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Warfare in Christianity and Islam: Unveiling Secular Justifications and Motivations Behind So-Called Religious Violence

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Warfare in Christianity and Islam: Unveiling Secular Justifications and Motivations Behind

So-Called Religious Violence

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Dedication

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who believed in me and endured my absence during my education abroad. I also dedicate this work to my younger brother Metin Can, who always supports and appreciates me, and my older brother Ahmet and his family, especially my nephew Barış Mete. I would never forget my grandparents, my aunt Seval Yilmaz and her precious family, and my uncles for their supports and cares, so I dedicate this work to them all.

And last, this study is dedicated in memory of my mother. Loved and remembered every day.

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Abstract

The phenomenology of religion has received the most attention in social science because it has shaped society on social, political, and economic levels throughout history. Religion can be an organization that brings people together and develops a sense of identification, while also acting as a divisive structure for those of other faiths or nonbelievers. And so, we have witnessed the rise of both religious tendencies and violent acts for the last two decades, occasionally intertwined. Various belief systems have increasingly become a factor that politicians, intellectuals, and the mainstream media associate with violence-based modern warfare. However, scholars and analysts who believe that all religions promote violence ignore that a core value of religion is peace. Therefore, it can be argued that religion and violence are two mutually exclusive concepts with no direct and definite correlation.

Historically, Christian and Islamic war traditions, namely the Crusades and jihad respectively, have relied on the myth of religious violence to justify violent acts. To better understand the true driving force behind religious violence, one must further examine the roots and historical motivations for wars and other violence conducted by believers. Accordingly, this study aims to provide the framework for better understanding how perpetuating the myth of religion as the sole and/or main cause of violence allows responsible authority figures to avoid punishment and overshadows the secular motivations behind so-called holy wars, including territorial, political or economic gain.

Introduction

Religion is a complex system of beliefs that impacts society on social, political, and economic levels. Today, religion continues to influence people and society as an organization that brings people together and gives them hope. Likewise, religion encourages a sense of identification and belonging, fulfilling both structural and cultural functions, and providing a transnational view. As such, individuals develop a loyalty to their belief system that can contribute to extremism. Although violence can be attributed to many social, political, historical, and economic sources, many people may argue that religion has acted as the main catalyst for several significant violent acts since its inception. However, when analyzing the motivations and outcomes of holy wars and violence, one would find that it was instead secular desires that played a substantial role in inciting these events.

In the second half of the twentieth century, especially the last quarter, we have witnessed the rise of both religious tendencies and violence and terror, occasionally intertwined. In such cases, leaders worldwide have attempted to legitimize these events with religious symbols and doctrines. For example, the ongoing conflict between Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East, tensions between India and Pakistan, and suicide attacks in Western countries all represent acts of violence in which religion plays a role. Religion has increasingly become a factor when explaining or promoting violence in the context of religious beliefs and traditions, so much so that some religious groups may even associate violence-based actions with theology, while others explicitly include principles such as "just war" or holy wars" in their spiritual teachings.

Since the September 11 attacks in the U.S., the notion of religious terrorism has become a notable image around the world, and many religions —primarily Islam —, were targeted because of the idea of holy war and *jihad*. Therefore, those who were experts on the Islamic culture had major influence on the Pentagon and National Security Council during the presidency of George W. Bush. As a result of such influences, political discourses and scholarly articles targeted Islam and associated the entirety of its associated cultures with terrorism. To illustrate, in his speech following 9/11, President Bush stated that "this crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while."[1] Although the president did not directly blame Islam or Muslims in his speech, his generalization caused Islam to become a target across the nation. In turn, Western perceptions of the Islamic world changed, and Westerners viewed Islam as the foundation of violence and terror rather than a valid religion like the others. Although Westerners now see Islam as a potential threat to their nation, the Islamic world would also blame the West for invading their countries and imposing economic and political sanctions on them since Bush declared "the crusades" onto Afghanistan and Iraq.

Bernard Lewis' theory of the "clash of civilizations," which was popularized by Samuel Huntington, is a phrase to demonstrate how cultural factors, such as religion, might influence relations and conflicts among countries. Following this theory, Huntington argues that after the collapse of Soviet Russia, states with different cultures and religions would not have to continue the bloc against the Soviet threat. Therefore, states with similar cultures will come together, whereas states with different cultures will divide. States will express their cultural identity

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[1] National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed April 17, 2020. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html.

through symbols such as crosses and crescents.[2] While during the Cold War, Western and the Islamic world were allies against the same enemy: the Communist Soviet regime, now there is nothing to keep two civilizations together. Huntington draws attention to a new era in world politics where countries identify themselves on the basis of civilization — the new civilizational identities rest in religio-cultural identities, such as Islam, Eastern Christianity, Western Christianity, etc. While the world becomes a smaller place with increased migration and the interaction between different cultures, the deep-rooted consciousness of belonging to a civilization remains consolidated. Therefore, the revival of religion leads to the emergence of an identity beyond national borders. Huntington predicts that the primary axis of world conflict after the Cold War would center around cultural and religious lines, meaning that religion, which has cultural connections, is arguably the core of political struggles in the world.

Religion regards violence as an immoral and unfair act because it is a contradiction to the core teachings of religion. Therefore, how can one associate religion with oppression, hatred, terror, and violence? Is there sufficient evidence to state that religion always caused wars throughout history? Is it reasonable to argue that religion promotes violence or to say that God wants violence to be used in his name? Do religious groups carry out terrorist attacks to praise God's name? On the contrary, the violent behaviors of believers stem from neglecting or misinterpreting the scriptures, based on an exclusive and strict religious understanding, which promotes an authoritarian and punitive interpretation of God instead.

Historically, the Crusades and *jihad* are Christian and Muslim war traditions, respectively that rely on the myth of religious violence and intend to legitimize these violent acts — which

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[2] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York 2011), 31.

will be touched upon within next chapters. However, this study aims to provide the framework for understanding that the myth of naming religious doctrines as the main cause of violence overshadows the role that secular motivations play in terms of conflicts.

Among the causes used to justify violence, religion is a scapegoat that religious authorities abuse to justify their violence. Nevertheless, the relationship between religion and violence has begun to be studied with more scrutiny and different disciplines than other influences. Fueling these debates on religious violence are statements by terrorist organizations that misuse scriptures and teachings. Contrary to the prevalent argument that religion promotes violence, I argue that religion and violence are two mutually exclusive concepts with no direct and definite correlation. To illustrate, the discourse of conflict can be explained using religious jargon such as "Crusaders and jihadist" or "holy wars and God's will." However, jihad might also reflect opposition to American globalization and secularism from the perspective of the Islamic propagandists. Likewise, the term "crusades" can be used in the Muslim world when referencing Western European occupation and imperialism, while the term jihad can be used by Westerners to describe terrorism and barbarism. In this sense, both sides incorporate the religious concepts of the crusades and jihad in war propaganda to justify initiated and returned violence without reference to subsequent causes.

