). Secondly, religious differences, which Huntington claims are the basis of differences among civilizations, imply different ways of understanding the world and social relationships (Reynal-Querol 2002, 32).

⁵ This is a serious concern in religious civil war because as stated earlier, leaders usually have to have a previous religious cleavage in which to exploit in order for the conflict to become a religious civil war in the first place.

Nonreligious ethnic wars on the other hand, involve the separation of peoples based on identities that are fixed at birth⁶ (Shils 1957). Ethnic identities may include linguistic and religious components but also a racial dimension. However, ethnic identities represent variables that depending on the context are not immutably fixed as configurations or primordial norms (Le Vine 1997, 53).

The elasticity of ethnic identities explain why Hutu and Tutsi identities have been so difficult to pin down in Rwanda and Burundi and also why ethnic identities “appear to be up for grabs in various parts of the former Soviet Union” (Le Vine 1997, 53). However, this theoretical distinction between a religious civil war and a non-religious ethnic war does not assume that ethnic conflicts cannot take on a “chronic and bitter character” or that they cannot also become protracted and violent (Smith 1986, 65; Birch 1989, 229). But, it shows that in comparison to religious identities/conflict, ethnic identities/conflict is less amenable to identity hardening⁷.

I contend that religious identities are more rigid than ethnic identities because religious identities are based primarily on belief systems that require individuals to perform both internal and external rituals and rites that set them apart from others. This aspect of

⁶ The assumption made here is that although religion may be “fixed at birth” in some cultures, because religion has the ability to cross-cut ethnic lines, it is possible that a religious adherent can shirk their responsibilities and not fight in defense of the religion. However, previous statistical analyses have shown that believers are often willing and supportive of those who fight in defense of the religion.

⁷ Kaufmann (1996) defines identity hardening as the result of hypernationalist mobilization rhetoric and real atrocities that make cross-ethnic political appeals unlikely to be made and even less likely to be heard (137). I argue that identity hardening also plays a role in religious civil war because grievances hardens religious identities to the point that cross-religious political appeals become futile, thus making compromise more difficult.

religious identities makes group members more conducive to identity hardening, whereas ethnic identities can be diluted through inter-marriage and migration to other areas.

Theoretical Approaches to Religious Conflict

The literature on the effect of religion on conflict can be divided into three theoretical approaches: primordialist, instrumentalist and constructivist. Primordialists view cultural differences as the basis of conflict, and view religion as having an independent effect on conflict (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 110). They argue that nations are embedded in civilizations and that each civilization is characterized by the religion on which it is based (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 109). From this perspective, religious similarities and dissimilarities produce converging and diverging state interests. Countries with similar religious traditions will form alliances directed against nations with dissimilar religious traditions. Therefore, conflict will largely be confined to interactions between civilizations (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 109).

Instrumentalists, on the other hand, view socioeconomic variables as being the basis of conflict and religion as having a spurious correlation with conflict (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 110). Although these groups of scholars admit that there has been a resurgence of religious movements, they argue that this is the result of growing economic, social and political inequalities in and between nations (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 110). Unlike primordialists, who believe that the end of the Cold War and its associated superpower tensions will cause an upsurge in religiously and culturally motivated violence⁸,

⁸ Primordialists do not believe that this upsurge is due to cultural variables becoming important after the end of the Cold War, but rather, cultural tensions were kept in check by the superpowers and their bi-polar balance of power. Therefore, the end of the Cold War will

instrumentalists do not predict a major departure from traditional patterns of state practice (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 111).

Instrumentalists view the politicization and radicalization of religious traditions as more likely when there is economic decay, social disintegration or state collapse (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 111). The masses that bear the brunt of these societal crises often turn to religion in search of an alternative political order that satisfies the need for welfare, recognition, and security (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 111). These religious communities operate as refuges of solidarity, sources of cultural reaffirmation, and safe havens (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 111). Power-seeking elites exploit this increase in religiosity for their own political ends. An example of this is the recasting of political enemies as foes of faith and the use of religion as a way in which to mobilize religious communities in support of their cause.

The final groups of scholars, the constructivists, also contend that socioeconomic variables are the basis of conflict between groups of different religions. However, constructivists view religion as an intervening variable in the study of conflict. Like instrumentalists, constructivists believe that power and interest play an important role in explaining politics (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 111). But constructivists hold that these interests are embedded in cognitive structures, like religion, that give meaning to them (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 111).

Another similarity between instrumentalists and constructivists is the belief that political entrepreneurs play an essential role in the outbreak of conflict. These entrepreneurs

not cause an upsurge in ethnic or religious hatreds but rather an upsurge in those conflicts escalating to war.

gain mass support for their interests and invoke religion as a means through which to legitimize their choices (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 114). However, the major difference between these two approaches is that instrumentalists believe that political leaders easily manipulate religion and that the framing of the conflict in religious terms is merely rhetorical and not substantial (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 114). In contrast, constructivists believe that once leaders incite religious sentiments, it can often develop a life of its own (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 114). Therefore, the rhetorical power of political elites is not absolute and can be challenged by others in the society (Hasenclever and Rittberger 2003, 114). Using this conception of religion, religion can be used either to escalate tensions into conflict or de-escalate tensions depending on the prevailing interpretation of religious texts.

Summary of Theoretical Approaches to Religious Conflict

	Primordialist	Instrumentalist	Moderate Constructivist
Basic Conflict	Cultural	Socioeconomic	Socioeconomic
Casual status of religion	Independent Variable	Spurious Correlation	Intervening variable
Expectations	Culturally based, realignments and wars of religions	Socioeconomic. Cleavages and civil wars	Socioeconomic. Cleavages, political conflicts, and contingent militancy and violence

(Hasenclever and Rittberger (2003, 110)

Islamic Religious Civil Wars versus Non-Islamic Religious Civil Wars

The literature on religious civil conflict tends to focus on Huntington's (1993, 1996) "Islam versus the West" argument and his claims that Islam has "bloody borders" as well as "bloody innards" or Islamic terrorism. Scholars who perform empirical tests of these

hypotheses, often find mixed results, some of which will be discussed in the next chapter. However, in this paper, I will examine the debate concerning whether religious civil wars involving Islamic groups last longer than religious conflicts involving members of another religious tradition. One argument in support of the longer duration of religious civil wars involving Islamic groups is Islam's unique ability to mobilize transnational religious followers and entice its adherents to make sacrifices for the welfare of the group. The more committed⁹ religious followers are to invest time, resources and even their lives if necessary, the longer the war will last.

Toft hypothesizes that transnational religious bids have a higher utility in Islamic civil conflict than non-Islamic civil conflicts (2007, 103). Transnational religious bids are appeals to religion that may "attract support as a form of religious obligation from outside the area of conflict" (Toft 2007, 103). Comparing the utility of religious bids across groups of different religions, Toft argues that in areas with pre-existing religious cleavages or highly concentrated religious communities, religious bids can both enhance local support and attract foreign support from fellow adherents (2007, 104).

Even though parties to a conflict generally desire both internal and external support, it is not often received. However, in religious civil wars involving Islamic groups there is a higher likelihood of third party support for the Muslim group (Fox and Sandler 2004, 66). This is due to the capacity of Islamic elites to draw external support from a larger, wealthy pan-Islamic world community. Unfortunately, when Islamic elites makes these transnational religious bids, it often results in attracting religious radicals from outside the country in

⁹ I discuss how to differentiate between a high commitment individual and a low commitment individual in the literature review section, thereby rendering the argument that the commitment of a religious individual to the conflict is due to exogenous factors, moot.

question¹⁰. Building on Fox and Sandler's (2004) findings, I argue that religious conflicts involving Islamic groups will last longer than religious conflicts involving other religious groups because rather than decreasing the length of the conflict by creating a swift victory for the Islamic group, the external support gained by Islamic groups in religious wars does not often lead to shorter conflicts. The logic behind this argument is that when Islamic groups are in the minority or in a weakened power position in comparison to the other party, it is easier for the Islamic group to attract an obtain third party support, especially from religious radicals who will continue to fight despite the decreased utility in doing so.

A second explanation for why external support in Islamic wars does not necessarily lead to shorter conflicts is the higher likelihood that religious conflicts involving Islamic groups, especially in the Persian Gulf region, will cross borders (Fox and Sandler 2004, 70). Although most modern internal conflicts have contagion effects on the surrounding region, religious conflicts are especially vulnerable because whether the affected group is a minority or a majority within the state in which they live, neighboring religious kinsmen are often influenced by the conflict and can themselves be inspired to rebel, thus extending the war (Fox and Sandler 2004, 70-1). An example of external support prolonging and diffusing conflict is the Iranian government's attempts at exporting its revolution throughout the Arab world, which led to Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf nations to side with Iraq in its eight-year war with Iran (Fairbanks 2001, 448). The Iranian revolution is often credited with inspiring Islamic fundamentalists throughout the world (Fox and Sandler 2004, 71). This is due to the widely held belief throughout the Islamic world that the Iranian revolution demonstrated that a Western-supported regime could be successfully opposed by Islamic

¹⁰ I discuss this in further detail below where I discuss the *mujhadeen* in Afghanistan.

groups (Fox and Sandler 2004, 71)¹¹. I argue that it is the presence of these fundamentalists that often lead to protracted conflict involving Islamic groups. In other words, it is not moderate Muslims that are driving the conflict, but rather it is the fundamentalists who will continue to fight until complete victory is attained.

Toft (2007) identified three reasons—historical, geographical and structural—that might explain why Islamic groups are involved in more religious civil wars than followers of other religions. The historical factor is based on the timing of the emergence of the state system after the Thirty Years' War and the subsequent development of an international system based on secular nations. She argues that unlike the events leading up to the Thirty Year's War that resulted in Christian polities divorcing religion from politics and the apparatus of the state, Islamic polities have not had sufficient incentives for such a divorce. The lack of separation of religion and state in Islamic polities result in a higher proportion of religious civil wars because political issues can easily take on a religious dimension, resulting in a mobilization of the faithful.

The geographical factor that helps explain Islam's higher representation in religious conflict is the co-location of Islamic holy sites to the world's largest petroleum reserves (Toft 2007, 107). The West's increasing dependence on petroleum and religious tensions after the creation of Israel in 1948, as well as the legacy of empire for example, the Ottoman, British and French, and colonialism have combined to make conflict more likely in this region, and that as a result Islam would play a disproportionately greater role.

The final factor is structural in which the Islamic teaching known as *jihad*, which translates into the English word "struggle," is analyzed as it relates to the defense of the

¹¹ The success of Afghan fighters against the Soviet Union reinforced this widely held belief.

Islamic “community of believers”, *ummah*¹², against internal and external threats. I contend that the waging of *jihad* in defense of *ummah* leads to longer wars involving Islamic groups because Muslims are sanctioned to defend their religious community against harmful elements that seek to destroy it. I claim that when religious elites frame issues as being harmful to the Muslim community and only the waging of *jihad* can prevent or halt it, even moderate Muslims will be willing to fight, as they believe that they are performing a religious duty. However, it is often the Islamic fundamentalists that will continue to fight and disrupt peace negotiations, even after the elites have attained their economic or political goals and the religious moderates are satisfied with concessions already received.

Therefore, I argue that of the three factors mentioned by Toft (2006b), the structural features of Islam leads to longer religious civil wars because they are most easily manipulated by elites¹³. Although the historical features of Islam and geographical co-location of Muslim holy sites and petroleum fields have resulted in higher stakes and increased benefits for ensuring that members of one’s own religious community are in power, they lead to Islam’s higher representation in civil conflict but does not explain why these wars last longer than those involving groups of other religious traditions¹⁴. Although the

¹² Although *ummah* has no specific religious connotations, it is, however, closely intertwined with *jihad*. I contend that it is useful to understand what defines the Islamic community and how Islamic scholars have argued its relation to *jihad*. I discuss this in further detail in my theory chapter.

¹³ The structural argument makes intuitive sense also, because elites are aware of the fact that historical and geographical factors have a shorter self-life than inciting religious fanaticism. I will discuss later how geographical factors, i.e. resources, have been shown to actually shorten conflict rather than extend them.

¹⁴ Toft (2007) shows that overlapping historical, geographical and structural factors help explain Islam’s higher representation in religious civil wars. However, in this study, I attempt to control for historical and geographical factors in order to isolate possible structural factors that contribute to religious civil wars involving Islamic groups to last longer. In other words,

relationship between the structural factors of Islam and conflict intractability will be difficult to test directly, I utilize variables in my dataset that capture how long the religious conflict lasts when an Islamic group is involved, while controlling for certain historical and geographical factors such as whether the conflict took place in the Middle East and whether the area of conflict had resources. I also control for these historical and geographical factors in my qualitative analysis of the Maitatsine conflict, by showing that structural factors unique to Islam provides the best explanation for the duration of religious civil wars involving a radical Muslim group.

The Puzzle

The growing literature on the effect of religion on civil wars has led to some interesting results on the correlation between the religious affiliation of the warring factions and civil war durability (Tuscisny 2004), devastation (Toft 2007), intensity (Pearce 2005) and likelihood of termination through negotiated settlement (Svensson 2007). Despite the empirical evidence collected on the role of religion in interstate and ethnic civil war, some scholars contend that the role of religion is part of the larger political culture argument that is a by-product of more testable hypotheses based on states' structure, security and power (Jackman and Miller 1998; Booth and Seligson 2004; Nasr 2005). The literature on civil war duration fueled this erroneous claim by lumping all cultural factors—the religious, ethnic and linguistic differences of the warring factions—into the same variable (DeRouen and Sobek

if Islamic civil wars last longer than religious civil wars involving other religions while controlling for historical and geographical factors, then I argue that this is attributed to structural factors unique to Islam, namely, the ability of elites to manipulate the waging of *jihad* in defense of *ummah*.

2004). Although these variables are sometimes closely related, treating them as having one independent effect on civil war duration is flawed¹⁵.

Toft analyzed the independent effect that the religious affiliation of key actors had on the likelihood that a conflict would escalate into a religious civil war. She found that in the 42 religious wars from 1940 to 2000, Islam was involved in 81 percent, Christianity in 50 percent and Hinduism in 16 percent (Toft 2006b, 12; 2007, 97). However, the puzzle that remains is whether Islam's higher representation in religious civil wars translates into conflict intractability? Therefore, my research question is, do religious conflicts involving Muslim groups last longer than religious wars where the parties are Christian, Hindu or Buddhist?

Determining religious civil war duration is important because it provides insight into the puzzling world of militant religiosity, particularly Islamic fundamentalism. These findings will either support or reject Huntington's claims that Islam has "bloody innards" and whether is attributable to Islamic religious traditions and not other factors, for example resources (1996, 258). Furthermore, the information gleaned from this research can be used to join the debate on whether it is cultural values, as shaped by religious convictions, that make Islamic states not only prone to violence but also prolonged internal war (De Soysa and Nordas 2007, 929).

¹⁵ One result of this flaw is when researchers control for ethnic and religious fractionalization in one variable and ethnic and religious polarization in another. Fractionalization and polarization measures for both ethnic and religious groups are not similar in all cases. Therefore, I utilize Reynal-Querol's (2008) dataset because she separates the fractionalization and polarization for ethnic and religious groups, thereby allowing me to treat them as having independent effects on the dependent variable.

Organization of Thesis

This paper is divided into six chapters. The second chapter, which follows this one, reviews the existing literature and empirical research that has been done on civilizational and ethnic and religious conflict. The third chapter offers some new insights into why I believe that religious civil conflicts involving Islamic groups will last longer than those involving other religious groups. The fourth chapter is the research design and discussion chapter, where I test the hypotheses derived from my theory and explain the results. The fifth chapter is a case study of the Maitatsine religious conflict in Kano, Nigeria, which I believe provides evidence in support my theory of religious conflict involving Islamic groups. The final chapter, the conclusion, summarizes the paper and provides suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

While the existing literature on religion and conflict does not provide an adequate theory to explain the phenomenon, the concepts and ideas within the various parts of the literature can be reassembled into a more organized framework to create a better theory.

-Fox 2002b, 1

This paper makes the assumption that religion exerts an effect on conflict independent of that of other elements of ethnicity. Additionally, I argue that the effect of the structural factors of religion on conflict differs across religious traditions. In other words, the religious tradition of the combatants affects the significance of the relationship between conflict duration and religion. Moreover, conflicts involving Islamic groups will last a significantly longer period of time than conflicts between combatants of other religious traditions, because structural factors of Islam can re-interpreted by elites and radical scholars in ways that legitimize violence and lead to longer wars. Nevertheless, before delving into the literature on Islam and conflict, it is necessary to trace the origins of the current research on religion and conflict.