Therefore, within this study, my goal is to examine so-called "religious warfare" in the Christian and Islamic traditions to demonstrate how secular motivations, such as politics and economics, are the main culprits in conflict rather than religion itself. In addition, this study aims to highlight how radical religious groups misuse their belief systems to recruit followers and justify their violence. Holy wars, especially the Crusades and jihad, alongside the radical religious groups, mainly al-Qaeda, are all key examples in this study that demonstrate how

religious authorities take advantage of theological doctrines by proclaim that "God wills it" (*Deus lo volt*) [3] as motivation for mobilizing and recruiting people into wars. Therefore, it is crucial to make evident that secular motivations, including politics, nationalism, and the economy, play a significant role in wars and other violent conflicts in order to prove that religion does not encourage these acts and instead condemns them.

Chapter One outlines key concepts, such as religion, violence, and religious violence, to provide a conceptual framework for understanding the relation between religion and violence. This chapter also introduces some classical theories of well-known scholars related to religious violence. This case study of religious violence will look through the lens of several scholars and how they view the role of holy wars and extremist religious organizations in this argument. Through this examination, it will become explicit that most scholars view religion as a threat to the modern world because of its absolutist and divisive structures. In the continuation of this chapter, the role of holy wars and some extremist religious organizations on the concept of religious violence through lens of several scholars will be examined as a case study.

Chapter Two delves into the Christian war tradition, The Crusades, to investigate common motivations underlying religious violence, and how misinterpretation of scriptures can mobilize believers into battle in the name of God. Moreover, this chapter focuses on numerous verses in the New Testament about pacifism and how leading Christian theologians, such as Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, played role in constructing the "just war" doctrine in Christianity. Besides, this chapter studies more generally the background of religiously motivated wars to identify the root causes of violence.

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[3] Lambert, M. *Crusade and Jihad Origins, History, Aftermath*. (London: Profile Books, 2016), 65.

Chapter Three will focus on peace, war and the concept of *jihad* — an Arabic term that most Western societies have become familiar with since radical Islamist organizations have conducted many terrorist attacks recently around the globe. This chapter also comprises the theological background of jihad as outlined in the Koran and analyses the term by dividing it into two factions: jihads in the Middle Age as a response to the declaration of the Crusades and the contemporary growth of jihads in the modern world.

Chapter Four studies probable justifications and motivations underlying Christian and Islamic warfare. To better understand why religious authorities would misuse religion to mobilize believers into battle, it is crucial to examine the motivations for holy wars and their ambitious campaigns rather than theological concerns. This chapter outlines various theologians and jurists playing a critical role in establishing the theory of "just war. Besides, this chapter investigates the fiercest and bloodiest example of an extremist organization: al-Qaeda, to demonstrate how religion can act as a vehicle for radical groups to recruit members and justify acts of terrorism. The aim here is to demonstrate that secular motivations, such as politics and ideology, are the true driving force behind the violent acts of these groups. In the example of al-Qaeda, the radical group's members exhibit their hostile disposition toward American and Western values such as liberalism and the free-market economic system.

Chapter One: Notions of Religion, Violence, and Religious Violence

Conceptualizing a phenomenon in social science is a challenging task, as most terms are subjective, with different methods and approaches for analysis that vary based on surrounding incidents and time. Therefore, understanding and explaining the bare, unbiased concepts of religion and violence have become more difficult with the influence of social and political events, terrorist attacks, and the mainstream media. Following the September 11 attacks, certain religions have become associated with violence and experienced a paradigm shift based on the media portrayals in Western societies.

Although it is more difficult to objectively conceptualize religion and violence because of the adverse outcomes of terrorist attacks and subsequent media images, it is very critical to outline a neutral definition of the following terms to establish a framework for understanding. Within this study, well-known scholars' definitions of religion and religious violence are given below. Christian Smith's definition of religion has the best stance because he underscores the function of religion in society.

1.1 Religion

One can define religion as a phenomenon that provides a tie between human beings and God, gods, or other supreme entities such as the ancestors or cult leaders. Religion also has an impact on non-believers, as its structure both directly and indirectly affects societies by establishing moral rules that function in various social spheres: family, economy, state administration, and education. From primitive to contemporary societies, the symbols and rituals

of different belief systems have brought people together, and also cause them to diverge.

Religion is considered a universal experience observed in all cultures, separate from all fields of

study, including politics, law, and science. Whether a believer or atheist, social scientists,

philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists agree that religion impacts society somehow; yet,

they have not reached a consensus on its definition.

The origin of the word religion dates back to ancient Rome. In his book *De Natura*

Deorum (Nature of the Gods), Cicero (106-43 BC) includes the concept of *religio* when

discussing the origin of faith in gods. Here, it refers to "traditions and customs" which are

fundamentals of social life in Rome rather than the theological doctrine referenced by the

concept *religio*.[4]

In his article, "Science and Religion," Albert Einstein states that it is not easy to

immediately think and answer "what religion is" so that it cannot be satisfactory even if we

answer it some way. Therefore, Einstein first asks what aspirations characterize a religious

person's life instead.[5] In this sense, the observation of a religious society's practices, or how

people include religion into their lives, can provide us with a framework for understanding

religion as a social and individual phenomenon.

Through the structural functionalism theory, the definition of religion by Emile

Durkheim provides a clear distinction between the profane and the sacred functions of religion.

In his book, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* Emile Durkheim states that religion is an

extremely social phenomenon in which groups of people congregate for spiritual

representations.[6] Following Durkheim's definition, religious groups can recreate and sustain

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[4] Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. (Fortress Press, 1963), 186.
[5] Einstein, A. "Science and Religion." *Nature* vol 146, (1940 November), 605–607.
[6] Durkheim, Émile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* trans. Karen E. Fields. (Free Press, 1995), 84.

doctrines through rituals and belief systems, as long as they partake in collectivist activities, called rites. As a result of common faith, members of the society are united and can distinguish the sacred world and its relations from the profane one. Church is a concrete structure that allows members to gather and represent similarities.[7] Durkheim draws attention to the significant role that religion plays in social life, as it impacts both society and the individual by unifying people through rites. Therefore, religion is a unique concept that scholars have been touching upon to better understand society and cultures.