Beyond the current interest in cultural or identity-based explanations for conflict, historical anecdotes suggest that elements of culture and identity have provided the basis for mobilization since the earliest times (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006, 55). Long before the events of September 11, 2001, military campaigns have been justified using religion or ethnicity (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006, 55). However, after the end of the Cold war cultural

variables became so pronounced¹⁶ that ethnicity, for some scholars, became the “new master explanatory variable” in world politics (Holsti 1997, 8). These authors viewed animosity among ethnic groups as the rival to the “spread of nuclear weapons as the most serious threat to the peace that the world faces” (Maynes 1993, 5; Huntington 1993, 1996). However, arguments were also put forward that tensions among countries with differing ethnic groups would not only increase interstate conflict, but would also increase intrastate ethnic conflict or “within-state fault line conflicts,” meaning communal conflict between groups from different ethnic groups (Huntington 1996, 252).

Most of the existing literatures on ethno-religious civil conflict center on the arguments of cultural realists like Samuel Huntington and his clash of civilizations thesis. In Huntington’s widely cited article and book, he argued that the Cold war’s focus on conflicts between democratic capitalist nations and communist countries were being replaced by conflicts between civilizations, specifically between the West and non-West (Huntington 1993). Huntington went on to state that since religion is the principal defining characteristic of civilizations, post Cold War conflict, particularly intrastate conflicts would be “almost always between people of different religions” (1996, 253).

Previous research testing Huntington’s clash of civilizations argument can be divided into two branches. The first branch consists of scholars who tested how civilizational differences affected the onset of interstate conflict (Henderson and Tucker 2001; Russett, Oneal and Cox 2000; Shannon 2002; Chiozza 2002; Bolks and Stoll 2003; Gartzke and

¹⁶ This could be both a function of the predisposition of scholars as well as the upsurge in ethnic conflict after the end of the Cold War and increased scholarly interest in ethnic conflict after Huntington’s “clash of civilization” thesis. It could also be the product of “faddish” trends in international conflict research.

Gleditsch 2006). The second branch of scholars who performed empirical tests of Huntington's claims, concentrated on the effect of civilizational cleavages or ethnic conflict within states (Gurr 1994; Fox 2001b; Roeder 2003). The findings of these scholars are presented in the table below:

Summary of Findings on Civilizational Differences and Conflict

	Interstate Conflicts (First Branch of Scholars)	Intrastate Conflicts (Second Branch of Scholars)
Empirical Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civilization membership is not significantly associated with the onset of interstate conflict during the Cold War (Henderson and Tucker 2001). - Pairs of states that were split across civilizational boundaries were no more likely to become engaged in interstate militarized disputes than were other states (Russett, Oneal and Cox 2000). - Contrary to Huntington's thesis, Islamic countries are more likely to fight each other than states from different civilizations (Shannon 2000) - State interactions across civilizational divides were not more conflict prone (Chiozza 2002). - General claims about civilizational differences giving rise to more conflict are exaggerated (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communal conflicts across fault lines between civilizations and religious traditions are more intense than non-civilizational/religious conflicts but have not increased significantly since the end of the Cold War (Gurr 1994). - There is strong evidence that contacts between civilizations that cut across linguistic and religious lines within states are more likely to escalate into intense conflicts than contacts that do not cross these cleavages (Roeder 2003).
Pre-Cold War Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - States of similar civilizations were more likely to fight each other than were those of different civilizations (Henderson and Tucker 2001). - There is a greater probability for 	

	mixed civilization dyads and for Islamic- Western dyads to engage in disputes and for these disputes to escalate to war (Bolks and Stoll 2003).	
Post-Cold War Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civilizational membership did not have a statistically significant relationship with the probability of interstate conflict (Henderson and Tucker 2001). - Islamic-Western dyads appeared more apt to engage in dispute in the post-Cold War period, but not to escalate into war (Bolks and Stoll 2003). - There is no evidence that conflicts between Islamic and Christian states have become more common after the Cold war (Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-Cold War surge in intrastate conflict is a continuation of a trend that began in the 1960s. The end of the Cold War contributed to long-term trends mainly by increasing the number of states experiencing serious ethnic conflicts (Gurr 1994; Roeder 2003). - Since the end of the Cold War, there has not been a statistically significant change in the ratio of civilizational to non-civilizational ethnic conflict (Fox 2001b). - Statistical analyses indicate that there has been little change in the distribution of Islamic involvement in civilizational conflict involving Western groups and Islamic groups have increased since the Cold War (Fox 2001b).

Review of the findings of both branches of researchers illustrates the shortcomings of the literature on religion and conflict. The first branch of researchers lumped religious differences, along with ethnic and linguistic cleavages as part of an overall civilizational schism among nations that may or may not lead to conflict. This fault was partially corrected by the second branch of scholars, who looked at intrastate civilizational conflicts by taking

into account the fact that religious traditions may crosscut ethnic and linguistic cleavages. However, as I will discuss, perhaps the most problematic issue was not empirical analyses of how differences in civilization background affected conflict duration but the theoretical approaches used to study the effect of differences in religious tradition and conflict.

Although there is no scholarly agreement on the extent of the effect that a revival in religious observance in both the developing and developed nations has on the occurrence of conflict, there is some consensus that religion is relevant to the study of both interstate and intrastate conflict. Disagreement between the two rival research camps come from differences in their theoretical approach to the study of identity-based conflict. The first group consisted of scholars who those used Fearon's rationalist logic of issue indivisibility¹⁷ to explain the effect that religious differences has on identity conflicts (1995). Authors utilizing this theoretical approach to the study of religious conflict argue that religious dynamics influence the development and termination of civil conflicts because they create a perception that the issues at stake cannot be divided (Svensson 2007, 933; Gilady and Russett 2002, 401). However, there is no consensus on the types of issues that parties to a religious civil war find indivisible and therefore, difficult to compromise on (Svensson 2007, 933). Nevertheless, previous research argued that issue indivisibility in religious civil wars could be attributed to ethnic identity (Kaufmann 1996), territory (Toft 2004), religious outbidding

¹⁷ Issue indivisibility "refers to situations where two rational actors cannot agree that the issue over which they are bargaining is divisible" (Toft 2006a, 35). Most issues are literally divisible, for example power can be shared and territory can be divided, however, "actors might escalate a dispute to violence because the benefits of obtaining ownership or control of the thing in question outweigh the costs and risks of non-violence or division" (Toft 2006a, 36).

(Toft 2007), legitimization of bargaining positions (Goddard 2006) and whether the belligerents' demands are explicitly anchored in a religious tradition (Svensson 2007).

Kaufmann argued that ethnic conflicts face the problem of identity hardening, making individual loyalties completely rigid and strengthening these identities to the point that attempts at negotiation become almost futile (1996, 138-9). Identity hardening make issues indivisible and the war cannot end until rival groups are physically separated (Kaufmann 1996, 139). Kaufman states that ethnic wars can only end in three ways: 1) a complete victory by one party; 2) temporary suppression of the war by a third party military occupation; and 3) self-governance of separate communities (Kaufmann 1996, 139).

Toft (2004) argued that civil wars involving territory that is significant for ethnic or religious reasons tend to take on an indivisible character leading to conflict, due to reputation concerns of the government and the close connection between identity and territory for the religious groups. However, this conceptualization of the relationship between ethno-religious identity and conflict gives territorial concerns primacy in explaining the intractability of religious civil wars. But, further research has shown that territorial conflicts were not significantly less likely to be settled through negotiations (Svensson 2007, 943).

Toft (2007) developed a theory on the role of religion in civil wars that built on Jack Snyder's (2000) model of nationalist outbidding. In his book *From Voting to Violence*, Snyder hypothesized that political elites attempt to outbid each other in order to enhance their nationalist credentials with a key domestic political audience (Snyder 2000). Toft posited that religious outbidding follows the same process whereby political elites seek to enhance their religious credentials in order to gain the support they need to counter an immediate threat (2007, 103). Basically, issues in religious civil wars become indivisible when elites exploit

pre-existing religious cleavages and manipulate religious beliefs (i.e structural factors) resulting in the mobilization of a religious audience, in order to make strategic gains.

Goddard (2006) takes the position that indivisibility is a social fact and not an objective characteristic of an issue as perceived by combatants. She argues that territory, or the state in the case of religious civil wars, appear indivisible depending on how actors legitimize their claims during the bargaining process (Goddard 2006, 36). Even though actors choose their legitimizations strategically in order to gain an advantage in negotiations, for instance religion if it mobilizes the highest number of supporters, these legitimization strategies can have unintended consequences (Goddard 2006, 36). An example of these unintended consequences is conflict intractability, in which even long after the elites have made their strategic gains, they are unable to reign in their religious audience because religious hatred, once incited, is difficult to halt.

Svensson makes a similar argument when he states that once a conflict is framed in religious terms the audience costs of backing down becomes unbearable, since this would imply a break with strongly held beliefs (2007, 934). Religious conflict becomes intractable because of the non-bargainable nature of the motivations and beliefs behind them (Fox 2004a, 58). In other words, there are no substitutes for the issues, i.e. control of the state, which led to the conflict (Svensson 2007, 934). Finally, Svensson argues that explicit religious claims, made by either one or both parties, create indivisibility problems and make negotiated settlement less likely (2007, 931). Therefore, once a leader on either side of the conflict declares an issue to be of religious significance, it is difficult to compromise since s/he would risk losing power. In other words, framing a conflict in religious rhetoric is a costly signal and leads to conflict intractability. However, I argue that not only the use of

religious rhetoric has an effect on conflict duration but also the structural features of the religious tradition of the group being mobilized. I attempt to take arguments in favor of the effect of religious framing on issue indivisibility one step further and show how structural features unique to certain religions are more easily manipulated, leading to protracted conflict.

On the other hand, critics of the issue indivisibility approach to identity/religious conflicts argue that these conflicts are best understood in terms of greed and not grievance. Initially, the greed thesis referred to the self-enrichment activities on the part of rebel groups. Or, in other words, the greed approach suggested that the relationship between natural resources and conflict was best viewed in terms of the benefits that resources provided rebel fighters (Aspinall 2007, 950). However, the definition of greed has evolved and scholars have argued that what matters most is feasibility, meaning how easily lootable the resources are (Collier and Hoeffler 2005, 629) and the opportunity to rebel (Collier, Hoeffler and Sambanis 2005, 3). These two factors interact in civil conflict insofar that insurgent movements can only emerge and be sustained when resources are available to finance them (Aspinall 2007, 951).

Other scholars' claim that gains made by conflict entrepreneurs and war profiteers feed grievances about identity, economic inequality and lack of political power (Korf 2005, 202). They hold that in the political economy of conflict, it is greed and grievances that reinforce each other and that the war economies of combatants are intertwined with the survival economies of civilians (Collinson 2003; Goodhand 2000; Keen 2000; Korf 2003, 2004). They argue that once an ethnic civil war begins, the political economy of war produces a self-sustaining logic of patronage networks along the lines of perceived 'friends'

or ‘enemies’ (Korf 2005, 202). The political networks of survival reinforce ethnic dividing lines and patronage networks nourish grievances along these same lines (Korf 2005, 202). Applying this self-sustaining logic to the context of religious conflict, greed provides the elites with a pay-off and grievances in turn contribute to heighten the motivation for people to fight for ‘justice’ (Korf 2005, 202). In other words, greed produces grievances, which in turn stabilize the war economy and offer economic opportunities for greedy progenitors of violence (Korf 2005, 202).

Many have questioned the robustness of the relationship between grievance, in terms of the presence of natural resources, and civil war (Fearon 2005) or have refined the greed thesis by analyzing the varying effects of lootable versus non-lootable resources (Ross 2003). Others argue in terms of the “political turn” hypothesis, which places more emphasis on the effects that states have on triggering resource or greed-motivated identity wars, rather than rebel movements (Ron 2005, 445). Different variations of this “political turn” argument focus on rebel movements and emphasizes how the social construction of identity affect identity conflicts rather than the characteristics of the state, such as regime type or the state’s capacity to co-opt potential and former warlords (Aspinall 2007, 951). Basically, they argue that the presence of resources will trigger conflict only if an appropriate collective action frame, for example religious grievance, exists in the cultural toolkit of the affected group (Aspinall 2007, 951). Collective action frames are schema of interpretation of the issues in conflict, which elites use in order to manipulate how religious adherents understand the conflict and respond to events. Moreover, natural resource exploitation gives rise to conflict when it becomes entangled in the wider processes of identity construction and is reinterpreted back to the population by political elites in ways that legitimate violence

(Aspinall 2007, 951). I argue that one of the ways in which elites both legitimize and spur on religious violence is through utilizing collective action frames that highlight the duties of the religious group being mobilized vis-à-vis the other group, i.e. drawing sharp contrasts between the structural features of their religion versus those of the other group.

Aspinall stated that though the mechanisms giving rise to an identity and collective action frame conducive to violence varies widely from case to case, three factors were key: the nature of the past conflict, state institutionalization of identity, and the agency of the counter-elite that extends the official discourse on identity to justify revolt (2007, 951). In his case study analysis of the religious civil war in Aceh, Indonesia, Aspinall found that the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels did not fund themselves exclusively from natural resource industries despite their abundance in Aceh's economy (2007, 967). Instead, the fact that the GAM rebels received funding from virtually every aspect of the economy suggested that the availability of resources is not a determining factor in causing or prolonging ethnic or religious civil wars.

Humphreys provides further evidence in support of grievance hypotheses for religious conflict rather than a rebel-greed mechanism (2005, 534). He found that natural resource conflicts were more likely to end quickly and were more likely to end with a military victory for one side rather than with a negotiated settlement (Humphreys 2005, 535). This finding supports much of the literature on ethno-religious wars, which state that religious civil conflicts are primarily based on primordial differences among groups, rather than constructed identities that can be manipulated through greed. In other words, religious civil wars have occurred for centuries in societies with different levels of development and socio-economic structures (Aspinall 2007, 968). This suggests that groups wanting to rebel will fund

themselves in any context, provided that the social environment is supportive (Aspinall 2007, 968). More significant than the availability of resources are the collective action frames, in this case religion, that validate their use to fund the rebellion (Aspinall 2007, 968). I suggest also that religious conflict will not only begin in the absence of resources but also become intractable, particularly in the case of Islam, because of the salience of certain structural factors, which will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Even within the broad literature on the greed versus grievance nexus, the framing of grievances rather than the presence of resources have profound effects on religious civil conflict. Fox found that grievances made by ethno-religious minorities are more likely to lead to increased levels of discrimination and influence the conflict (Fox 2004b, 108-117).¹⁸ One of the ways in which religious grievances influence a conflict is through identity hardening. Identity hardening occurs under situations of religious grievances because members of the minority group begin looking toward members of their own religious community for security and political and economic welfare and distrust members of other religious communities. These inward looking practices help fuel grievances, in spite of resources. A summary of the arguments of the issue indivisibility and greed versus grievance approach to the study of identity/religious conflicts are presented below:

¹⁸ Fox's analysis does not address whether an ethno-religious majority can face discrimination or grievances, especially when faced with a more organized and politically powerful ethno-religious minority.