In his book, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Karl Marx explains religion as a spiritualistic theme that humans believe in to avoid struggle and experience happiness. Religion constitutes the inner melody of the oppressed person, the warmth of a heartless world, the spirit of the social conditions in which spirits are excluded.[8] Although Marx points out the aspects of religion, he expresses the need to "eliminate" religion as it offers only "the illusory happiness." It is bluntly stating that religion is opium or a tool that the ruling class wields to gain power; yet, it is clear that Marx's political consciousness dominates his interpretation of religion.

Christian Smith's definition of religion can be a better stance within this paper because he provides the framework for understanding how religion generates causal powers to impact societies. In his book, *Religion,* Smith prefers to not focus on debates about abstract structures and "whether religion is an entity or something that was invented"; instead, he focuses on the reality of religion — the visible rituals and practices rather than ideals and beliefs.[9] In Smith's definition, religion has prescribed practices based on the existence and nature of superhuman

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[7] Ibid.,115.
[8] Marx, Karl, trans. Joseph J. O'Malley. *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right."* Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics. (University Press, 1970), 131.
[9] Smith, Christian. *Religion: What It Is, How It Works, And Why It Matters*. (Princeton University Press, 2017), 21.

powers. It is a vehicle that help practitioners communicate with or "align themselves with these powers" to distinguish goodness while avoiding bad things.[10] As Smith explains, religion has a crucial influence on society, but there is not sufficient equipment to study the intricacies of these belief systems. Nevertheless, religion is an institution that still plays a role in society — despite the significant influence of communist regimes or secularization. Given that, religion is intertwined in the life and the reality of human beings. Although it is complicated to observe all the variations of this phenomenon, it is possible to claim that religion exists to some extent in all cultures and has influence in all parts of the world.

1.2 Violence

Violence, which we often witness in every society, refers to physical and psychological negativity toward oneself, another person or a community. To better analyze violence, the World Health Organization (WHO), defines the concept by quantifying various forms of violence with a scientific measurement alongside its causes and results. According to WHO, violence is the use of power or force as a threat against oneself or others — others can be a group of people or community— which results in injury, death, psychological damage or maldevelopment.[11]

In WHO's reports, we can see impacts of these acts around the world, major risk factors for violence, and recommendations for actions against violence at domestic and international levels.[12] To accomplish this goal, the WHO develops a typology of violence. Among the types of violence that the WHO outlines, *collective violence* is the one that might be associated with religion, as this system encourages a collective consciousness in its believers. The WHO defines

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[10] Ibid., 22.
[11] Krug EG et al., eds. World Report on Violence and Health. Geneva, World Health Organization, (2002), 5.
[12] Ibid.,15.

collective violence as the vehicle for a group of people who identify themselves as members of an organization and who have a permanent identity against others to achieve economic, political and social gains. Furthermore, the WHO describes various examples of collective violence that occur within states or between states: violent political conflicts, wars, state-perpetrated violence (i.e. genocide, torture, human rights abuses), terrorist attacks, and gang warfare.[13] Fueling a group with fanaticism alongside *ethnic, national, and religious lines* can contribute to collective violence in the same way as political and economic factors. However, within the WHO's report on violence and health, religious symbols, groups or sects are not the main risk factors for collective violence, but states.

Nevertheless, since historical events such as holy wars and the 9/11 attacks, both scholars and political scientists view religion as a cause of ongoing conflicts and violence around the globe, despite its core teachings. Therefore, state-perpetrated violence has been overshadowed by "religious violence," especially among those who believe that the state is the supreme power ahead of other institutions. Given that belief, religious violence has become a new point of discussion since the terrorist attacks linked to religious actors and leaders.

1.3 Religious Violence

In religious traditions, namely Judeo-Christian and Islamic thought systems, violence is generally considered as one part of the problem of evil, just as an unfair attitude and behavior. Violence can stem from greed, revenge, and hatred — all factors that religion aims to restrain and control. On the one hand, religion aims to prevent negative attitudes that would cause

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[13] Ibid., 215.

societal degeneration by instead spreading messages of peace and love. On the other hand, religion implements rituals in which believers conduct sacrifices, sufferings, and martyrdom.

Since the collapse of the Twin Towers — the symbols of the United States' economy and military supremacy — the phenomenon of religious violence has become a hot topic among scholars, politicians, the media, and average citizens alike. While the term was used to emphasize terrorism conducted by religious groups, it has evolved into a phrase where that classifies Western societies' view of Islam and Muslims as a potential threat to their nations. Since Muslim countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan are occupied by Western nations, Muslims blame Westerners— rather than Islamist extremist groups like Al-Qaeda— for causing judgement on the entire Islamic world. Considering the fact that many Muslim countries lack political and military certainty and security, many Islamist groups emerge to "advocate" for Muslims. Furthermore, radical groups have conducted terrorist attacks in both European cities and the States to draw the world's attention— and they did. So much so, that in recent years, a stereotype has developed that religion brings more violence and war than peace and love.

Furthermore, when religious organizations' leaders— fear mongers and cults leaders— have psychological disorders such as paranoia and megalomania, they may cause religious violence by driving members to mass destruction. Therefore, examining religious violence from only one perspective would cause us to misrepresent the motivations of violent acts and neglect causes outside of the religious scriptures and laws.

In his book, *Sacred Fury, Understanding Religious Violence,* Charles Selengut analyzes the phenomenon of religious violence from various standpoints that give us an opportunity for well-rounded understanding. However, Selengut argues that none of the templates would be enough to legitimately explain the complex and varied structure of religious violence.

According to Selengut, violent acts fueled by religious laws or authority figures, i.e. holy wars, terrorism, and violent conflicts, may actually be launched for any number of underlying reasons: economic or political advantage, revenge, or to sustain hegemony over subordinate groups.[14] As Selengut states, secular reasons such as economy and politics may play a main role for religious violence.

Since the religious wars between different sects in the 16th and 17th centuries, many people in Europe began to associate religion with violence. However, Europeans discerned adverse outcomes of the religious wars and the inquisition through the Enlightenment era. Therefore, they concluded that violence would be minimized by removing religion from social life. On the contrary, most Muslims countries have not separated "mosques" and state, so many Europeans hold Muslims responsible for terrorist attacks occurring in the West due to this lack of separation.

1.4 Religious Violence: A Fact or a Myth?

Religion is increasingly accused of contributing to violence due to the acts of terrorism happening throughout world. The media, intellectuals, and the public expect a convincing answer from scholars regarding whether or not religion promotes violence. However, it would be quite difficult to give descriptive, understandable, and convincing answers to these criticisms considering the influences of today's secular world. To explain that complicated issue, scholars adopt different and unique perspectives in terms of religious violence, and they approach holy war from varying standpoints. Especially as incidents of violence, such as the Oklahoma City blast and the 9/11 attacks, have led people to consider it to be the new style of jihad revived in

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[14] Selengut, Charles. *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003),19.

the 21st century. And so, the West launched a campaign in which Islam was depicted as a source of violence directly and indirectly. Therefore, social science scholars started pondering the relationship between religion and violence, and how fundamentalism plays a significant role in actual conflicts.

Mark Juergensmeyer analyzes the relationship between religion and violence by highlighting crucial concepts of religious violence in his book, *Terror in the Mind of God*: *The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Based on his interviews with those involved in terrorist attacks, he highlights the commonalities of violent acts exhibited by different faith groups. Terrorism in the West by Islamist-extremist movements and the Western invasion of Muslims territories have revived the idea of holy war or "cosmic war" in the past two decades. Cosmic war is a concept that Juergensmeyer calls on to explain how absolutism and religion can be the center of violent movements.

The examination of religious terror through theological dimensions led Juergensmeyer to consider that the idea behind performing terrorist attacks springs from theology. Furthermore, he states that the goal of violent acts is to achieve cosmic order; therefore, religious terror is waged as a "cosmic war" in which good and evil are in battle.[15] However, acts of violence originating from Christian, Jewish or Buddhist traditions are generally defined by theological and cosmic traits; whereas, Muslim activists and ideologues attribute their violent acts to mundane matters rather than theological grounds. Consider, for example, Juergensmeyer states that Muslim activists and Hamas ideologues convicted of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center were fighting against economic exploitation and political occupation.[16] In this sense, extremist

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[15] Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. (Univ of California Press, 2017), 358.
[16] Ibid., 75.

Islamist perpetrators' justification for their violence is not a direct order of Islam but is instead their revenge for the US bombings and killing of innocent people in the Middle East.

Like Juergensmeyer, Charles Kimball draws the connection the between religion and violence through some common factors and points out the "five warning signs" that indicate a religion's tendency towards violence. In his book, *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning Signs*, Kimball lists five warning signs as absolute truth claims, blind obedience, the establishment of the ideal time, legitimizing the purpose, and declaring holy war. According to Kimball, absolute truth claims can cause believers to resort to violence and destructive behavior in the name of religion. Likewise, blind obedience leads believers to abandon their individual responsibilities and surrender themselves to the authority of charismatic leaders who demand absolute obedience and have unlimited power. In this case, religion can easily turn into a vehicle that produces violence.[17]

Rene Girard's book, *Violence and the Sacred*, is one of the most remarkable studies to comprehend the relationship between religion and violence. In his study, Girard explains both phenomena through a mechanism by which one person accuses others as scapegoats. In this context, he claims that religion is intertwined with violence based on certain rituals, namely the sacrificial worship found in many religious traditions throughout history.[18] Girard argues that violence occurs on an individual level in the beginning, and if it is not controlled, it would spread on the societal level. In other words, the repressed desire for violence in individuals can cause tremendous devastation. Therefore, the sacrificial ritual can be a vehicle that protects the society from those who encountered the nature of violence in battle.[19] As a result, the only way to save

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[17] Charles, Kimball. *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning* Signs. (HarperCollins e-books, 2008), 82.
[18] Girard Rene, trans. Patrick Gregory., *Violence and the Sacred,* (The John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 35.
[19] Ibid., 42.

the society from violence and to ensure the continuity of social order and tranquility is to shift the direction of violence onto a victim that will satisfy and meet the violent motives of the individuals in the community.[20]

In her book, *The Curse of Cain*, Regina Schwartz attempts to explain the relationship between religion and violence through *collective identity* theory. Within this theory, groups of people or nations fight without hesitation in order to preserve their identities classified by "religion, ethnicity, race, or nationality."[21] Locating the origins of violence within the concept of identity, Schwartz claims that all actions taking place during the formation and marginalization of certain groups are acts of violence. In this context, she states that the most extremist violent acts committed by human beings are intended to build identity that distinguishes them from others.[22] Schwartz uses the example of Israelites' covenant with God to demonstrate how collective identity can be formed by monotheistic thought and its relation with violence. Within this covenant, those who declare themselves as chosen and are given a territory "by God" tend to marginalize all other nations— and this idea of othering can incite violence.

Another remarkable study on the relationship between religion and violence is *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence* by Charles Selengut. In this study, Selengut deals with the phenomenon of religious violence by analyzing the concept from different approaches and perspectives in the following:

- S*criptural violence* is one of the crucial typologies in which sacred texts and traditions are used to justify religious violence.

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[20] Ibid.,42-43.
[21] Schwartz, Regina M. The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism. (University of Chicago Press, 1997), 4.
[22] Ibid., 5.

- *The psychological perspective* perceives religious conflicts as a vehicle to meet the social psychological needs of large groups of people.

- *The civilization perspective* interprets religious violence as an emerging response to prevent the hegemony of cultural and political figures.

- *Apocalyptic violence studies* focus on religious acts bring salvation and redemption, as is the case with suicide bombers. In this sense, religious violence would help believers exceed the limitations of the physical universe.

- *Religious violence, sexuality, and the body* draws attention to the role of the body in religious traditions and life, in which religion invites believers to commit physical submission, sacrifice, and physical violence. [23]

William Cavanaugh is another well-known theorist who makes solid points in terms of religious violence. In his book, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict,* Cavanaugh criticizes the several notable social science scholars who argue that religion has the tendency to promote violence because it is particularly absolutist, divisive, and irrational. In academic literature about religious violence, Cavanaugh argues that there is a dangerous tendency of religion to promote violence under certain circumstances.[24] However, he points out that religion differs from secular institutions, such as politics and economics, since it is a transhistorical and transcultural human impulse.[25]

Furthermore, he states that secular concepts, like nationalism or Marxism, can also exhibit many characteristic features of religion, including absolutism, divisiveness, irrationalism,

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[23] Selengut, Charles. *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 11.
[24] Cavanaugh, William T. *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*. (Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.
[25] Ibid., 69-70.

and the ability to mobilize the masses for violent.[26] Most wars — including WWI and WWII that caused tremendous destruction and massive casualties — were waged for so-called secular motivations, such as acquisition of lands and raw materials, ideology, and ethnicity. Assuming that the state would solve violent conflict by eliminating all religious symbols and authorities from society actively dismisses the idea of acts of violence perpetrated by the state.[27]

As mentioned above, religious violence is a complex phenomenon that can be regarded as either a fact or a myth. The solution for preventing religious violence may be separating church and state or spreading secular ideas into irrational societies as it "occurred" in Iraq, 2001. However, to better understand the origin of religious violence — and thus potential solutions — one must further examine its roots and historical backgrounds. It is possible to do that by analyzing the Crusades and jihad in the Medieval period wherein theologians entered violence into the Christian and Islamic traditions with the doctrine of "just war."