Summary of Issue Indivisibility, Greed and Grievance Approaches

Issue Indivisibility	Greed	Grievance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toft (2004) argued that civil wars involving territory that is significant for ethnic or religious reasons tend to take on an indivisible character leading to conflict, due to reputation concerns of the government and the close connection between identity and territory for the religious groups. - Religious outbidding results in issues in religious civil wars become indivisible when elites exploit pre-existing religious cleavages and manipulate religious beliefs (i.e structural factors) resulting in the mobilization of a religious audience, in order to make strategic gains (Toft 2004). - Svensson argues that explicit religious claims, made by either one or both parties, create indivisibility problems and make negotiated settlement less likely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greed approach suggests that the relationship between natural resources and conflict are best viewed in terms of the benefits that resources provides rebel fighters (Aspinall 2007, 259). - The feasibility, meaning how easily lootable the resources are and the opportunity to rebel, interact in civil war in so far that insurgent movements can only emerge and be sustained when resources are available to them (Aspinall 2007, 951). - Gains made by conflict entrepreneurs and war profiteers feed grievances about identity, economic inequality and lack of political power (Korf 2005, 202). - Greed provides the elites with a pay-off and grievances in turn contribute to heighten the motivation for people to fight for 'justice' (Korf 2005, 202). - 'Political turn' theorists argue that the presence of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the religious civil war in Aceh, Indonesia found that the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels did not fund themselves exclusively from natural resources, despite their abundance in Aceh's economy. The fact that the GAM rebels received funding from virtually every aspect of the economy suggests that the availability of resources is not a determining factor in causing or prolonging ethnic or religious conflict (Aspinall 2007, 967). - Natural resource conflicts are more likely to end quickly and are more likely to end with a military victory for one side rather than with a negotiated settlement. This finding does not support the findings on the intractability of identity-based conflicts (Humphreys 2005, 535). - Groups wanting to rebel will fund themselves in any context, provided that

(2007, 931). Therefore, once a leader on either side of the conflict declares an issue to be of religious significance, it is difficult to compromise since s/he would risk losing power.	resources will trigger conflict only if an appropriate collective action exists in which to exploit (Aspinall 2007, 951).	the social environment is supportive. More significant than the availability of resources are the collective action frames that validate their use to fund the rebellion (Aspinall 2007, 968).
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In this study, I argue that the theoretical approach of issue indivisibility offers the best explanation for the intractability of religious civil wars, particularly those involving Islamic groups, rather than the greed/grievance approach. I propose that there has to be legitimate grievances and religious cleavages in which to incite a religious civil conflict. However, in religious civil conflicts involving Islamic groups, elites often find that structural factors, meaning religious beliefs, are easy to manipulate because they create a perception that the issue(s) in conflict cannot be divided. Furthermore, the Islamic belief concerning the legitimate use of violence, *jihad*, in the defense of the Islamic community, *ummah*, provides a well-suited collective action frame for issue indivisibility. Elites exploit legitimate grievances against Islamic groups and frame these issues as attacks against the Islamic community and create the perception that the waging of *jihad* is the only way in which the religious community can be defended. Both issue framing and the manipulation of religious doctrine, i.e. *jihad*, leads to longer conflicts.

Although the following chapter provides a more nuanced look at how various features of Islamic doctrine more easily lends itself to issue indivisibility, I provide some background

on how radical interpretations of Islamic doctrine has been applied by elites and how they were able to successfully link the need to avoid negotiations with religious duty. In order to understand how structural factors of Islam can lend itself to conflict intractability, it is necessary to have a basic knowledge of the writings of Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb and how they relate to the religious collective actions frames used by Islamic elites. In *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, which was published long after his death, Qutb states:

Islam knows only two types of societies: the Islamic society and the *jahili* [willfully ignorant of Islam] society. The “Islamic Society” is the society in which Islam is followed—in creed, practice, rules of life, institutions, morals, and behavior. The *jahili* society is the society in which Islam is not followed (1993a, 116).

Qutb also stated that willful ignorance or active opposition to true Islam “surrounds” the true Muslim, and for that person, “the battle is continuous and *jihad* continues until the Day of Judgment” (Esposito and Voll 2003, 240; Qutb 1993a, 130). Although, Qutb did not initiate the *jihadist* vision of conflict in international affairs, anymore than Huntington did with his clash of civilizations, he is “widely acknowledged as the father of militant *jihad* [and] for those Muslims who, like Bin Ladin, were educated in schools and universities with Islamist teachers, Sayyid Qutb was a staple of their Islamic education” (Esposito 2002, 8).

Similarly, violence in defense of *ummah* has been used as a foundation for the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Arabic movement and also provides a basis on which elites can make indivisible claims. According to Khatab, Qutb’s writings “sufficiently indicate that Qutb connected nationalism to Islam” and viewed Islam as the nationality of Muslims and there was no nationality for Muslims except Islam (2004, 221). Qutb states:

In the Islamic view, all human beings are one nation (*ummah wahidah*). Thus, there is no race, or homeland (*watan*) that can exploit other races or the homeland of others...When Islam abolishes both those geographical bounds and racism

(‘*unsuriyyah*’), upon which the idea of the national homeland (*al-watan al-qawmi*) is established, it does not abolish the idea of homeland completely but preserves its righteous meaning, that is the meaning of association *tajammu’*), brotherhood, cooperation, system, and the meaning of the common goal with which the group is associated (Qutb 1993b, 96-7).

In conclusion, I emphasize that although Islamic doctrine does not explicitly promote religious violence except under limited circumstances (see next chapter), writings of Islamist and *jihadist* scholars like Qutb provide a starting point for my argument that religious civil conflicts involving Islamic groups will last longer than religious civil conflicts involving members of other religious traditions because the role of issue indivisibility is more prominent and easily manipulated using Islamic doctrine.

CHAPTER 3: THEORY

Jihad is neither simply a blind and bloody-minded scrabble for temporal power nor solely a door through which to pass into the hereafter. Rather it is a form of political action in which...the pursuit of immortality is inextricably linked to a profoundly this-worldly endeavor, the founding or re-creation of a just community on earth.

-Quoted from "Jihad and Political Violence" by Roxanne L. Euben 2002, 365

The theory put forward in this paper is that civil conflicts in which one of the conflicting groups is Muslim will last longer than conflicts in which a Muslim group is not involved. The causal mechanism for the relationship between religious civil conflict duration and religious affiliation of the groups is issue indivisibility. I contend that issue indivisibility plays a more pronounced role in Islam in comparison to other religious traditions because structural factors unique to Islam make religious bids more likely and more successful.

According to the issue indivisibility literature, conflicts over certain issues like religious beliefs and sacred territory are obstacles that prevent conflict resolution (Toft 2006a). Other scholars claim that issue indivisibility is a poor foundation for a general explanation of why disputes escalate to violence or are longer lasting (Fearon 1995). Hassner separates territory from sacred spaces and claims that only in the latter is issue indivisibility a problem for combatants (2003). He argues that sacred spaces are naturally indivisible such as the Qaba in Mecca, and that regardless of the stated aims of combatants, ethnic and nationalist conflicts over other issues, such as territory might be better explained by disputes over resources (2003; Toft 2006a, 39). However, Toft finds the logic of Hassner's claim that "it is meaningful to distinguish between real and imagined issue indivisibility" interesting, since it suggests that if an issue can be made indivisible by an act of will, then it can be made

divisible by an act of will (Hassner 2003; Toft 2006a, 39). However, unless there is empirical evidence that constructed indivisible issues are relatively easier to alter than issues that are naturally indivisible, there is no reason to introduce an operational or causal difference (Toft 2006a, 39). In other words, there should be no theoretical or operational difference between the indivisibility of religious nationalism (socially constructed indivisible issue) and sacred spaces (naturally indivisible issue), since there is no empirical evidence that combatants value these issues differently (Toft 2006a 39)¹⁹.

Previous literature identified two components of issue indivisibility that significantly affects religious civil conflict. The first refers to integrity, which implies that the issue at stake, which is usually control of the state²⁰, cannot be divided without losing its subjective value (Hassner 2003, 12). When one side to a conflict anchors its demands in religious convictions and beliefs, the subjective value of the contested issue, usually the control of the state is significantly increased (Svensson 2007, 933-4). The other component is non-fungibility, which refers to the condition that the issue to be divided cannot be substituted for or exchanged for something of equal value (Hassner 2003, 13). Compromises on issues that were framed as being closely linked to religiously based positions would imply a break with commonly long-held beliefs, sentiments and worldviews (Lesh 1993, 130-31). In other

¹⁹ Toft relates a conversation with a colleague in support of her critique of the capacity of will to alter constructed realities (versus naturally indivisible realities), the colleague said “Rocks are natural and bricks are constructed, but if either hits you in the head you might not appreciate the difference” (2006a, 39).

²⁰ The issue at stake in religious civil conflicts may not always be control of the state, as aforementioned, parties may have more limited aims such the installation of *shari'ah* courts. Or, in the case of Maitatsine conflict, the aims may be unclear but the religious collective action frames used to entice people to violence were sufficient for conflict intractability to occur.

words, religiously based issues are non-fungible because of the unbargainable nature of the motivations behind them (Fox 2004b, 58).

I contend that the non-fungible component of issue indivisibility has a more pronounced role in Islam in comparison to other religions²¹. This is due to the manipulability of the Islamic belief system, particularly the waging of *jihad*²² in defense of *ummah*. *Jihad*, which generally translates to the English word “struggle,” is primarily the means through which the Quran advises Muslims to preserve the *Shariah*, which is the “guidance for all walks of life—individual and social, material and moral, economic and political, legal and cultural, national and international” (Khurshid 1975, 37). The oppression, despotism, injustice and criminal abuse of power by both Muslims and non-Muslims must be punished and the Quran identifies three main types of *jihad*—the internal, the external and the intercommunal—that can be used in the defense of *Shariah* (Ziauddin 2003, 64). The Quran permits the use of violence in all three forms of *jihad* but it limits the use of violence in the internal and the external *jihad* (Venkatraman 2007, 232). The internal struggle²³ refers to the

²¹ Toft’s (2008) dataset includes variables that divide religious civil wars from non-religious civil wars as well as variables that divide conflicts among religious traditions. I utilize Toft’s measure for conflict duration as a proxy for the indivisibility of the issue in question and run linear regressions to determine the statistical significance of its relationship with religious tradition.

²² I discuss *jihad* using its most general Islamic interpretation and integrate *Sunni* interpretations through the writings of Sayyid Qutb. In short, I define *jihad* as the waging of war against elements that are deemed dangerous to the Islamic faith and/or community. However, *jihad* is a complex concept and has multiple meanings and interpretations, which differ depending on whether the Islamic group is *Shi’a* or *Sunni*. For a strict *Shi’a* interpretation of *jihad* refer to Assaf Moghadam. 2007. Mayhem, Myths, and Martyrdom: The Shi’a Conception of Jihad. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19: 125-143.

²³ Violence in the internal *jihad* is mostly figurative as one wages a war against carnal desires and is rarely externally violent, hence the presence of limiting violence with this type of *jihad*. However, in referring to internal *jihad*, the *Qu’ran* counsels believers to struggle

personal struggle of faith that a believer faces when they are trying to follow God's words as laid down in Islamic teaching (Toft 2007, 111). The concept of internal *jihad* is common to many religions, in which believers are challenged to strengthen their faith in God by performing sacraments and rituals (Toft 2007, 111). The external *jihad* involves defending the community of believers from unbelievers—meaning persons who have heard and rejected Islamic teachings (Toft 2007, 111). This concept also has other parallels in other religions, most notably Christianity (Toft 2007, 111). However, the difference is that since the end of the Thirty Years' War and the Crusades, this aspect of Christianity has lain dormant for hundreds of years (Toft 2007, 111). Another difference between Islam and Christianity is that most contemporary interpretations of the Quran have focused on the conduct of Muslims vis-à-vis Jews and Christians (Toft 2007, 111)²⁴. In the Islamic world, a violent interpretation of this external component of *jihad* was revived during the Soviet Union's attempt to impose a Marxist regime in Afghanistan (Toft 2007, 111). These "Afghan Arabs" were foreign fighters who flocked to Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion (Moghadam 2008, 58). After the Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan, these Afghan Arabs returned to their home countries where they participated in local *jihads* against regimes in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia (Moghadam 2008, 58). Many of these Afghan Arabs radicalized and mobilized Muslims in

against the pressures of living in a nation where unbelievers are the majority (25:52).

Struggle in this context could also turn violent.

²⁴ Toft's data supports this argument, she claims that:

Almost no difference exists between the number of states with an Islamic orientation and those whose official religion is Islam (27 and 25 respectively). For Christian states, the proportions are very different: 32 states have a distinctly Christian orientation, yet only 13 claim Christianity as a state religion. Moreover, there are more Christians worldwide than Muslims and more states whose populations contain a majority of Christians; yet, Christianity is much less prevalent in religious civil wars than is Islam (2007, 111).

their countries and regarded themselves as an Islamic vanguard, who chose violence as their preferred tactic (Burke 2004, 290). The third type of *jihad* refers to “intercommunal” conflicts, which are cases where “Muslims can individually determine the nature and extent of *jihad* required, based on the ‘freedom of interpretation’ vested by the Quran in its followers,” as well as the geopolitical conditions in which the conflict arises (Venkatraman 2007, 232)²⁵. Nevertheless, the most important “prerequisite in the Quran’s discourse on violence is that force should only be used when the *Shariat* has been violated and needs to be preserved” (Venkatraman 2007, 232).

Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyya who was born in Damascus in the mid-thirteenth century was the first scholar to promote the concept of *jihad* as a Muslim’s most important duty, second only to belief in God and Islam (Roshandel 2006, 51-52). In his book “Governance according to God’s Law in Reforming both the Ruler and his Flock,” Taymiyya wrote:

The command to participate in *jihad* and the mention of its merits occur innumerable times in the Koran and the Sunna, Therefore it is the best voluntary [religious] act that man can perform...*Jihad* implies all kinds of worship, both in its inner and outer forms. More than any other act it implies love and devotion for God, Who is exalted, trust in Him, the surrender of one’s life and property to Him, patience, asceticism, remembrance of God and all kinds of other acts [of worship] ...Since lawful warfare is essentially *jihad* and since its aim is that the religion is God’s entirely and God’s word is uppermost, therefore according to all Muslims, those who stand in the way of this aim must be fought (As quoted from Peters 1996, 47-49).

Global *jihadists*, like Bin Laden, have utilized Taymiyya’s writings to garner support for their war against American forces in the Middle East however, it has also been used by intrastate religious rebels to justify challenging the religious credentials of their fellow

²⁵ This could also be used as a justification for global terrorism however, I do not explore this possibility since I believe that it would detract from the focus of my paper.

Muslims leaders, as well as the overthrow of non-Muslim leaders (Roshandel 2006, 50). Taymiyya's claim that a militant interpretation of *jihad* is not only permissible under less stringent circumstances than stated in religious texts, but also a part of a good Muslim's duty, makes religious conflicts involving Muslim groups intractable since followers will share the belief that it is their duty to fight.

Writings of various Islamic scholars, including Abu al-A'la Mawdudi who established Pakistan's first Islamist party, the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, believe that Muslims should not "shrink from the use of force" and that the ultimate goal of *jihad* is to establish a just society:

Islam wants the whole earth and does not content itself with only a part thereof. It wants and requires the entire inhabited world. It does not want this in order that one nation dominates the earth and monopolizes its sources of wealth, after having taken them away from one of more other nations. No, Islam wants and requires the earth in order that the human race altogether can enjoy the concept and practical program of human happiness, by means of which God has honored Islam and put it above the other religions and laws. In order to realize this lofty desire, Islam wants to employ all forces and means that can be employed for bringing about a universal all-embracing revolution. It will spare no efforts for the achievement of this supreme objective. This far-reaching struggle that continuously exhausts all forces and this employment of all possible means are called *jihad* (As quoted from Peters 1996, 128).

Although Mawdudi's writings emphasize global *jihad*, they have also been used to justify waging local or intrastate *jihad*, the successes upon which an expansion of *jihad* may be built. However, his meaning for religious rebels are clear, waging *jihad* is the only way to bring about a just society and one should exhaust all viable means in order to make this possible. I argue that issue indivisibility is a prominent feature of religious wars involving Islamic groups because once issues have been effectively framed using this violent

interpretation of *jihad*²⁶, the conflict will continue for an indeterminate period of time. I also contend that a violent interpretation of *jihad* does not necessarily coincide with a complete victory, but, depending on the collective action frame, specific goals, such as the establishment of *shariah* law can be utilized as a means through which individuals are assured that small victories contribute to much broader long-term goals.

The pervasiveness of issue indivisibility in religious civil conflict involving Muslim groups can also be attributed to the various scholarly definitions of *ummah*, which translates to “nation” or “community of believers,” and the responsibilities of Muslims to defend it. Huntington claimed that this belief has caused Muslims to be less loyal to the territorially bound, secular state and have more allegiance to causes connected to the larger religious community (1996, 175). Violent interpretations of *jihad* are bounded together with *ummah*, as a means through which the community is protected against hostile elements, whether they are invading armies or un-Islamic internal despots, as well as promoting the integrity of Islam (Venkatraman 2007, 232). Qutb defined the concept of *ummah* as follows:

The basis for association is belief (*'aqidah*)...Humanity must associate on the basis of its most noble attributes, not on the basis of fodder, pasture, and enclosure...There are, on the face of the earth, two parties: that of Allah and that of Satan...the *ummah* is the group of people bound together by belief (*'aqidah*), which constitutes their nationality. If there is no *'aqidah*, there is no *ummah*, for there is nothing to bind it together. Land, race, language, lineage, common material interests are not enough, either singly or in combination, to form an *ummah*. The Muslim has no homeland (*watan*) other than that which implements the *Shari'ah*...The Muslim has no nationality (*jinsiyyah*) other than his Creed which makes him a member of the 'Islamic *ummah*' in the Islamic homeland (*dar al-Islam*). The homeland (*al-watan*) is a place (*dar*) governed by *'aqidah*, and a program of life and the *Shari'ah* of Allah. This is the meaning of the homeland (*watan*) appropriate for human beings '*insan*,' The nationality (*al-jinsiyyah*) is *'aqidah* and program of

²⁶ Although many issues may be framed using a violent interpretation of *jihad*, these frames are only effective when the religious community has legitimized the grievance, resulting in religious violence.

life. This is the bond appropriate for human beings *'adamiyyun* (Qutb 1995, 88; Qutb 1993a, 151).

Historically, the word *ummah* denotes a community based on religious principles and is an integrative term that has political, economic, social, intellectual, and moral connotations, however, Qutb's writings have given it a distinct nationalist overtone (Khatab 2004, 217). Qutb echoes the writings of other Islamic scholars, who have held that "every Muslim must do as much as he can for his *ummah* where he lives and he must defend it" (Khatab 2004, 217). The perception throughout Islamic scholarship that the defense of *ummah* and *shariah* are issues in which there is no compromise for the true Muslim, has increased the non-fungible nature of the state in religious civil wars involving Islamic groups.

I argue that when elites make religious bids using the writings of extremist scholars, an interesting and hardly noticeable shift in the interpretation of Islamic doctrine occurs. In other words, the *Qur'an* clearly limits the use of violent *jihad* to cases where the *shariah* has been violated but when elites use the writings of Qutb and Taymiyya, they are able to justify the use of violence in defense of the Islamic community. However, *ummah* in this sense is not the religious community that should protect itself from secular and irreligious elements, but rather, its meaning has been corrupted to morph into the nationalistic aims and objectives of the elites making the religious bids. In other words, opportunistic elites use a nationalistic interpretation of *ummah* to geopolitical conditions and present a religious premise for violent *jihad* (Venkatraman 2007, 235). Once this application of religious text to a crisis is done, the intent and act of violence meets Quranic requirements, consequently making violent *jihad* a legitimate religious reaction (Venkatraman 2007, 235).

Venkatraman states that violence in nations with Muslim populations “almost always has an essential religious rather than a purely political bias” (2007, 235). Although the extent to which violence can be used for the purposes of carrying out *jihad* and defending *ummah* is not stipulated in the *Qur'an*, the religious text simply states that *jihadis* “should engage all means required to ensure that the enemy is defeated or accepts defeat” (Venkatraman 2007, 235). I argue that this structural factor lends itself to issue indivisibility whenever elites convince Islamic groups²⁷ that their religious community is under attack. These bids will mobilize the Islamic community but only fundamentalists will continue to fight long after the elites have obtained their goals and concessions have been granted for the easing of grievances. In other words, the ability of civil wars involving Islamic groups to draw third party support, often in the form of Islamic fundamentalists, leads to conflict intractability.

Furthermore, I contend that Fox’s (2004b) finding that grievances made by ethno-religious minorities is more likely to influence conflict, also plays a role in religious civil wars involving Muslim minorities. Similar to the processes that played out during wars in Kosovo, Israel/Palestine and Kashmir, in cases where Muslim minorities are involved, religious bids made by elites are better able to attract fighters and supplies from outside the area of conflict.

Although I have briefly discussed touched on this topic in the previous chapter, I make the argument that conflicts involving groups from the Abrahamic religions will be more intractable than conflicts involving other religious groups, but draw a distinct between

²⁷ I refer here to Muslims, in general, not because Islamic groups are inherently violent but as I have attempted to argue previously, even moderate Muslims (in comparison to members of other religions) can be enticed to violence conditional on the existence of a historical grievance and an effective collective action frame, fundamentalists cause these conflicts to last longer.

civil conflicts involving Jewish and Christians groups and those involving Muslims groups. Conflicts involving those from Abrahamic religions tend to become indivisible once religious bids and religious collective action frames are used because these religions are governed by religious texts that govern the actions of believers vis-à-vis each other and to society in general (Toft 2007). These religious texts outline the duties of the true believer and the punishments laid down for those who do not fulfill these duties. Effective framing will mobilize these religious groups more effectively than other religious groups and result in religious hard-liners continuing the conflict past its positive expected utility. However, even within these three religions, there are differences in the structural factors that are manipulated to give rise to conflict. Little can be said of Jewish involvement in religious civil wars, because the state of Israel was only created in 1948 and before then, violence directed toward Jewish groups were often based on the economic and nationalistic goals of elites and did not involve religious outbidding.

Civil conflict involving Christian groups on the other hand has a greater potential to become religious civil conflicts because of the greater number of Christian adherents worldwide (Toft 2007) and to a much lesser extent, the effect of structural factors. Although those who defend their faith with one's life is "particularly respected in Christian and Muslim traditions," one of the long-term effects of the Thirty Years' War and the Treaty of Westphalia is that this structural feature of Christianity has been used less and less because "Western elites have long since secularized their political leadership" (Toft 2007, 100, 112). However, the usefulness of structural features of the Islamic religion, i.e. the framing of issues as an attack on the religious community, has a strong effect on the duration of the

conflict since there has not been a divorce of the religious life from the political life in Islamic polities.

The argument that I attempt to make in this study is that certain particularities of Islam, meaning the lack of a secularizing historical event and more importantly the explicit sanction of violence in religious text, albeit in very specific contexts, and writings of prominent Islamic scholars result in conflicts in which these groups are mobilized to last longer than conflicts in which other religious groups are mobilized, holding other factors such as the presence of resources, constant. Structural factors in the Islamic religion relate to religious conflict intractability in three important ways: 1) waging *jihad* has a mostly defensive connotation, providing elites with a ready-made frame in which to argue that the opposing group is belligerent and needs to be stopped by any means necessary, regardless of whether the Islamic group is weak or in the minority 2) defense of *ummah* is separate and apart from defense of the nation or territory, implying that religious identity/community is the most important thing to Muslims, this makes third-party intervention more likely, but also leads to protracted conflict because the defeat of one's religious community is equated with existential defeat and 3) these two features combine to make conflicts involving Islamic groups more likely to groom and attract fundamentalists, who often continue violence against the state, even after the elites have received their material pay-offs and moderate Muslims have been de-mobilized. In other words, grievances form the basis for conflict, religious framing creates the issue indivisibility and structural factors provide the fuel in which to keep conflict on going.

Hypotheses

Several hypotheses can be drawn from the discussion on how the religious affiliation of the conflicting groups can affect conflict duration. Due to the fact that most religious civil wars are between groups of differing religious traditions²⁸, my hypotheses will focus on how the presence of an Islamic group or how the size of the Islamic group affects conflict duration. The first hypothesis that I will test is whether there is a difference in conflict duration when an Islamic group is involved versus conflicts in which the parties are Christian, Hindu or Buddhist. Therefore:

Hypothesis 1: Religious civil conflicts in which an Islamic group is involved will last longer than religious conflicts in which an Islamic group is not involved.

The causal logic behind this hypothesis is the nature of the Abrahamic religions, in general and Islam in particular. These religions tend to be uncompromising, in that they place important limits on the conduct of believers (Fish 2002). Good conduct results in reward and prohibited conduct results in punishment (Toft 2007, 100). When elites frame grievances using structural factors, believers of these religions, especially Islam, are more likely to mobilize in defense of their religious community and fundamentalists are less likely to engage in negotiations, even if it might result in a shorter conflict or peace²⁹.

The second hypothesis implies a different logic from that employed by the first hypothesis; it rests on the assumption that a different calculation operates when Islamic

²⁸ See Fox 2001b and Toft 2006b, 2007.

²⁹ I argue that some of the key tenets of the Islamic faith that can be manipulated to legitimize violence are the waging of *jihad* in defense of *ummah*. Therefore, all other considerations come second to this most fundamental religious belief.

groups are in the minority in a religious civil conflict. I will test whether religious conflict lasts longer when Islamic groups are in the minority. In other words:

Hypothesis 2: Religious civil conflicts in which Islamic groups are present will last longer if the Islamic group is in the minority.

The logic behind this hypothesis is that religious dynamics more easily mobilizes minority groups (Reynal-Querol 2002) and attracts fundamentalist external support. Toft argues that elites within each conflicting religious faction will outbid each other to enhance their religious credentials and gain the support needed to counter an immediate threat (Toft 2007, 103). I theorize that religious outbidding is more prevalent when Muslims are in the minority because it creates a rallying effect that often reverberates throughout the Islamic civilization, whereas if these groups are in the majority, religious outbidding is less likely. The rally effect creates indivisibility in that the religious minority, often spurred on by fundamentalists, will find the issues more salient and will find it more difficult to compromise thereby leading to conflict intractability.

The final hypothesis will test whether religious conflict involving an Islamic group and a Christian group will last longer than conflicts where only one of these groups is involved:

Hypothesis 3: Religious civil conflicts between a Muslim and a Christian group will last longer than a religious civil conflict that is not between members of these two groups.

The logic behind this hypothesized relationship is similar to the logic employed in the first hypothesis. It rests on the argument that Islam and Christianity³⁰ encourage believers to

³⁰ In theory we can expect to find longer conflicts with Islamic groups and Jewish groups as well, and between Jewish groups and Christian groups due to the nature of the Abrahamic

discount their physical survival, as the physical self is mortal but the religious self is both immortal and eternal³¹ (Toft 2007, 100). Therefore, the sacrifice of the temporal in order to obtain the eternal, is not only rational but also desirable, this results in wars in which both sides to the conflict share these beliefs to last longer than religious conflicts in which only one side has these beliefs³².

Summary of Theoretical Argument and Hypotheses

Theory	Civil conflicts in which one of the conflicting groups is Muslim will last longer than conflicts in which a Muslim group is not involved.
Casual Mechanism	The relationship between religious civil conflict duration and religious affiliation of the groups is the concept of issue indivisibility.
Outline of Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Hassner's (2003) two-part definition of issue indivisibility, I argue that the non-fungible component of issue indivisibility has a more pronounced in Islam due to the religious concepts of <i>jihad</i> and <i>ummah</i>. - Religious elites manipulate the concept of "intercommunal" <i>jihad</i> as a way in which to keep religious adherents mobilized and have them believe that <i>ummah</i> needs to be defended. In other words, waging <i>jihad</i> is the only way to bring about a just society and one should exhaust all viable means in order to make this possible. - <i>Ummah</i> creates issue indivisibility and leads to longer wars because the perception throughout Islamic scholarship is that the defense of <i>ummah</i> is an issue in which there is no compromise for the true Muslim.

religious (discussed above). However, hypothesis concerning conflicts between Muslims and Jews were not included due to the fact that Israel is the only Jewish state and during the period the dataset covers (1940-2000), there have only been two *intifadas* issued against Israel, the first 1945-1948 was included in the dataset but the second *intifada* (September 2000-?) was not included because it did not reach the required number of battle field deaths by December 2000, in order to be included in the dataset.

³¹ As discussed in the introduction, depending on the nature of the grievance or how the conflict was dealt with previously, elites can manipulate existing religious beliefs in order to serve their own purposes. This hypothesis is merely stating that Abrahamic religions feature uncompromising doctrine that is easily manipulated and which often leads to violence, if the grievance is framed correctly.

³² Another interesting hypotheses would be to test the duration of Islamic inter-faith religious conflicts, however, the limited amount of cases prevented this analysis.

Hypotheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Religious civil conflicts in which an Islamic group is involved will last longer than religious conflicts in which an Islamic group is not involved.</i> - <i>Religious civil conflicts in which Islamic groups are present will last longer if the Islamic group is in the minority.</i> - <i>Religious civil conflicts between a Muslim and a Christian group will last longer than a religious civil conflict that is not between members of these two groups.</i>
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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In all, there is a considerable body of theory and comparative research positing that religion is an important influence on society, politics and conflict [...] However, most of these studies, whether they are theoretical, comparative, or quantitative, are limited.

-Fox 2004b, 28

The main dataset consulted for this research design was Toft's Dataset of Civil Wars (2008 version), which included all civil wars that took place between 1940-2000. The dataset also included a variable that differentiated religious civil conflicts from non-religious conflicts, as well as a variable indicating whether religious issues were a central or peripheral concern to at least one combatant. Toft's dataset also included end and start dates of each conflict. The second dataset used for this study was Reynal-Querol's dataset on religious and ethnic polarization and fractionalization (2008). Reynal-Querol's dataset provided the religious polarization and fractionalization score for most of the countries in Toft's dataset.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable in my analysis is the duration of religious civil conflict calculated in days. The variable for duration was measured using the first date of the conflict start month and the end date of the conflict end month. For conflicts with the same start and end month, the conflict was calculated as lasting the number of days in the entire month; for conflicts that were ongoing at the end of the dataset, the end date was calculated as December 31, 2000. Due to the fact that the dependent variable measures time and is extremely right skewed, I performed a logarithmic transformation in order to pull outlying

data, i.e. civil wars that lasted for most of the dataset, closer towards the majority of the data in order to create a normally distributed dependent variable.

Independent variables

In this research project I utilized six independent variables and ran linear models with each variable. Variables were coded using a dichotomous coding scheme with ‘1’ reflecting the presence of the religious tradition or dyad of interest, and ‘0’ otherwise. The first two independent variables captured whether an Islamic group was involved in a religious conflict or in a non-religious civil war. The next two independent variables showed whether the Islamic group was the minority in a religious conflict or in all civil conflicts, respectively. The final main explanatory variables showed whether the parties in the conflict dyad were Islamic and Christian in both religious civil wars and civil wars in general.

Other variables

The effects of this category of variables on the dependent variable were not being studied but were necessary to include as theory states that the impact of these variables may produce biased estimates of the effect of the main explanatory variables on religious conflict duration. The first control variable is religious polarization which was bounded between ‘0’ and ‘1,’ with scores close to ‘0’ representing countries with low levels of polarization and scores close to ‘1’ representing countries with high levels of religious polarization³³. A polarization measure was included in order to capture the sum of interpersonal antagonism that result from “the interplay of the sense of group identification (group size) and the sense

³³ Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2002) capture polarization by measuring how far the distribution of groups is from a bimodal distribution.

of alienation with respect to other groups (intergroup distance)” (Esteban and Ray 2008, 166). Measures for religious fractionalization was included in preliminary tests but were excluded since the results obtained from these tests provided further evidence in support of Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Hegre and Sambanis (2006) findings’ that there was not a statistically significant relationship between religious or ethnic fractionalization and conflict.

Other variables that were included in this analysis were dummy variables for whether the conflict took place in the Middle East, whether there was a third party intervention on behalf of either the religious rebels or the government and the presence of resources. The Middle East variable captured the relationship between the main independent variables on the dependent variables taking into account the co-location of resources and the predominance of the Islamic faith in this region. The variable for third-party intervention controlled for two things, first, it captured whether the civil conflict, regardless of whether it was religious or not, was a result of Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. The second relationship that this variable captured was whether the duration of the war was affected by pan-Islamic movements or was a case of regional contagion effects. The final dummy variable for resources was to control for the effect that greed may have had on conflict duration. Experiments with variable coding were attempted, for example coding resources as a four part categorical variable, with countries with no resources, lootable, non-lootable and both lootable and non-lootable resources coded differently, but this did not change the overall relationship among this variable and the main independent variable and conflict duration. The final control variable was gross domestic product, which was included in order to control for the effect that aggregate income level would have on conflict duration. Gross domestic product was also log-transformed to correct for right-skewed ness.

Below is a table of the summary statistics for the variables used in this analysis.