1.5 The Cases of Holy Wars in terms of Religious Violence

When we look at the cultural, social, and political influences in the development of religious wars, it is clear that religion was the most effective driving force in war dynamics in the Middle Age. The strengthening of the Muslims in Jerusalem and the ensuing transition of power in the region caused the emergence of a new religion-war-politics system. Moreover, religious authorities exploited their doctrines to support political and economic interests, which led to an increase in physical violence. Since then, believers have resorted to violence in various ways just as they did during the Crusades and jihad in the Middle Age.

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[26] Ibid.176.177.
[27] Ibid.177.

Hence, holy wars and other religiously motivated acts of violence are among the most important issues studied by academicians in the field of social science. Moreover, the amount of literature regarding religious violence, including examinations of holy wars and radical religious groups, reached its peak after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Before exploring how holy wars and radical religious organizations have helped shape the concept of religious violence, it is essential to investigate the historical background of holy wars and how extremist groups' leaders have preached to justify violent actions around the globe.

John Kelsay, in his book, *Arguing the Just War in Islam*, examines the connection between the justification for the September 11 attacks — the resulting conflicts in Iraq — and the idea of "jihad" in Islam. In other words, Kelsay claims that Islamic militants get involved in violent activities in obedience to Islamic law, such as the Koran, the Sunnah (the Prophet's life and sayings), and early Muslim scholars' teachings. His book then provides a systematic template for understanding the violent perspectives of Islamist militants that arise from the theological teachings of Islam. Kelsay describes the Islamist militants' justification of violence as "Sharia reasoning."[28] His book also helps to distinguish how political motivations can mobilize religious militants, and then religion then becomes the best candidate to rationalize their violence.

To better understand the motivations behind the Crusades and jihad, it is important to look at the brief history of both war traditions and their infamous legacies in the modern era. *Cross, Crescent, and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Western and Islamic Tradition*[29] is a notable study consisting of four conferences about the themes of peace and warfare in Islamic and Christian traditions. In general terms, the book addresses numerous

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[28] Kelsay, John. *Arguing the Just War in Islam*. (Harvard University Press, 2007), 3-4.
[29] Johnson, James Turner. *Cross, Crescent, and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Western and Islamic Tradition*. (Greenwood, 1990.)

shared issues regarding the political and religious authority figures, reasonings, and limitations underlying war in the monotheistic religious traditions from both Muslim and Christian authors' perspectives. Moreover, the book takes a comparative dialogue method to provide understanding on how the just war tradition revolves around crescent and cross cultures. Namely, the scholars in this book discuss how monotheistic religions, which adopt the propensity of peace as a core teaching, recklessly resort to immoral violence.

Jonathan Riley-Smith's books, *The Crusades: A History* [30] and *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*,[31] are great works demonstrating features and history of the Crusades. Besides, his books cover religious-political hostilities between Christians and Muslims in the Middle Age.

It is crucial to consider the "economic and territorial ambition" underlying the declaration of holy war.[32] After all, investigating these secular conditions is also vital to discovering the true motivations, rather than stated justifications, behind religious violence.[33]

In the contemporary world, Islamic fundamentalists have caused considerable damage to their image as good believers and the overall notion of religion worldwide due to the associated radical religious organizations.[34] Therefore, it is also crucial to identify and separate the political statements made by extremist religious leaders from the religious core teachings, which are mostly based on peace, toleration, and compassion. In many instances, some radical groups

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[30] Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades: A history*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).
[31] Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*. (Columbia University Press, NY, 2008).
[32] Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), XVI.
[33] Gregg, Heather Selma. *The Path to Salvation: Religious Violence from the Crusades to Jihad*. (Potomac Books, Inc., 2014).
[34] Lawrence, Bruce, ed. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*. (London: Verso, 2005).

target others because of differing belief, ideology, or status. Yet somehow, they utilize religion to validate their violent actions and recruit new members.

As mentioned before, the main interest of this study is to answer whether it is theological or secular motivations that have the greatest influence on religious wars and violent acts of radical organizations. By analyzing the various motivations that drive the masses to holy wars, primarily the Crusades, or suicide attacks, we can fully realize that these events result from secular motivations rather than religion itself.

Chapter Two: Christianity, Warfare, and the Crusades

2.1 Peace and Violence in Christianity

When one mentions the early Christian community, most people would take into consideration Jesus, his apostles, and their life-principles in the first place. The Book of Acts demonstrates how the Apostles and Jesus lived in unity as fellow:

> *... the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. All the believers were together. They held all things in common. They were selling their property and possessions and were distributing them to everyone according to each one's need. Every day they continued together in the temple. They broke bread in their houses. They shared food with gladness and in simplicity of heart. They praised God and had favor among all the people.[35]*

As can be understood from the verses above, the first Christian community had a life in which they shared possessions and helped each other. Apparently, early Christians' way of life was not "Communism" but the basic teachings of religion: peace, valuing others, and sharing what they had with those in need. In addition, the Bible emphasizes the importance of establishing universal love and peace for humanity.

> *But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.[36]*
> *"to guide our feet into the path of peace"[37]*

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[35] Johnson, Luke Timothy, and Daniel J. Harrington. *The Acts of the Apostles*. (Liturgical Press, 1992), 56.
[36] Luke, 6:27-28. New International Version.
[37] Luke, 1:79

By embracing God as the source of peace and love, Christianity advises people to devote themselves to God and live in peace. To establish world peace, Jesus asks believers to avoid from hurting others:

> *But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.*[38]

Directing ones focus to Christianity's holy text allows for the argument that Christianity is a non-violent religion and would never promote violence. However, violence seems to have entered the Christian tradition after/during the time that Christianity became the state religion of Rome. Furthermore, Christian theologians approved and legitimized violent conflicts by referencing violence in scripture. Because state and church sanctioned violence apparently had a doctrinal basis, examining these doctrines can provide a background for understanding how theologians could have reformed them to justify violence. In the context of Christian religious violence, it is essential to examine the scriptures and stages that laid the legitimate groundwork for the Crusades. Examples of some of the verses of the New Testament that contain violence are below. Because the Bible was not written down or compiled when Jesus was alive, it is difficult to determine what verses were intentionally inserted or edited by those in power.

The New Testament may emphasize the concepts of love, peace, and tolerance, but other themes rise to the surface. There are also other passages and verses that contain violence, hatred, and anger against others in the book. As an example, when Jesus explains God's purpose of sending him, he says:

> "*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against*

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[38] Matthew, 5:39. New International Version.

her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies will be the members of his own household."[39]

Jesus also tells a story of a king punishing those servants who did not recognize his authority in the Gospel of Luke:

"*But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.*"[40]

It is challenging to know whether or not the Church under the control of the Roman Empire changed the biblical manuscripts. The early church may have created a new image of Jesus in which Jesus is depicted as a totalitarian and despot to strengthen the Roman Empire. Considering that the premise of Christianity that God sent Jesus as a willing sacrifice to bring peace upon humanity, the more scenario is that the Roman Empire forced theologians to find a way to convince Christians to join the Roman Empire's army. Although Jesus promoted pacifism, Christians' attitudes towards the morality of war had changed with the doctrine of "just war" in the third century.[41]

2.2 Theorizing Warfare in Christianity

Violence as a tool was already ingrained in the Roman Empire in wars, armed rebellion, or other sanctions through the state. Because the early Christian theologians did not find any comfort zone in resorting to violence in the New Testament — in which pacifism is an essential theme — the early Church sought alternative ways to legitimize violence. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo (d. 430), is the greatest of those pre-medieval theologians whose theories developed the

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[39] Matthew. 10:34-36. New International Version.
[40] Luke, 19:27. New International Version.
[41] Heft, James. "Religion, World Order, and Peace: Christianity, War, and Peacemaking." *Cross Currents*: 60, (2010), 1-4.

scope of Christian warfare.[42] In his doctrine of the just war, St. Augustine argues that Christians

should resort to violence when they could not resolve conflicts through peaceful methods.

St. Augustine states that individuals cannot act to initiate violent hostility, but the divine

authority of the empire has the right to declare war.[43] St. Augustine states that Christians should

not have an intention for killing others, yet they may kill as a state agent. As long as the ruler is

morally certain about the cause of war and neighbors violate juridical rights of Christian rulers,

wars are permissible for Christians.[44] With this logic, being attacked by your neighbor could be a

sufficient reason to justify war. Christian warriors should have good intentions, namely, the aim

is to attain the good and to avoid the evil. In addition, the sovereign authority is the only figure

that has a right to initiate the war, and wars are for common welfare and happiness of the society,

rather than personal interests. Therefore, a war waged on behalf of the sovereign authority should

be considered as legitimate as long as it has the intention to prevent injustice circumstances and

establish peace.

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) is another Christian theologian who developed the doctrine of

the "just war." He argues that self-defense is a rightful reason for war; hence, he legitimizes

violent acts, which Christians would conduct to protect themselves.[45] In his book, *Summa*

Theologica, Aquinas emphasizes three factors which are obligatory for a war to be considered

just. First, sovereign authority is the only power that can declare war since they are the only ones

with the right to summon troops in wartime. Secondly, Aquinas argues that those being attacked

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[42] Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades: A history*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 47-48.
[43] Dougherty, James E., and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff. *Contending Theories of International Relations*. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971), 152.

[44] Ibid., 152.
[45] Heft, James. "Religion, World Order, and Peace: Christianity, War, and Peacemaking." *Cross Currents* 60. (2010), 2.

must be guilty of a crime serious enough to deserve punishment. Their crime must be serious enough to deserve punishment; therefore, attacking them would be a just cause.

Apparently, Aquinas was not concerned with the legitimate self-defense of an attacked state, since he claims that a nation or state deserves to be punished due to their fault. His writing seems to place priority on justifying war, and not on justifying self-defense. Aquinas's last reasoning for a just war is the requirement that the belligerents intend to establish the advancement of goodness and to avoid evil.[46]

Aquinas argues that wars are permissible under certain conditions. However, his influential statements only determine the criteria of what constitutes "proper authority, just cause, and right intention." Yet, he does not examine general principles, nor acknowledges the exceptional conditions that underly armed conflicts.[47]

From the Aquinas' perspective, the brutal slaughter of the masses by dictators such as Hitler and Stalin could be "just" acceptable because the temporal authority declared the war without any consideration of morality and religion core teachings based on love and care. Early Christian theologians could believe that their political and secular authority figures were, in fact, representations of God on Earth. As a basic historical analysis will tell, the whims of authority figures have caused many deadly conflicts around the world, such as the World Wars and the Holocaust. Although the sacred scriptures infused people with love, peace, and compassion, after the early Church and theologians' doctrines, it became an instrument that the ruling class used to maintain their mundane campaigns and justify their violence.

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[46] Aquinas, Saint Thomas. *The Summa Theologica: Complete Edition*. (Catholic Way Publishing, 2014), 1813-1814.
[47] Stout, Jeffrey. "Justice and Resort to War: A Sampling of Christian Ethical Thinking." *Cross, Crescent, and Sword*. (1990), 22.

It is worth keeping in mind that although church law is nourished by Christian theologians such as St. Augustine and Aquinas, the Roman Empire had also influence on the early Church in terms of doctrines justifying wars. Therefore, the moral theory of the just war determines the criteria that provide satisfaction in resorting to violence.[48] Thus, Christian theologians and the Church's doctrine of the just war and justifications for violence were instruments to strengthen the rule of the Roman Kingdom.

Christian theologians, especially Saint Agustine and Thomas Aquinas, devised the fundamental and methodical doctrine of the just war, in which Christianity was transformed from its pacifist tendency to a warrior religion. Thus, the Church also prepared the appropriate environment for the Crusades that targeted the Muslim lands.

2.3 The History and Purpose of the Crusades

The Crusades were "religiously" motivated military movements between Eastern and Western civilizations. There are many ways to describe the Crusades and their participants. First, *iter peregrinatio* is a Latin term to describe the Crusades, and in modern language it means travel or pilgrimage. Another Latin term to describe the Crusades is *crusesignati*, which refers to persons signed by the cross. The reason why the concept of the Crusades is related to the cross is that the symbol of Christianity, the cross, was sewn on the uniforms of Christian warriors.[49]

Moreover, there are controversial theories on the crusade terminology regarding its roots and time they occurred. Scholars who studied the Crusades in the past divided into two schools: Traditionalist and Pluralist. On the one hand, the Traditionalist camp defined the Crusades as a

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[48] Ibid., 5.
[49] Allen, Susan Jane. *An Introduction to the Crusades*. (University of Toronto Press, 2017), 18.

military campaign in which the papacy aimed to reconquer the Holy Land, particularly Jerusalem. On the other hand, scholars who adopted the Pluralist view define the Crusades by examining factors motivating, organizing, and legitimating the expeditions.[50]

Although there is not a consensus on the definition of the Crusades, it is explicit that the papacy played the significant role in the growth of the Crusades.