Summary Data of Variables

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max
Conflict Duration	133	3044.617	3899.56	30	19146
Conflict Duration (logged)	133	6.892693	1.870063	3.401197	9.8598449
Religious Civil War ³⁴	133	.3157895	.3157895	0	1
Islam	133	.2556391	.4378691	0	1
Islamic Group in Religious War	42	.8095238	.3974366	0	1
Islamic Minority	133	.1879699	.3921652	0	1
Islamic Minority in Religious War	42	.6190476	.4915074	0	1
Islamic-Christian dyad	133	.1278195	.3351511	0	1
Islamic-Christian dyad in Religious War	42	.4047619	.4967958	0	1
Religious Polarization	114	.6457018	.2989213	0	1
Middle East	133	.1428571	.3512501	0	1
GDP	87	4.49e+10	9.64e +10	1.31e+08	4.95e+11
GDP (logged)	87	22.93755	1.861171	18.86071	26.92782
Intervention	130	.5307692	.5009829	0	1
Resource	133	.5639098	.4977736	0	1

Methodology

Two different statistical analyses were performed on the data. The first was a simple two-tailed two-sample t-test, in which all the independent variables were compared to the dependent variable to determine whether the average difference between the two groups was statistically significant or if it was better explained by random chance. The second model was ordinary least squares (OLS) for multiple regressions, in all OLS models, I utilized robust

³⁴ This variable offers a summary of religious civil wars in comparison to the entire dataset of civil wars in general.

standard errors, which made finding statistical significance more difficult but its use was necessary because it reduced the effect of high leverage conflicts³⁵ and is often used in cases of unusual data in small- to medium-size samples (Fox 2008, 544).

Results and Explanation

Two-Tailed Two-Sample T-Tests Models

Two sample t-test models showing the duration of religious civil wars in comparison to non-religious civil wars (not significant) and other variables that were statistically significant.

	Group	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	95% Conf. Interval.	P-value	DF
Religious Civil War ³⁶	0	91	2776.95	3512.16	2045.503- 3508.39	0.2454	131
	1	42	3624.57	4623.50	2183.79- 5065.36		
Islamic Group ³⁷	0	8	7590.5 ³⁸	7089.15	1663.82- 13517.18	0.0055	40
	1	34	2691.4	3344.92	1524.32- 3858.51		
Islamic Minority ³⁹	0	17	6556.83	5587.43	3684.03- 9429.61	0.0003	40
	1	25	1630.64	2339.66	664.88- 2596.40		
Middle East	0	114	3363.03	4079.44	2606.07- 4119.98	0.0205	131
	1	19	1134.16	1595.83	364.99- 1903.32		
Third Party Intervention	0	61	1782.18	2516.92	1137.567- 2426.79	0.0014	128
	1	69	3730.58	4007.18	2767.95- 4693.21		

³⁵ High leverage observations would be conflicts that lasted for most of the dataset.

³⁶ With influential cases removed, religious civil wars were still longer than non-religious civil wars, on average a year longer, but the variable still remained statistically insignificant.

³⁷ This model only looks at Islamic involvement in religious civil wars regardless of whether religion was a central or peripheral issue.

³⁸ There were two cases driving the result that religious war involving non-Islamic groups last longer than those in which an Islamic group was involved. When these cases were removed the duration of non-Islamic religious wars were insignificant with a mean of 4403.167 days and a p-value of 0.278. However, when only one of those influential cases was removed the variable retained statistical significance, with a mean of 5939.7 days and a p-value 0.05.

³⁹ This model only looks at Islamic minority involvement in religious civil wars regardless of whether religion was a central or peripheral issue.

Explanation of Results

The two-sample t-tests tell us whether the means of the two populations being tested are statistically different. However, for most of the models that were run using the cross tabs method, the confidence interval contained 0, indicating that there was insufficient data to conclude whether the duration of a conflict involving the variable of interest is different from conflicts in which the variable was not present.

The first two-tailed two-sample t-test looks at whether religious civil wars last a statistically significant period of time than non-religious civil wars. However, we see that although the variable is not significant, religious civil wars last on average two years and four months longer than non-religious civil wars. Nevertheless, there was statistical significance for two of the main explanatory variables, namely the presence of an Islamic group and an Islamic minority. These findings partially support hypotheses 1 and 2 that religious civil conflicts involving an Islamic group and an Islamic minority group lasts a significantly different period of time in comparison to religious conflicts in which these groups are not involved.

The results of the second model indicate that religious conflicts involving an Islamic group lasts a statistically significant different length of time than religious civil wars in which an Islamic group is not involved. However, the relationship is not in the hypothesized direction. In fact, religious civil wars involving an Islamic group are, on average, ten years and two months shorter than conflicts where Muslims are not a party to the conflict.

However, when the two longest-lasting religious wars that do not involve an Islamic group are removed, the statistical significance of the duration of these wars disappears.

The results of the third model also provides partial support for hypothesis 2 in that religious conflicts involving an Islamic group lasts a statistically different period of time than religious conflicts in which this group is either not involved or is not a minority group, however, the relationship is not in the hypothesized direction and involvement of a Muslim minority group may serve to shorten conflict by approximately thirteen years and eight months.

An explanation for the results for the second and third models could be that governments that face a mobilized Islamic group or a Muslim minority population fear intervention from countries in the Islamic civilization as well as the influx of fundamentalists into their territory and are therefore more conciliatory with these groups⁴⁰. In other words, rather than the presence of an Islamic group or Islamic minority extending the conflict, it could actually have the opposite effect of shortening the conflict, since framing the issue in religious rhetoric could force the government to acquiescence more quickly since having an Islamic group or Islamic minority that is willing to fight could serve as a signal that the conflict will become intractable.

The two sample t-tests also provided evidence that conflicts that take place in the Middle East were actually shorter than conflicts located outside this geographical region. This is also an interesting finding since it debunks historical anecdotes that conflicts in this region are by definition intractable. Although this may be the case when examining intra-

⁴⁰ Another explanation that runs counter to my argument is that these conflicts are shorter because overwhelming government repression forces compromise on the side of the religious group.

regional relations and Middle Eastern countries' relations with nations outside the region, the relationship between geographical location and conflict intractability does not hold true when examining civil conflicts that take place in the Middle East. In fact, conflicts that take place within the Middle East are approximately six years shorter than conflicts outside the region. Finally, the last of models found that civil conflicts where a third party intervened lasted longer than those without such intervention, an average of five years and three months. One possible explanation for this finding is the existence of a interstate rival affects civil war duration because even the expectation of outside assistance can deter members of a religious group from seeking settlement and further motivate them to fight (Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski 2005).

Ordinary Least Squares Regression Models

All OLS models are presented regardless of the statistical significance of the main explanatory variables. A brief explanation of the direction and significance of variables follow the table and a section suggesting explanations for the results are provided at the end of the model presentation.

MODEL 1.1			
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	P-value
Intercept	.6107881	2.862935	.832
Islam ⁴¹	-.018208	.4905273	.970
Intervention	.8077199	.3741872	.034*
Resource	.6915907	.4219077	.106
Religious Polarization	-.0217807	.7307632	.976
GDP (logged)	.2514589	.116965	.035*
Middle East	-1.280589	.6427262	.050*

⁴¹ When three of the longest lasting civil wars were removed, the sign on this coefficient changed to .0651 but it remained statistically insignificant with a p-value of 0.894.

MODEL 1.2			
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	P-value
Intercept	1.09837	8.059553	.893
Islamic Group in Religious War ⁴²	-.5438444	.7612198	.485
Intervention	-.3479866	.7073713	.607
Resource	.8327997	.8345262	.462
Religious Polarization	1.744749	1.932637	.358
GDP (logged)	.232172	.2748457	.438
Middle East	-.2413865	1.310828	.850
MODEL 2.1			
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	P-value
Intercept	-.0254376	2.753667	.993
Islamic Minority	-.9869759	.6111007	.111
Intervention	.9301522	.3655541	.013 .
Resource	.6551318	.4048356	.110
Religious Polarization	-.3328852	.7558477	.661
GDP (logged)	.2914732	.1132415	.012 .
Middle East	-.9308593	.7220018	.202
MODEL 2.2			
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	P-value
Intercept	10.27439	8.147144	.224
Islamic Minority in Religious War	-2.939622	1.055486	.013*
Intervention	-.1894741	.4459184	.676
Resource	.2376708	.6134032	.703
Religious Polarization	-4.115124	2.847088	.167
GDP (logged)	.0450903	.2843567	.876
Middle East	-.3953266	.7570094	.608
MODEL 3.1			
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	P-value
Intercept	.5750482	2.811351	.839
Islamic –Christian Dyad	-.1890094	.5086069	.711
Intervention	.8296699	.3791032	.032*

⁴² When influential cases were removed, the coefficient in this variable also changed signs to have a positive effect on duration with a value of 0.1396 but it was still statistically insignificant with a p-value of 0.814.

Resource	.7308442	.4362528	.098
Religious Polarization	-.0293727	.7276283	.968
GDP (logged)	.252658	.113344	.029*
Middle East	-1.297583	.6251035	.042*
MODEL 3.2			
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	P-value
Intercept	-.2681932	8.078348	.974
Islamic-Christian Dyad in Religious War	-.1252243	.8802455	.889
Intervention	-.4041351	.7728493	.608
Resource	.9425612	.9604971	.340
Religious Polarization	1.920323	1.884091	.322
GDP (logged)	.2681146	.306384	.394
Middle East	-.3315762	1.212218	.788
Significance codes: '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1			

Explanation of Results

Each OLS regression model tested the relationship between one main explanatory variable (and other theoretically relevant variables), and its effect on conflict duration. Models 1.1 and 1.2 tested whether conflicts involving an Islamic group lasted longer in comparison to both civil wars in general and religious civil conflicts involving other groups. Although there was no statistical significance for the main explanatory variables in either model, the finding was that the involvement of an Islamic group shortened conflict. This may be attributed to an argument made earlier that when governments are faced with a large Muslim group they may negotiate more quickly and yield to the groups' demands rather than continue the conflict indefinitely. This argument could also be made to support the findings of models 2.1 and 2.2 that looked at the relationship between civil conflict duration and the presence of a minority Islamic group. Those results also showed that the presence of a

minority Islamic group led to shorter civil conflicts, however, there was only statistical significance for cases in which a Muslim minority was involved in a religious civil war. Models 3.1 and 3.2 tested the relationship between Islam-Christian dyads in respect to both religious conflict and all other types of civil war. Although neither relationship is statistically significant, the coefficients are negative indicating that conflicts between these two groups may actually last a shorter period of time than conflicts that are between other combinations of religious dyads. If this relationship were explored further, it could be used to refute Huntington's claims that the Western and Islamic civilizations have reasons to fear each other.

Other results from these models are that some of the control variables switched direction depending on whether the model was looking at all civil conflicts or just religious civil conflicts. For example, in OLS model 1.1 the variable for third party intervention served to lengthen conflict when looking at Islamic involvement in civil wars in general, however, when analyzing religious civil wars (model 1.2) intervention served to shorten the length of the conflict. A probable explanation for this result, is that third parties intervene more readily in civil wars in general and that these conflicts would last a long period of time regardless of the intervention, whereas in the case of religious civil wars, third parties tend to intervene after the conflict has been going on for a long period of time and conflict intervention comes at a time when the conflict was in its final throes. This explanation could also be used to explain the same change in the coefficient for intervention when analyzing the presence of a Muslim minority in civil wars (model 2.1) and religious civil wars (model 2.2) as well as the presence of an Islamic-Christian dyad in model 3.1 and 3.2. Another sign change occurs with the religious polarization variable, in models 1.1 and 3.1 polarization shortens conflict but in

religious civil wars (model 1.2 and 3.2) it serves to lengthen conflict. This is an intuitive finding, since it suggests that the size of the religious group does not serve to extend a generic civil war but when the conflict is religious in nature, the size of the religious groups in relation to each other has the effect of extending conflict.

Discussion

In roughly half of the models, the variables for the Middle East, third party intervention and gross domestic product showed statistical significance. However, the most useful finding was that resources and conflict duration did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship, although it had the effect of prolonging war. These results provide weak support for the greed hypothesis, however, the fact that the religious affiliation of the groups had significance in at least one model (2.2) indicates that grievances plays a stronger and more important role in explaining conflict duration. The variables for third-party intervention and GDP also had the effect of extending conflicts in the models where they were statistically significant. On the other hand, in models where the Middle East variable was statistically significant, it had the effect of shortening conflict. This could be attributed to the fact that the West intervenes more quickly in conflicts in this region because intractable conflict could have the long-term effect of strangling oil extraction and production, a resource vital to Western interests.

The variable for religious polarization were not significant in any model, which is a surprising finding since some scholars claim that conflicts are affected by size of religious groups in relation to each other (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2003, 202). The logic behind this predicted relationship is that when religious polarization reaches its maximum, meaning

there are two religious groups of equal size, the likelihood of conflict intractability increases because the out-group is viewed as posing a potential threat to the in-group's interests (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2003, 202). The fact that religious polarization was not co-linear with any of the main independent variables and the relationship between those variables and conflict duration were significant even when the variable for religious polarization was omitted, suggests that the size of the group in relation to the other groups does not explain conflict intractability as well as the religious tradition of the majority and/or minority group.

Although the statistical analyses did not provide evidence in support of my theory, there are many possible explanations for these findings. First, although there were 133 civil conflicts in the data, the unavailability of data for GDP and religious polarization⁴³ for all countries at the conflict start and/or end date, resulted in a degrees of freedom problem in which there were too few cases per independent variable and thus interesting relationships were difficult to uncover. Data unavailability also restricted the number of variables that I could control for, leaving open the possibility that the direction of the relationship between the main explanatory variables and the response variable could change if there was enough data to support additional control variables. Thirdly, data limitations also affected the types

⁴³ In models similar to models 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1 using robust standard errors but with the variables for GDP and religious polarization omitted, the variables for resources, intervention and Middle East were significant at the 0.05 level, with resources and intervention serving to extend conflict duration and the Middle East variable serving to shorten the length of the conflict. In models similar to models 1.2, 2.2 and 3.2 (meaning those that only look at religious civil conflicts) using robust standard errors and with the variables for GDP and religious polarization omitted, only the variables for the presence of an Islamic group and the presence of a minority Islamic group were statistically significant at the 0.05 level but the relationship was not in the hypothesized direction. However, this does support the overarching argument that religious affiliation affects religious civil war duration.

of statistical models that I was able to utilize. I switched the six main independent variables into six separate response variables and turned duration into an independent variable to see the results it would generate⁴⁴, but instead, the statistical software was unable to find concavity on the last iteration, indicating that the software could not establish a direction vector in which to guide new parameter estimates and the vector was essentially flat in some areas of the data. The shortcomings of the dataset, of which there were no better alternatives⁴⁵, was a contributing factor to the weak statistical support for my hypotheses and theory.

In order to determine whether the statistical results presented above capture the relationship between Islam and conflict duration in actual religious civil wars, I conduct a case study analysis of the Maitatsine religious conflict in Kano, Nigeria that allows for a qualitative analysis of the connection between Islam and conflict duration. The Maitatsine conflict is an interesting case study since it involves a large, mobilized Islamic group that terrorized other Muslim groups as well as Christians in the area. Although, it began as a state issue, the conflict quickly spread and became so disastrous that the Nigerian federal government had to intervene in order to restore order in the northern states. Furthermore, the relative resource scarcity of Nigeria's northern states supports Toft's (2007) argument that greed was not a motivating factor in the conflict but rather grievances against the state and federal government against an ethno-religious group.

⁴⁴ I am aware that by doing this my dataset the research question would have to be changed, since I would be asking a slightly different question.

⁴⁵ Although there are other datasets on ethnic and religious conflict, Toft has created the only dataset, of which the author is aware, in which these two variables are not lumped together as having one effect on civil conflict.

Summary of Hypotheses and Statistical Results

	Variables that were significant in all Civil Wars	Variables that were significant in Religious Civil Wars
Hypothesis 1: <i>Religious civil conflicts in which an Islamic group is involved will last longer than religious conflicts in which an Islamic group is not involved.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Middle East variable served to shorten conflict. - Overall there was no support for the argument that civil wars involving an Islamic group lasts a statistically significant different period of time than conflicts in which a Muslim group was not involved. But the direction of the coefficient indicates that these wars may actually be shorter than non-Islamic conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were no significant variables in the model analyzing the duration of religious civil war. - There was no support for the argument that religious civil wars involving an Islamic group lasts a statistically significant different period of time than conflicts in which a Muslim group was not involved. But once again, the direction of the coefficient indicates that religious civil wars involving a Muslim group may be shorter than religious civil wars in which an Islamic group is not involved.
Hypothesis 2: <i>Religious civil conflicts in which Islamic groups are present will last longer if the Islamic group is in the minority.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervention and GDP were significant. Both served to extend the length of civil conflict. - Overall there is no evidence that the presence of an Islamic minority affects the length of the conflict, however, the coefficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The variable for Islamic minority is significant and it serves to shorten the length of religious conflict. - There is evidence that the presence of an Islamic minority affects the length of

	is not in the hypothesized direction, indicating that the presence of a Muslim minority serves to shorten the length of civil conflict.	religious conflict duration, but not in the hypothesized direction.
Hypothesis 3: <i>Religious civil conflicts between and a Muslim and a Christian group will last longer than a religious civil conflict that is not between members of these two groups.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Variables for intervention, GDP and Middle East were significant. Intervention and GDP served to extend conflict and Middle East served to shorten conflict. - Overall there was no support for the hypothesis that civil wars involving an Islamic-Christian dyad lasts a statistically significant period of time than conflicts that were between other combinations of religious dyads. Also, the sign of the coefficient indicates that conflicts involving these dyads are actually shorter than the models predicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No variables were statistically significant. - There is not support for the hypothesis that religious civil wars involving an Islamic-Christian dyad lasts longer than religious civil wars involving other combinations of religious dyads. In fact, the presence of an Islamic-Christian dyad may serve to shorten the length of the conflict, although this finding is not statistically significant.

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY

Muslims in Nigeria have never initiated a single religious conflict in Nigeria. Even the so-called "Maitatsine Religious Riots" were carefully planned by non-Muslims to implicate Muslims and ridicule Islam...What the Muslims have done in the past was to react spontaneously to religious clashes, once initiated.

-Quoted in Falola 1998, 285

Since the earliest times, religious conflict has been a pervasive fear in Nigerian politics and society. Due to the fact that both Muslims and Christians are approximately equal in number, Nigeria's religious conflict in Kano state serves as an excellent case in which to support the mechanisms involved in the first hypothesis that religious conflict involving an Islamic group will last longer than a religious conflict in which a Muslim group is not involved. This analysis illustrates how historical factors supporting the use of certain collective action frames, issue indivisibility and the waging of *jihad* in defense of *ummah* can play in religious civil conflict intractability⁴⁶.

Although the quantitative analyses did not find any statistical significance between the presence of an Islamic group and conflict duration, I argue that case study analysis is perhaps a better method of capturing the relationship between religious tradition and conflict duration and the role that issue indivisibility plays in this dynamic⁴⁷. Based on my theory, the case study of the Maitatsine religious conflict in Kano, Nigeria should follow a pattern in

⁴⁶ Although a single case study is unable to provide a truly robust test of my hypotheses, it presents an alternative to the statistical analyses and highlights the compounding effect my casual mechanisms (framing, issue indivisibility, *jihad*, *ummah*) has on conflict intractability.

⁴⁷ Qualitative analysis may be better at uncovering the relationships that I hypothesize due to two factors: data limitations and, secondly, perhaps the hypotheses that I propose are difficult to test quantitatively because the reasons religious groups continue fight are not easily quantifiable.

which there is a perceived ethno-religious grievance, elites frame the issue using religious rhetoric and the issue at stake becomes indivisible⁴⁸, the Islamic religious group mobilizes and gains strength, they challenge the authority of the leaders and/or government and finally even after being militarily overwhelmed by government forces, continue to fight because they believe that they are fighting a *jihad* and are defending the *ummah*. If this pattern is reflected in the events leading up to and during the Maitatsine conflict, then my theory would have some basis in qualitative analysis and should be researched further. In other words, the Maitatsine conflict can follow two possible trajectories⁴⁹ for religious civil wars, the first in which historical and structural features of Islam intertwine to create an intractable conflict that outlasts the elites that framed it and the second in which the religious issue frame may or may not have been used but the absence of either historical or structural features to support the frame did not result in intractable conflict. To further strengthen my arguments that structural factors play a greater role in Islamic conflicts, I have also included brief qualitative analyses of the Indian Sikh insurrection (1983-1993) and the Tibetan Revolt (1954-1959) to illustrate how religious civil wars involving groups of other religions do not become protracted because they do not have the historical or structural foundation on which to fuel a successful intractable conflict.

⁴⁸ Toft (2006b; 2007) uses the case studies of Sudan's two civil wars to illustrate how the peripheral role of religion in Sudan's first civil war was conducive to negotiations and hence resolution. However, in Sudan's second ongoing civil war, religion is a central issue and attempts to negotiate peace have proven futile. I argue that in the Nigerian case the state governor's attempt at negotiating peace with the Maitatsine were futile because religion was a central issue and even after the leader was killed, the followers still continued to wage religious violence because the frame was effective.

⁴⁹ Both trajectories will assume issue indivisibility, since I have established in earlier chapters that issue indivisibility best explains religious conflict.

First Possible Trajectory of the Religious Conflict

Grievance is identified and elites frame issue using religious rhetoric.	Religious group is mobilized and historical and structural features intertwine to create a religious conflict.	Religious group seeks to fortify itself against government forces and is unwilling to bargain with the government.	Elites/leaders die or are imprisoned but the conflict continues because historical and structural features have drawn fundamentalist elements.
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Second Possible Trajectory of the Religious Conflict

Grievance is identified and elites may use religious frame if there are existing religious cleavages.	Religious group is mobilized and conflict may ensue if there are existing religious tensions.	Support for religious war wanes because there are no historical or structural factors in support continued conflict.	When elites/leaders die, the conflict ends because it was unable to attract fundamentalist elements.
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Background Information

Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Africa with over 250 distinct ethnic groups, each possessing a distinct language, social customs and beliefs (Umar 2007, 263). But arguably, the sharpest divide is religious with the north being predominantly Muslim and the southeast predominantly Christian, leaving only southwestern Nigeria where both religions are equally represented (Falola 1998, 1).

In the most simplistic sense, Nigeria has three main religions—Traditional or animistic religions, Islam and Christianity (Kayole 1985, 233). Nigeria's Traditional religions have deep historical roots in Nigeria and are primarily based on oral traditions; the other two are religious imports that were brought to Nigeria either through trade or

colonization. For the purposes of this paper I will concentrate on the background of the growth and spread of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria.

Islam was brought to Nigeria during the eleventh century via the caravan trade routes that came from the north into Kanem-Bornu, the areas of present Bornu state and from the west into Hausa country, parts of the present Sokoto, Kaduna and Kano states of Nigeria (Kayole 1985, 241). Merchants formed settlements along these trade routes and eventually inter-married with their indigenous customers and formed their own separate communities in which they could practice their religion (Kayole 1985, 241). From these early beginnings, Islam slowly spread throughout northern Nigeria and by the start of the nineteenth century, knowledge of Islam had grown to the point where, Islamic reforms of politics and culture were welcomed (Kayole 1985, 243). Islamic reformers eventually launched a *jihad*, which was a formal attempt to convert Islam from the level of personal belief to that of communal law as well as to create a theocratic Islamic empire (Kayole 1985, 243). The *jihad* transformed the Hausa states and continued eastward into the Bornu kingdom and southward into Nupeland and northern Yorubaland (Kayole 1985, 243). However, the Yoruba people were able to stem the spread of *jihad* and Islam further south. Nevertheless, Islam has left indelible marks on certain aspects of Nigerian culture and politics, such as language, dress and civic and martial law (Kayole 1985, 245).

Christianity, on the other hand, was introduced into Nigeria at a much later date and was brought by missionaries mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Kayole 1985, 245). Missionary propaganda was successful in the south and coastal cities and by the end of the nineteenth century, Christianity threatened to undo the *jihad* that had occurred between 1804 and 1831 in northern Nigeria (Kayole 1985, 247). Christianity's successes in the south

made it both a cause and catalyst of social change (Kayole 1985, 249). Moreover, Christianity gained most of its converts through European-run schools, propelling it to become the religion of the educated African elite. On the other hand, many were denied membership by Christian missions until they possessed an intellectual grasp of the doctrine and had divested themselves of their multiple wives (Kayole 1985, 250). Basically, Christianity brought western education and value systems to all parts of Nigeria.

Religion has always played a role in Nigerian politics. In the pre-colonial era, religion was integral to identity formation, power legitimization, and economic might (Falola 1998, 2). During the colonial period, both Islam and Christianity increased in size, but under British rule, Christianity enjoyed a privileged status and produced a new elite that would control the postcolonial economy and bureaucracy (Falola 1998, 2). After independence from Britain in 1960, ethnicity became the main destabilizing factor and resulted in a civil war toward the end of the decade. As attention focused on ethnicity, various solutions were implemented such as the creation of cross-cutting institutions, the strengthening of the federal government and the subdivision of the country's three main geographical regions—the north, east and west—in order to weaken them (Falola 1998, 2).

However, since the 1970s and the end of the civil war, religion has moved to the forefront to become just as disruptive as ethnicity. In fact there have been more than a dozen riots between Islamic and Christian groups in the decades since independence, with most having to be terminated by the police or military (Falola 1998, 2). The theme underlying all these conflicts has been the issue of religious dominance, with both groups seeking “to unseat the rival religion, to impose their own values, and to control the state” (Falola 1998, 2). Religious tensions also influence power struggles and are often manipulated by political

elites. In fact, religion has become so important in Nigerian society that it has become a mainstay in country case study analyses (Falola 1998, 2).

Despite the calls made by politicians to vote along religious lines from the mid-seventies, most scholars date the beginning of Nigeria's religious crises to April 1978, when the Constituent Assembly was holding deliberations on a Presidential Constitution (Falola 1998, 2). After the collapse of the First Republic in 1966, Nigeria had a military government that ruled for thirteen years. The return to civilian authority necessitated a new constitution that provided many opportunities for religious tensions to flare (Falola 1998, 3). Two contentious issues emerged during the constitutional crises, the first was whether Nigeria would become a secular state; the second was whether it should subscribe to *al-Shari'a*, the Islamic code of laws (Falola 1998, 3).

The adoption of the constitution caused widespread religious violence and political demonstrations on both sides. By the end of the 1970s, religiously motivated conflicts became a feature of Nigerian politics and society. One of the most devastating religious conflicts during this period was the 1980 Maitatsine crises that lasted approximately four years and claimed over ten thousand lives and millions of naira worth of property damage (Falola 1998, 3). But although some scholars describe the violence in Nigeria's northern states as a series of riots (Falola 1998), others (Toft 2007) argue that it was in fact a continuous, protracted religious conflict. I fall into the latter category because all the violent clashes that took place during this time was perpetrated by members of the same religious group, whose objectives for bringing about a *jihad* in northern Nigeria had not changed since the conflict began. This case study will concentrate on the first incident that took place in

Kano state that lead to the widespread religious conflict between a large Muslim group and smaller Islamic and Christian groups⁵⁰.

Maitatsine Conflict (1980-1985)

Even before the religious violence that characterized the 1980s, inter-religious conflict had been anticipated by both Muslims and Christians and “threats of a prolonged, intractable religious war had been made as far back as 1978” (Falola 1998, 175). By 1980, a series of religious riots broke out in Kano and spread to three neighboring states over the course of four and a half years (Falola 1998, 137). Although the precipitating riot lasted less than two weeks, it resulted in the death of over five thousand people (Falola 1998, 137). Two years later, another four thousand people were killed, two thousand left homeless and over three million naira worth of property destroyed in Bulunkutu in neighboring Borno state (Falola 1998, 137). In the same period, riots in Kaduna state killed twenty-three people and continued conflict in Kano state lead to church burnings and extensive property damage belonging to Christians (Falola 1998, 137). Violence in Yola and Jimeta, both in Gongola state (which is now divided into two states, Adamawa and Taraba) resulted in the deaths of over two thousand people and the total destruction of Jimeta’s only modern market (Falola 1998, 137). The crisis finally ended in April 1985 in Gombe state, where another one hundred people lost their lives (Falola 1998, 137). These conflicts are known collectively as the Maitatsine riots (after Marwa’s Islamic organization) and had all the characteristics of armed struggle including the use of guerilla warfare (Falola 1998, 137). These riots were the

⁵⁰ It is worth noting that both the state and federal government at the time were also Muslim, however, the important difference was that they were careful not to frame the conflict as a religious war. But as defined in the introductory chapter, a war is religious if at least one party to the conflict views religious issues to be salient, in this case, the Maitatsine movement viewed the war as primarily religious.

first major religious disturbances in post-colonial Nigeria and frightened both Muslims and Christians alike.

Prelude to the Conflict

The Maitatsine conflict has been explained using two different prisms, as a consequence of the economic troubles and political decadence of the 1970s, or as a consequence of Islamic fundamentalism (Falola 1998, 138). I will discuss each explanation and offer arguments in favor of the latter.

The religious conflict occurred during Nigeria's Second Republic, which was a period of declining revenues, high unemployment rates, political corruption, government mismanagement and serious popular concern about the erosion of moral and religious values (Falola 1998, 138). One problem that precipitated the conflict was the economic decline of the 1970s, which was used by a self-declared prophet named Muhammadu Marwa, an Islamic teacher in Kano, who presented himself as a liberator and encouraged religious violence as a solution to the problems facing his followers (Falola 1998, 138). Falola states that prior to the conflict:

The country was in debt and badly mismanaged, and environmental disasters—drought and desertification among them—were reducing the productive capacity of the rural areas. The masses bore the brunt of the economic decline: prices of food soared, building materials became scarce, and jobs were difficult to find. The police and other officers of state took to corruption to augment their salaries. Politicians at the state and federal levels looted the treasuries and flaunted their wealth to the public. The poor sought the means to survive. In the north, many fled from the rural areas to the cities, where they compounded the societal problems and made themselves vulnerable followers for exploitative religious leaders (1998, 138).

Paul Lubeck (1986) argued that the failure to create a semi-industrial capitalist base in Kano was responsible for producing the circumstances that nurtured the development of

the riots. Additionally, evidence that most of Marwa's followers were poor and jobless⁵¹ encouraged the interpretation that the violence in Kano was a revolt of the poor against an inept and corrupt federal government. Frustration with the national party politics of the Second Republic is also attributed to the outbreak and duration of the conflict in the northern states. Kukah (1993) claims that it was the political system that produced Marwa and his followers (the Maitatsine) and because Marwa was able to mobilize so many followers, it provides further evidence of the effects of the failed political system and the recklessness of its politicians.

Although it is doubtful that the political system alone resulted in Marwa's success at instigating a religious conflict, Falola states that there is "conclusive evidence that the politics of the time shaped some of the outcome of the events" (1998, 139). An example of the failure of the local government to check the growth and strength of Matwa's movement was the defeat of a motion in the Kano State House of Assembly to regulate dangerous public preaching (Falola 1998, 139). The motion was defeated because a majority of assemblypersons attributed their political careers to preachers who campaigned on their behalf. Undoubtedly, Marwa was also aware of the predicament of the Kano assemblypersons. He probably knew that his activities could be defended as being religious in nature and that he had the right to preach, but also that assemblypersons benefited from public preachers and that it would only be expected that religious leaders also had a political agenda (Falola 1998, 140). Furthermore, politicians lacked the power and authoritarianism of the military, which was needed to slow down or stop the Maitatsine movement. Another

⁵¹ This provides evidence for the greed hypothesis, but Marwa did not allow his followers to take any possession other than food when they pillaged markets and stores.

political explanation of the conflict was that it came at a time when the People's Redemption Party (PRP) government was weak and fractionalized due to infighting and political rivalries (Falola 1998, 140). Shortly, before the outbreak of the conflicts Governor Abubakar Rimi sought a peaceful way to check Marwa, by inviting him to the state house for a visit. Marwa declined the invitation and instead sent three emissaries in his place (Falola 1998, 140). Had this occurred when the government was stronger, it is probable that Marwa would have been identified as a national security risk and his movements monitored. However, even government agencies like the National Security Organization (NSO) that had useful information against Marwa, refused to share it with other agencies due partly to bureaucratic inefficiency but also due to political competition within its ranks (Falola 1998, 141).