The armies of the Crusades consisted of Europeans that united under the leadership of Popes and clergy, and there had been a significant growth of interest in the Crusades. Pope Urban II, who played a significant role in the formation of the Crusades, held the meeting on November 27, 1095 during the Clermont Council. After the meeting, the Pope addressed the crowd of clergy and people for launching the Crusades upon Muslim lands. After the Pope delivered a preach, it had altered the history of all western Christendom.

Pope Urban II summoned warriors from all over the Christian world to take revenge on the followers of Islam who committed crimes against the Christian world.[51] After the spiritual leader of the Holy Roman Catholic Church preached, the Pope also ceased wars that lasted for centuries between European nations and united the knights of Europe to "save the Holy Land" from Muslims. The Pope established a special army connected by symbols such as Jerusalem, the cross, and the vow to the Church. The Pope declared war on non-Christians, particularly Muslims and Pagans, claiming that, *Deus lo volt*, God wants it.[52]

To Urban's appeal, in the spring of 1096, more than 60,000 soldiers from the European country's five armies were accompanied. When it's autumn, over 100,000 men consisting of

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[50] Ibid., 19.

[51] Asbridge, Thomas S. *The First Crusade: A New History*. (Oxford University Press on Demand, 2004), 27-28.

[52] Lambert, M. *Crusade and Jihad Origins, History, Aftermath*. (London: Profile Books, 2016), 65.

priests, kings, soldiers, aristocrats, and peasants were ready to march onto the Eastern world.[53] The medieval mentality may have viewed these military campaigns against non-Christians as a divine purpose to glorify God and the Holy Pope, the representative of God on earth.

As a result, the Church recruited more knights by using religious doctrines and sermons to recapture Jerusalem and establish its own hegemony over the East through the Crusades.

The Crusades were the West's first movement to invade the East in history, believing in the holy wars' righteousness. The papacy and preachers played a significant role in the military mobilization of Christians in the late 11th century. In addition to the legacy and influence of the Church, individuals who participated in expeditions played a significant role in shaping Christian mentality on violence. To illustrate this notion, the *Gesta Francorum* is an anonymous book written by a highly sophisticated and outspoken skilled professional knight to emphasize the importance of the Pope's summon as a requirement for both a developed sense of feudal loyalty and social responsibility. The preface of the *Gesta* expresses the origin of the Crusade in the following sentences:

> When that time had already come, of which the Lord Jesus warns his faithful people every day, especially in the Gospel where he says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," there was a great stirring of heart throughout all the Frankish lands, so that if any man, with all his heart and all his mind, really wanted to follow God and faithfully to bear the cross after him, he could make no delay in taking the road to the Holy Sepulchers as quickly as possible.[54]

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[53] Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), 42.43.
[54] Cowdrey, Herbert EJ. "The Genesis of the Crusades: The Springs of Western Ideas of Holy War." *The Holy War* (1976), 11.

Although the author of the *Gesta Francorum's* language is exclusively about pilgrimage and following in Christ's footsteps in Holy Lands, the author also referred the importance of gathering armies against armed components.[55]

When viewing the Pope's sermon and its "holy" purposes from the fanatic-Christian perspective, one can perceive the Pope's summon for the Crusades as a divine message from God, which Christians should follow without any hesitation. Steven Runciman, best known for his three-volume *A History of the Crusades*, posits a new question by which to evaluate the crusades. He asks in his book's preface, "were the crusades the most glorious and romantic of the Christian adventures, or of the last barbarian invasions of the medieval period?"[56] On the one hand, the Crusades, which stemmed from the different motivations of both the European kings and the Church, were significant for both Latin Western Christians and Eastern Muslims to exchange their cultures, values, and traditions. On the other hand, it is an undoubtedly fact that the Crusades caused the massacre of the Muslims, Jews, and even some of Christians. Moreover, crusaders sieged many wealthy cities such as Antioch and Jerusalem and slaughtered men, women, and children in the houses and mosques. There was not mercy nor protection to non-Christians, unless they chose Christianity over their religions.[57]

In addition to rescuing the holy places from non-Christians and helping Byzantium against the Turks,[58] the missionary activity was another purpose of the Crusades. The missionary activity occurred during the Crusades. In the traditional Christian thought, the Jews were

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[55] Wolf, Kenneth Baxter. "Crusade and Narrative: Bohemond and the Gesta Francorum." Journal of Medieval History 17, no. 3 (1991): 207-216.
[56] Runciman, Steven. *A History of the Crusades: Volume 1, The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Vol. 1. CUP Archive, (1951), Preface.
[57] Ibid., 286-287.
[58] Cowdrey, Herbert EJ. "The Genesis of the Crusades: The Springs of Western Ideas of Holy War." *The Holy War*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), 25.

responsible for crucifying Christ. Therefore, during the Crusades, some of the knights, who burned the Torah's scrolls and vandalized synagogues, threatened the Jews with a horrific choice: baptism or death.[59] Although some Germans provided sanctuary in their places and churches to protect the Jews from the mobs of Crusaders, the "holy" knights or peasants, who came to the Pope's call for an expedition, forced non-Christians, primary Jews, to abandon their religion and accept Christianity in the name of God.

Furthermore, some of the German dukes convinced their followers to begin their own Crusade, by disobeying their emperors and bishops, and they attacked the Jewish community that lived close by. Although the Bishop of Spier managed to protect some of the Jews and punished murderers later, some of the Jews who refused to embrace Christianity were slaughtered by the knights.[60]

Under the papacy and the European kingdoms, the Knights sought to recapture the Holy Land, where Jesus was born, and stop the Muslim spread in Christian lands. Moreover, Christians resorted to unspeakable violence in the East and sought to convert non-Christians to their religion. As a result, the Crusades laid the foundations for historical religious wars that would still cause Western and Eastern conflicts. The reaction of the Muslims to the military expeditions of Christians was to develop doctrines regarding warfare in Islam.

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[59] Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), 71.
[60] Runciman, Steven. *A History of the Crusades: Volume 1, The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Vol. 1. (CUP Archive, 1951), 137.