The Maitatsine riots and its ability to appeal to so many and last so long were due to religious rivalries and tensions that have long identified the Nigerian political and societal landscape. Religious revivalism had become increasingly popular in Nigeria, leading to an increased commitment to issues that affected faith and aggressive proselytization (Falola 1998, 16). Religious doctrines and differences were presented in sharp contrast, which bred intolerance and provided the fuel for religious violence (Falola 1998, 16). In fact, Nigeria provides an excellent case of where violence and religious fundamentalism are intrinsically intertwined. Falola argues that it is not difficult to find believers, particularly in Islamic sects, who believe that martyrdom is necessary in furthering one's cause (1998, 17). Similarly, Christians in the predominantly Muslim north, as opposed to those in the mostly Christian south, seek more limited aims and justify their use of violence as a means through which to protect their lives and defend their faith against violent *jihadists*. Basically, the religious framing of the legitimate grievances affecting the Islamic community had the effect of

lengthening what would otherwise have been a conflict based on divisible issues such as joblessness and unequal economic opportunities for the poor.

Four factors underscore fundamentalism in Nigeria and how it provided a fertile soil for protracted religious conflict:

First, fundamentalist Islam has gained a wider reputation for militancy than Christianity, as cases are reported across the world, creating a widespread impression that Islam is more violence-prone than Christianity. Secondly, there is a desire for reform among fundamentalists; that is, the concept of the *tajdid* in Islam—a commitment to change with respect to both the religion and the state itself. Oftentimes freedom and nationalism are invoked in describing the search for change. Third, there is an international dimension: ideas and resources circulate among religious groups who tend to share similar commitments or vision. Some Islamic groups have been accused of receiving money from Iran and Libya. Finally, the religious leadership profit by being able to use religion to build a power base. It is not uncommon for religious leaders to incite their followers against the state, against other religions, or even against another sect of the same religion (1998, 17).

Using the dogmatic, deeply religious Nigerian society⁵² for his own purposes, Marwa used the Islamic religious tradition to create a doctrine and an interpretation of his own (Falola 1998, 142). The worldview of Marwa and his followers minimalized death, they were not property conscious and did not worry about those who would be left behind as their deaths would not cause anyone hardship (Falola 1998, 146). In their conception, the next life was trouble-free and non-materialistic and something in which to look forward. They also believed that the Nigerian government consisted of “infidels” who had to be resisted (Falola and Heaton 2008, 206). Furthermore, Marwa’s followers were taught that any Muslim who read any book apart from the Quran was a pagan and referred to rich Muslims as unbelievers (Udoidem 1997, 165). Building on these teachings as well as Islamic beliefs that infidels “are

⁵² For an illuminating discussion of Nigeria’s religious tensions and its constant potential for conflict, I recommend Micklethwait and Woolridge (2009). *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith is Changing the World*. New York: The Penguin Press, pp. 297-322.

to be humiliated [...] until they agree to submit” (Quran 9:29) and that Muslims have “a mission to convert or conquer unbelievers” (Ibrahim 1983, 2), Marwa was able to create an effective religious frame in which to mobilize his followers and bring about conflict.

Although his political and/ or economic motives remain unclear⁵³, the protracted conflict was envisioned as a *jihad*, and the end product of struggles against the state, capitalism, the West and Christianity (Falola 1998, 149-154). Leading up the outbreak of conflict, the Maitatsine were openly hostile to Christians and attacked Muslims unsympathetic to their cause (Falola 1998, 149-154). Marwa’s successful framing of the issues in the conflict as indivisible from belief in Islam, continued in the Khariji tradition within militant West African Sunnism, especially the tendency to pronounce *takfir*⁵⁴ on those ostensibly defined as Muslim (Ryan 1987, 13-14). This led Marwa’s impoverished followers to esteem their religious status and the humble services they rendered, and to resent the increased secularization of the nation, Kano state and especially the elite Muslim community (Ryan 2006, 206-7). I argue that the issues in conflict during the Maitatsine religious war were indivisible because Marwa’s followers believed that “the Muslim elite, whether civilian or military, did not have the same priorities as their fellow Muslims of humble background” and *jihad* was the only way in which to accomplish a purge of these dangerous elements and protect *ummah* (Ryan 2006, 207).

The Conflict

⁵³ Falola 1998, 155; Ryan 1987, 13-14.

⁵⁴ In Islamic law, *takfir* is the practice of declaring an individual or a group that was previously considered Muslim to be non-believers and in some cases legalizing the shedding of their blood.

Albert claims that the first steps toward a crisis were probably taken by the state government on November 26, 1980, when Governor Rimi gave Marwa fourteen days in which to demolish illegal structures that Marwa had built for his homeless followers (1999, 286). Marwa was also accused of being in possession of illegal weapons which he was asked to submit to the government immediately; Marwa reacted by asking his followers to attack the “infidels” that had declared war on him (Albert 1999, 286). The targets of the Maitatsine included the police, Christians and Muslims who did not join the Maitatsine movement.

Widespread violence began in the first week of December, when members of the Maitatsine went to the Shahuci Playing Ground in Kano to preach (Falola 1998, 153). The group had gathered in this area before but this time the police were determined to put an end to the sect’s public demonstrations as they often led to violence. Official accounts of that encounter stated that the police discharged smoke shells to scare sect members off but sect members were undeterred and they began attacking the police on all sides. When the police opened fire, the Maitatsine continued to surge forward and soon the police lost control of the situation and had to retreat (Falola 1998, 153). For three weeks, Marwa and his followers held Kano under siege (Hackett 2004, 198). They outnumbered the police and managed to commandeer some of their weapons during their confrontation at Shahuci (Hackett 2004, 198). The Maitatsine occupied some buildings in the city and destroyed others (Hackett 2004, 198). Many Kano residents fled the city as the economy weakened and attacks and fatalities mounted (Hackett 2004, 198). Panic and chaos in Kano emboldened the Maitatsine after their victory over the police and after just one incident, what initially started as a local problem soon grew into a religious civil conflict (Falola 1998, 153).

Retribution against the main body of the Maitatsine was swift and the federal government was able to retake control of Kano state and arrest many of sect adherents, government incompetence led to the early release of many of the sect's followers and the riots in Kano state were repeated in states across northern Nigeria, each more violent and devastating than the last:

Marwa's followers were dispersed, bitter, and vindictive, but Marwa's death did not bring an end to his ideas and his worldview. There were also social and economic conditions that drove many young people to the option of violence. The first follow-up riot took place in Buulunkuru, a village fifteen kilometers east of Maiduguri. The fight lasted four days and many lives were lost. The Maitatsine regrouped in Kaduna, where many were also killed. Two years later, such vicious and deadly violence occurred in Yola that it took a combined operation of the police, the army, and the air force to end it. Almost a year later, Gombe witnessed its own riots, which featured very sophisticated fighting (Falola 1998, 161).

The collective action frame, i.e. religion, in which Marwa used to mobilize his followers and his worldviews that the purpose of the Maitatsine was to bring about *jihad* did not cease to resonate with his followers even after his death in 1980 (Falola 1998, 161). Marwa would recite verses like this one to embolden his followers, "Allah will defend you against them; Destroy them with the wish of Allah" (Falola 1998, 146). Although their leader died less than a year into the conflict, the Maitatsine continued to wage a religious war that continued for four more years. The fact that the conflict was able to outlast the discredited Second Republic by over two years indicates that it was structural features rather than socio-economic factors that were driving conflict intractability. In other words, socio-economic factors created the grievance, Marwa created the religious frame but structural factors such as a belief in millennial Islam, in which a violent *jihad* would bring about an end to suffering and injustice, resulted in individuals taking it upon themselves to do their part in bringing

about a just society and hastening the end of the world⁵⁵, leading to protracted conflict. The role of Islam did not dissipate or shrink in significance after the death and/or imprisonment of the movement's leaders, rather, the belief (which was created from a manipulation of Islamic structural factors) among the Maitatsine that their actions would result in either an otherworldly paradise, Islamic millennium or at the very least the religious and social transformation of Nigerian politics and society, continued to exert a powerful influence on a movement that mostly consisted of the poor and so did not result in the reasonable expectation that the conflict would draw to a close after the death of Marwa and the end of the Second Republic. Akinwumi (2004) argues that religious revolts in Kano during the 1980s resulted from manipulation of religion by Islamic fundamentalists who capitalized on popular alienation from the Nigerian political economy, and who offered "the promise of Heaven, untainted by the Nigerian political elites debauchery, [which] was too good to pass over" and too good a cause to stop fighting for (144-5).

Analysis: Hypotheses on religious civil war duration and Nigeria's religious civil war

Hypothesis 1 posits that conflicts involving Islamic groups will last longer than conflicts in which other religious groups are involved. The case study of religious tensions in the predominantly Islamic northern Nigeria illustrates the dynamics that play out in religious conflicts. There were many causes for grievance during Nigeria's mismanaged Second Republic, economic hardships and the perception that the government had failed in its duty to alleviate popular discontent, provided the basis on which Marwa's *jihad* would thrive.

⁵⁵ Although exact dates for the end of the Maitatsine conflict are in dispute, most likely due to coding criteria in the Toft dataset, the religious violence, especially between Muslims and Christians, would continue to be a recurring part of Nigerian life and become increasingly public, explosive and violent.

Historical accounts of Islamic proselytizing in the north as well as the aims of the Maitatsine rebels, point to a possible relationship between calls for *jihad*, the defense of their community (*ummah*) and their willingness to continue fighting even after their leader was killed by government forces and senior members were imprisoned⁵⁶. Nigeria's northern states were familiar with calls for *jihad* as a means through which to gain new adherents, as it was one of the primary means that Islam was able to spread so rapidly. Therefore, as the economic crises of the Second Republic deepened and religious nationalism intensified, historical factors unique to Nigeria's predominantly Muslim North provided fertile ground for intractable religious conflict. These factors, coupled with arguments made in previous chapters that once grievances are framed using religion the conflict often takes on a life of its own independent of its leaders, offers a compelling explanation behind why the conflict continued even after Marwa's death.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 are partially supported in the case of the Maitatsine religious conflict. The second hypothesis predicts that religious conflicts in which a Muslim group is in the minority will last longer than religious conflicts in which another religious group is in the minority because of the pronounced effects of religious outbidding. However, the strength of this relationship in regard to the Maitatsine conflict is disputable since it is close to impossible to determine whether it is the presence of a militant Islamic group or the fact that the Maitatsine targeted other Muslims is driving the relationship. The third hypothesis states that a religious war will last longer when it involves an Islamic-Christian dyad. Although, this conflict involves one such dyad, there is little evidence that the Christian

⁵⁶ Historical factors, meaning the fact that *jihad* had been fought in northern Nigeria previously, as well as the stated aims and objectives of the rebels increase the likelihood that it was the framing of the conflict using *jihad* that led to protracted conflict.

group was able to mobilize and pose an effective counter-threat to Marwa and his followers. Therefore, we will concentrate on how the presence of an Islamic group that utilized radical interpretations of the structural features of Islam coupled with Nigeria's turbulent religious history, served as fertile ground for a violent, intractable war.

Although most Islamicists agree that the *Qur'an* makes no specific reference to a *Mahdi* or "God-guided One" who will come and "ensure the triumph of Islam for a millennium before the end of time," they would probably all agree that this idea plays an important role in popular African Muslim thought (Clarke 1987, 96). Fourteenth century Islamic scholar, Ibn Khaldun, wrote:

It has been accepted by all Muslims in every epoch that at the end of time a man from the family of the prophet will make his appearance, one who will strengthen Islam and make justice triumph; Muslims will follow him and he will gain dominance over the Muslim realm. He will be called the *Mahdi*. Following him the anti-Christ will appear, together with all the subsequent signs of the Day of Judgment. After the *Mahdi* Jesus will descend and kill the anti-Christ. Or Jesus will descend with the *Mahdi* and help him kill the anti-Christ (Khaldun 1967, 257-59).

Although millenarianism appears to be a structural feature of religious belief and practice shared by the Abrahamic religions, *Mahdism*, while believing in a period of "earthly" rule for Islam lasting a thousand years, also incorporates others structural features, namely *jihad* and *hijra*, attack and withdrawal, as a way of inaugurating it (Clarke 1987, 108). In fact, the injustice against which most of these Islamic millennialist movements reacted was that of "nominal" Muslims whose "mixing" and collaboration with "Christians" were leading to the breakdown of the Islamic community (Clarke 1987, 109-110). *Mahdist* tradition in northern Nigeria centered on the belief that the onset of the millennium involved war. Another condition that was necessary for the conflict to become intractable was the

perception that the socio-economic conditions of post-independence Nigeria symbolized a widespread failure to bring about a just society (Clarke 1987, 114-5).

Hackett argues that political culture in the predominantly Islamic areas of Nigeria has involved a sense of the potential for the transformation of society⁵⁷ (2004, 195). The belief that religious identity is inextricably tied to national identity has led to numerous cases of religious violence in Nigeria and the formation of different syncretistic religious sects. These sects divide the Muslim community in Nigeria and highlight the conflict between religious identity and war intractability. Although the non-Nigerian origins and un-Islamic orientation of Marwa were underlined in the aftermath of the original conflict, for many southern Christians, this movement evoked fears of the further Islamization of Nigeria (Hackett 2004, 195) as well as the arbitrary application of *jihad* to seemingly unreligious issues, such as federal economic mismanagement.

Hackett states that the Maitatsine movement can be viewed as one element in the wider, burgeoning phenomenon of radical religious fundamentalism (2004, 195). Watts comments that Marwa had contradictory views on materialism and the West (1996). Maitatsine's followers began appropriating private land prior to the main conflict, claiming that plots of land and markets belonged to Allah and His people (Lubeck 1985, 386-87). However, religious and political analyst Matthew Hassan Kukah lays more emphasis on the contemporary political climate, pointing to tensions between the Kano state governor and the Emir of Kano, as well as the internal divisions within the ruling party, the People's

⁵⁷ Other scholars disagree with this statement, they claim that Islamic millennialist movements in Nigeria do not seek a revolutionary transformation of society as such and although their tactics may involve armed struggle, their goals are neither ill-defined or atavistic (Mazrui 1978, 139-43).

Redemption Party (Kukah 1993, 154-56). Other arguments for the motivations behind the Maitatsine conflict was that it was a revolt against the uneven development that was taking place during Nigeria's oil boom. In other words, it was a revolt against the system and a voice for the oppressed.

But, how is it that this revolt only occurred in the northern regions where Islam was dominant and not in areas where there were equal numbers of Christians and Muslims? In other words, why were there not religiously motivated conflicts in other areas of the country considering the fact that the same system affected everyone? Framing issues using religious rhetoric was also available to Christian elites in the south, so why did religious conflict not occur there? Watts (1996) offers an explanation that incorporates two locally constituted global force-fields—Islam and capitalism. In other words, the uneven development and prosperity of the oil boom may have precipitated the crises but the millennialist orientation of the Maitatsine movement invoked a sense of defensive war and redemption (Clarke and Linden 1984, 121). Furthermore, there was an awareness of Ayatollah Khomeini's achievements in Iran and a desire by the Maitatsine to emulate them (Clarke and Linden 1984, 121). Moreover, it was the beginning of a new Muslim century—1400 or 1979/80 C.E., which was believed to be the end of the world for millennialist Muslims after which the entire world would be converted to Islam (Al-Karsani 1993). Some of Kano's leading scholars viewed the crisis as a "Signs of the Hour," which in Islamic eschatological thought is related to the idea that at the end of every century a *mujaddid* or "renewer" may arise to restore order (Barkindo 1993, 99). Marwa was successful in mobilizing the religious community using these structural factors of Islam however, the unintended result was that the

conflict continued long after his death due to either the presence of fundamentalists or the strength of the collective action frame⁵⁸.

Although the Maitatsine conflicts were largely intra-religious rather than inter-religious, they demonstrate the fact that conflicts involving Islamic groups are more likely to become intractable because once elites incorporate a *jihadist* component; the issue can be easily manipulated to justify the use of violence on behalf of the community. Due to the fact that a violent *jihad* had been fought in northern Nigeria and was successful in converting many to the Islamic faith, Marwa found fertile ground in which to capitalize on the economic mismanagement of the Second Republic by framing the legitimate grievances of northern Islamic Nigerians as an attack on their religious beliefs and community and justifying the use of violence by invoking *jihad*. This analysis also highlighted the fact that Marwa's death did not stop the spread of the movement, and further violence occurred through the country (Paden 2005, 185). This points to the fact that religious framing using structural features such as *jihad* in defense of *ummah*, has the effect of attracting and perhaps creating fundamentalists, who will continue fighting even if their goals seem unattainable. The relationship between religious framing, issue indivisibility and conflict duration in the Maitatsine riots are similar to the processes that Roy (1994) describes in a Bangladeshi communal conflict⁵⁹. Analogous to the grievances expressed by Marwa's followers, local Bangladeshi Muslims felt that they had been historically discriminated against by the former British colonial masters in favor of the Hindus and that the disadvantages that "Muslims

⁵⁸ What I mean here is that the framing of the issue resonated so well with his followers that they continued to fight, even after his death.

⁵⁹ This conflict erupted between Muslims and Hindus after a Hindu man accused a Muslim of tying his cow too close to his (Hindu man's) field, resulting in the cow eating the Hindu's field.

suffered vis-à-vis Hindus combined with a long list of petty indignities suffered at home,” created a general sense of injustice and resentment that easily erupted into violence (Roy 1994, 65). Muslims believed that since the state was now theirs, this was an opportunity to teach the Hindus a lesson; the Hindus also understood the agenda in those terms as well, Roy states that the Hindus “sensed the aggressive stance of the Muslims, sanctioned by their leaders and they set about building a defense” (Roy 1994, 65). Once Hindus believed that Muslim leaders approved the issue frame⁶⁰, crowds were mobilized on both sides. Roy states:

They were hardly passive, however; more accurately, they were distracted by the fight and refused to believe in the reality of bullets. But there was a change in the dynamic of the riot. The people were no longer shaping their destinies. Greater powers were taking charge (100).

However, in contrast to the riot in a small Bangladeshi village that ended with police involvement and a negotiated agreement, the issues involved in the Maitatsine Movement were indivisible due to its religious component. I argue that the “greater powers” in the Maitatsine riots were the presence of structural features that lead to a belief that the conflict should continue until the *jihad* against the “infidels” (wealthy Muslims) and the unbelievers (Christians) was complete. This “great power” became separate and distinct from the constructed frame, in fact, it came to outlive and outlast the elites.

Even though religious leaders and politicians sought to deny Marwa’s authenticity as a Muslim, in order to prevent others from recognizing the religious dimensions of the conflict, this is an indefensible perspective in the case of revivalist militant African Islam. Nevertheless, this case study of the Maitatsine conflict offers some support for my theory and

⁶⁰ Although in this conflict groups were organized according to religious community, the issue frame was not religious but rather ideological, Roy explains that it was “to translate power on a state level into power on a local level” (1994, 65).

hypothesis that religious conflicts involving an Islamic group will be more intractable than conflicts involving groups of another religious tradition. The discrepancy in the findings between these quantitative and qualitative analyses provides a framework for more research in the area of how structural features of Islam tend to attract more fundamentalists that are willing to continue fighting in spite of the decreased utility in doing so.

Comparable Quantitative Analyses

Although the processes of grievance, elite framing, issue indivisibility and religious conflict onset are not unique to Islamic civil wars, a cursory exploration into religious civil wars between groups of other religious traditions may offer a more lucid explanation of why structural factors play such an important role in the duration of religious conflicts involving Islamic groups.

Sikh Insurrection (1982-1993)

The Sikh insurrection in Punjab, India from 1982-1993 illustrates a case of a religious civil war in which both the grievances and issue frame had long histories, but the absence of comparable structural features made the conflict end with the death of important elites despite important Sikh victories against the state of India.

Background Information

India is a multi-ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious country. But, before the end of British rule and the partition of the country in 1947, “the main focus of communal propaganda was not on the Hindu-Sikh cleavage but on the Hindu-Muslim divide” (Kinnvall 2006, 91). In this struggle, Sikhs mostly sided with Hindus but after the subcontinent was divided into a Hindu majority country, India and a Muslim majority country, Pakistan, ruling class politicians turned swiftly to exacerbating the Hindu-Sikh divide (Kinnvall 2006, 91).

Following the lead of enterprising politicians, notably the Congress Party, who campaigned among Hindus that they should record their mother tongue as Hindi in the 1951 census, Sikh communalists began propagating Punjab as the language of the Sikhs, and were successful in their bids for the creation of Punjabi-speaking states (Kinnvall 2006, 91). Later in 1973, the Congress Party re-formulated its political strategy and “tried to portray itself as a champion of the Sikh cause and to mobilize Sikhs along religious lines” (Kinnvall 2006, 91). However, the Sikh-dominated party, Akali Dal (the army of the faithful) conducted their own counter-mobilization effort and adopted the *Anandpur Sahib Resolution*, which was centered almost exclusively on the “separate interests of the Sikh community and gave the appearance of a movement for self-determined status for the community” (Kinnvall 2006, 91).

After much political maneuvering on the part of the Congress party, including covertly supporting a Punjabi-based Sikh extremist movement led by Sant Jarnal Singh Bhindranwale, Akali Dal was placed once again on the defensive and as a result launched a *dharm yudh* (righteous struggle) in 1982, which combined economic demands (more irrigation water) with religious and political issues of greater autonomy for Sikhs within India (Kinnvall 2006, 92). Although Bhindranwale did not come out in favor of a separate Sikh state of *Khalistan*, the violence of both him and his followers lent support to the separatist cause (Shani 2008, 57).

Conflict

At first the righteous struggle consisted of a series of organized civil disobedience “which sought to bring the Punjab to a standstill by blocking canals, roads and the railways” (Shani 2008, 55). However, the movement became more violent after an attack on Hindu passengers on a bus to New Delhi by Sikh militants, which was apparently in retaliation for

the widespread harassment of Sikhs by security forces (Shani 2008, 55). The federal government then imposed martial law, which resulted in the Akalis threatening to “launch a new campaign of mass non-cooperation that included boycotting the payment of water rates and land revenue to the state government” (Shani 2008, 55). Indian President, Indira Gandhi, responded by ordering Indian troops to storm the Golden Temple complex in June 1984, named ‘Operation Blue Star,’ in order to remove the threat posed by Sikh separatism, however, this had the effect of militarizing the movement in general and later developed into an armed movement dedicated to the establishment of a Sikh state (Shani 2008, 55-6).

In retaliation for state brutality in Operation Blue Star, Sikh bodyguards assassinated Indira Gandhi in October 1984 (Purewal 2000, 134). Immediately after her assassination, Congress mobilized “elements of the criminal underground” to attack Sikhs in Delhi and in other places outside the Punjab (Purewal 2000, 134). After numerous retaliatory measures on both sides, the Indian army was able to kill Sikh militant leader Gurbachan Singh Manochal in February 1993, marking the government’s biggest success in its campaign against Sikh separatists and effectively ending the conflict.

Comparison to the Maitatsine Conflict

Similar to the Abrahamic religions, Sikhism has a well-documented martial history⁶¹. However, unlike the Maitatsine conflict that continued long after the death of its leader, the Sikh insurrection, though more violent than the Maitatsine conflict⁶², was effectively ended with the death of its primary military leader. In other words, although the conflict lasted for a

⁶¹ For more on this read: Nijhawan, Michael. 2006. *Dhadi Darbar: Religion, Violence and the Performance of Sikh History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁶² It was more violent in terms of number of persons killed, this could also be attributed to the fact that it was also a longer conflict.

longer period of time, I contend that religious conflicts will continue in spite of structural factors supporting them as long as the elites are still alive and in power. However, in the case of the Sikh separatist movement, the violence and religious grievances quickly fizzled out after the death of the last major militant leader. This stands in stark contrast to the Maitatsine movement that continued long after the death of their major leaders.

The hierarchical structure of the Sikh separatist movement combined with its large geographical and resource base ought to have resulted in this conflict becoming as intractable as the conflict between the Indian government and Islamic groups over Kashmir. However, what I have attempted to show in this brief case study is that religious frames are not as effective in non-Islamic religious civil wars because once the elites who created these collective actions frames have been eliminated, there are no structural features in which to support a self-sustaining logic of violence and intractable conflict.

Tibetan Revolt (1954-1959)

The Tibetan Revolt in Tibet, China from 1954-1959 is another example of a religious civil war in which both the grievances and issue frames were legitimate led to the outbreak of conflict, but the absence of structural features comparable to those present in Islam, made the conflict end in the absence of the main religious leader, the Dalai Lama, despite the continued salience of the issues that gave rise to the conflict.

Background Information

China is another multi-cultural society, which despite its relative inclusiveness⁶³, has been embroiled in several civil wars, some of which religion has played a central role.

⁶³ According to Roy (1998), the inclusiveness of Chinese culture stands in contrast to the exclusiveness of other East Asian cultures like Japan and Korea. He goes on to argue that:

Historically, Chinese elites have categorized their empire through a set of “concentric circles radiating outward from the Chinese heartland, demarcated roughly by the Great Wall in the north, the Yangzi River in the west, and the East and South China Seas” (Roy 1998, 88). Due to the fact that Tibet fell into China’s traditional sphere of influence, the Chinese over the centuries “grew accustomed to thinking of Tibet as part of the Chinese empire” (Roy 1998, 88).

In the last half century the Communist Party had grown to realize Tibet’s economic, strategic and domestic political value and in 1950 invaded the region and placed the area under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) control as the Tibet Autonomous Region (Roy 1988, 88). However, religion became a critical barrier between the atheist invasion forces and the Tibetan Buddhist culture. CCP ideology accepts the Marxist view of religion as the ‘opiate of the masses’ (Roy 1988, 89). But for Tibetan Buddhists, Tibet is a religious land with a polity based on and legitimized by religion as expressed in the concept of “king as protector and patron of religion” and the dual religious and secular system of government” (Kolas and Thowsen 2005, 36).

Kolas and Thowsen assert, “the political system was epitomized by the crucial status of the Dalai Lama as political leader and in his sacred role, protector deity of Tibet” (2005, 36). Therefore, the Tibetan Revolt was an uprising against a colonial power, who sought to first separate support for an independent Tibet from support for religion but whose tactics

Peoples of a variety of ethnicities may be accepted as ‘Chinese’ provided they adopt basic aspects of Chinese culture, such as speaking the Chinese language, eating Chinese food and practicing Chinese social and political customs. [But] there are of course geographic limits to ‘Chineseness’ (87).

later evolved to attempts at eradicating Tibetan religion and culture as part of “democratic reforms” (Kolas and Thowsen 2005, 45-6).

Conflict

These democratic reforms coincided with the CCP adopting a more aggressive strategy in Tibet. Craig (1999) states that “by 1954, many atrocities were being perpetrated by the Chinese in eastern Tibet, and the people were frustrated and angry” (68). In February 1956, men in Lithang in south-east Kham made a surprise attack on the local Chinese army camp after refusing to carry out an inventory of the Lithang monastery’s possessions (Craig 1999, 70). The Chinese army retaliated by bombing the monastery, leading to the deaths of over 6,000 people (Craig 1999, 70). This exacerbated the conflict resulting in a “rash of revolts” that united ordinary people, who laid aside their narrow clan loyalties and adopted a wider regional allegiance (Craig 1999, 70-1).

In 1957, twenty-three Khampa chieftains united together and began collecting guns, ammunition and horses, to fight the war in earnest (Craig 1999, 87). In order to suppress the revolt, the Chinese began bombing and shelling monasteries and entire villages were wiped out (Craig 1999, 88). Although the Dalai Lama was coerced by the Chinese to send a peace delegation to the freedom fighters in Khampas and Amdowas, the rebels there were determined to go on fighting (Craig 1999, 88). The revolt was eventually repressed in 1959, after the Dalai Lama fled into exile to India and Tibetan fighters lost their political and religious leader.

Comparison to the Maitatsine Conflict

Although the Tibetan revolt was not openly endorsed by the Dalai Lama, the actions of the CCP party and their efforts to erase Tibetan Buddhism and culture and replace it with reliance and deference to the Communist Party and Chinese civilization and culture, resulted in the creation of a frame that was conducive to the onset of religious war. This is surprising since Tibetan Buddhism is avowedly non-violent, however, aggressive measures taken against Tibetans by the Chinese government caused many monks to renounce their vows of non-violence (Craig 1999, 88).

Nevertheless, in the absence of structural frames unique to Buddhism in which to support a protracted conflict, I argue that the loss of their religious and political leader, coupled with the increasing brutality of Chinese forces led to the conflict not becoming intractable. This is an interesting finding since Tibetans had the covert support of Western democracies like the United States and overt diplomatic support from neighbors like India (Craig 1999). Although it is doubtful that these nations would have intervened militarily on behalf of the Tibetans, their military support and supplies would have aided the Tibetans in carrying out protracted guerrilla operations against CCP forces.

CHAPTER 6: SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For countries in which two or more dominant religious coexist, tensions tend to revolve around the propagation of faith. If one faith is dominant by the numbers [...] the minority religion plays the politics of survival, and its members can either be politically passive or recognize the futility of injecting religion in politics. The trouble is that where two or more religions are assertive, or where one is unable to dominate politically, they tend to be relatively equal in number and power.

-Falola 1998, 289

This research project sought to uncover the relationship, if any, between religious tradition and religious civil war duration. My theory was that religious conflicts involving an Islamic group would last longer than religious conflicts in which this group was not involved due to the more pronounced role of issue indivisibility due to structural features of the Islamic religion. Issue indivisibility would play a prominent role in religious conflicts involving Islamic groups because the religious concepts of *jihad* and *ummah* are easily manipulated by religious elites and serve as both a validation and motivation to mobilize Muslim groups and keep them fighting until elite objectives, whether it is control of the state or the establishment of *shari'ah* law, are met and even then the conflict may continue indefinitely. I put forward three hypotheses based on my theory. The first was that religious conflicts in which an Islamic group was involved would last longer than those in which an Islamic group was not involved. This hypothesis was not supported by statistical analyses, in fact, the coefficients for this variable, although insignificant, showed that having an Islamic group in the religious conflict may actually serve to shorten the conflict. The second hypothesis is that religious civil wars involving minority groups would last longer than religious civil wars in which this group is not in a minority position. The variable for Islamic

minority was significant but it was not in the hypothesized direction, in fact, having an Islamic minority in the religious civil war shortens the length of the conflict. The final hypothesis tested whether religious conflicts involving an Islamic-Christian dyad lasted longer than conflicts in which this dyad was not involved. This hypothesis was also not supported by the data and the Islamic-Christian dyad coefficient, though not significant, indicated that these conflicts are shorter than religious civil wars between different combinations of religious dyads. One reason behind the contradictory results could be that once a conflict has been framed using religious rhetoric at least one party, moves quickly and decisively to grant concessions. Another reason could be that these findings are only unique to Islamic groups and not religious conflicts in general, meaning religious civil wars involving Islamic groups are shorter than conflicts in which a Muslim group is not involved because the other party fears third party intervention on the side of the Islamic group and is more willing to acquiesce. In other words, my hypothesis could reflect the relationship between religious affiliation and civil conflict but not in cases when an Islamic group is involved. Finally, the most intriguing finding was that resources were not statistically significant in any of the models, indicating that greed was not a motivating factor in these conflicts.

Despite the lack of support that the statistical analyses provided for my theory and hypotheses, qualitative analysis of the Maitatsine religious conflict in Nigeria and its comparison to other non-Islamic civil wars, demonstrated that the structural features of the Islamic religion has the effect of prolonging conflict, when effectively manipulated by elites. The case study also left open the question of whether the presence of a minority Muslim group as well as the presence of a Christian group serves as contributing factors to the

intractable nature of religious conflict. The findings also shed some light on the durability of civil conflicts that have been framed using religious rhetoric and concepts, in fact, the re-occurrence of many of the conflicts included in the dataset, demonstrate that religious conflicts are also more likely to re-occur than civil conflicts on other issues (Toft 2007).

Future research in the area of militant religiosity should focus on several factors. Firstly, more complete data would be useful in determining whether the directionality of the relationships between my hypotheses and conflict duration would change with the addition of new control variables. Secondly, extending the time period covered by the dataset would increase the number of cases and perhaps uncover statistically significant results. Thirdly, the religious dimensions of these conflicts should not be ignored and researchers should investigate factors unique to the Islamic religion, because it may provide clues into whether higher representation and duration of conflicts involving these groups could lead to better methods in which to engage Islamic groups in conflict. Finally, the effect that resources play in the duration of religious civil conflict should be more closely examined. I believe that if these suggestions are heeded, it will provide very fruitful research.

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