Chapter Three: Islam, Warfare, and Jihad

Islam is one of the monotheistic religions that God, or *Allah*, sent over humanity in the

7th century through Muhammad: the final prophet of God. The principle of Tawhid, *the doctrine*

of unity, constitutes the primary basis of Islam, and it emphasizes the fact that there is only one

God and that there is no creator other than Him. With more than 1.2 billion believers, Islam is

the second most growing religion globally, after Christianity, expanding from North Africa to

Southeast Asia.[61]

The origin of the term Islam derives from the Arabic root *s-l-m,* which means

"submission" or "peace." The concept of submission reflects Muslims who surrender to God's

will or law and render peace between themselves and God. Muslims obey God; therefore, they

implement God's will or law in their daily and social lives as a sense of responsibility.[62]

3.1 Mecca throughout the Pre-Islamic Era

Examining pre-Islamic Arabia is vital to understand how Islam played a decisive role in

changing adverse attitudes towards enslavement and infanticide that dominated the lives of

Meccans. Historians consider pre-Islamic Arabia as the Age of Ignorance: *Jahiliyyah*. The

concept of *Jahiliyyah* emphasizes the pre-Islamic period, or "ignorance of monotheism and

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[61] Esposito, John L., ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. (Oxford University Press, 2003), 144.
[62] Ibid., 144.

divine law."[63] This term also reflects the conditions, life perceptions, and mentality of Meccans' before the prophethood of Mohammad.

In sociological and economical aspects, Meccans were divided into two main groups, nomadic *Bedouin* tribes and the Semites living in cities in the Arabian Peninsula. Two groups differed from each other in terms of ecological and ethnographic factors such as literature and language.[64] As Arab cities were on trade routes, their economy mainly comprised commercial activities, but they were also engaged in livestock and agriculture. However, the Arabs were not independent in terms of political and economic factors, as powerful empires, such as Byzantium and Persians, surrounded them, and those powers determined trade conditions.[65]

The pre-Islamic period of ignorance of Arabs and their adoption of a nomadic lifestyle might have caused them to alienate themselves from the societies around them in terms of knowledge, morality, and social rules. Hence, the Meccans had a lifestyle comprising sinful behaviors and social injustice such as burglary and slave-trade.

In Cultural and religious aspects, Meccans were aware of two main religions, Judaism and Christianity, due to Mecca's geopolitical position. Nevertheless, idolatry and polytheism were the traditional beliefs dominating the Meccans' lives.[66] The rising aristocratic merchant class, who held and ruled capital and lands in pre-Islamic Arabia, influenced the Mecca society. Furthermore, Mecca's wealthy class traded in slaves and exploited people with low economic status. Meccans witnessed the growing injustice, inequality, and moral corruption throughout the

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[63] Ibid., 154.
[64] Holt, Peter Malcolm, Ann KS Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, eds. *The Cambridge History of Islam: The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*. Vol. 1A. (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4-5.
[65] Ibid.,20-21.
[66] Ibid.,24.

pre-Islamic era.[67] Moreover, regardless of gender, some Arabians practiced infanticide, which

Islam regards as a grave sin, in the pre-Islamic age of ignorance.[68]

However, with the rise of Islam, the Arabs abandoned their idols they worshipped and

adopted Islam as their belief that put an end to social injustice and inequality.

Therefore, Islam reformed the nomadic Bedouin society and ensured the establishment of an

Islamic State with a social structure where believers are responsible for applying values such as

justice, compassion, kindness, solidarity, equality, and peace to their lives. On the one hand,

Islam played an essential role in the formation and strengthening of Arab nations' cultures and

had an active role in the development of peace and prosperity in the Arabian Peninsula. The

Arabs became a determining factor in the economy and politics over other nations. On the other

hand, a shift of the balance of power from non-Muslim civilizations such as Persians and

Byzantium to the Islamic State caused conflicts between Muslims and its neighbors. Thus,

conflicts between the states escalated and questioned the role of Islam promoting war versus

peace.

3.2 The Main Sources of Islam

Islam is based on the belief of the one deity in which *Allah* (God) created the entire

universe, including all its entities. Islam is a set of divine laws that emphasize peace, tranquility,

and obedience for the Koran's absolute terms. With that, Islam's primary goal would be bringing

happiness and salvation in this world and in the afterlife.

Some main sources, including the Koran, *the Sunnah*, *qiyas*, and *ijma* are where Muslims

turn to in need. The Koran is the primary sourcebook of Islam, and the sacred book consists of

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[67] Hasan, Ahmad. "Social Justice in Islam." *Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (1971), 209-219.
[68] Gil'adi, Avner. *Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society*. (Springer, 1992), 79-80.

general moral instructions and obligatory practices such as the Five Pillars. Besides, Koran passages emphasize the importance of themes such as peace, tolerance, and pluralism. Muslims regard the *Sunnah*, which consists of the Prophet Muhammad's statements (*hadith*) and attitudes, as the second source of Islam. The analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) technique is the third source that Muslims use when they cannot find definitive texts in either the Koran or the Sunnah about the issues they encounter. The majority of the Muslim scholars' consensus (*ijma*) is the last source that Muslims resort to solve problems. The *ijma* technique stemmed from the Prophet's tradition since he said, "My community will never agree on an error."[69] However, after the military campaigns of Muslims to non-Muslim lands "for the purpose of spreading Islam," Muslims faced many cultural, social, and political issues, which they could not have found answers in these sources of Islam.

After the Rashidun Caliphate era, when the first four caliphates ruled the Islamic State after the Prophet Muhammad, scholars developed religious doctrines and laws in response to sociopolitical matters under the pressure and domination of the ruling figures. Although Islam's primary sourcebook determines lines and rules that Muslims must follow in an inevitable war, the early Islamist jurists developed warfare. Before analyzing Islamic jurists' contributions to warfare in the Islamic tradition, it is better to highlight the place of the concept of peace in Islam.

3.3 The Islamic Law of Peace

The concept of Islam derives from the Arabic word salaam: *s-l-m, salaam* that reflects people's peace with themselves and with God.[70] Although Islam, as Judaism and Christianity, teaches peace, tolerance, morals, and the values of human rights, people have regarded Islam

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[69] Esposito, John L. *Great World Religions: Islam*. (The Teaching Company, 2003), 29.
[70] Esposito, John L., ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. (Oxford University Press, 2004), 144-274.

with violence since terrorist attacks in the West. However, speaking of Islam and peace, the Prophet Muhammad's life and the sacred scriptures are prominent factors that underscore the value of peace in Islam. In Islamic law, the Koran and the *Sunnah*, attention is drawn to the universal principles such as respecting all people's lives regardless of identity, race, color, and religion, treating them fairly, and esteeming individuals' rights and lives.

The Koran is the primary source of teachings of Islam, and there are not verses that justify and encourage the act of violence. The Koran aims to establish justice, moral principles, and peace for a livable society. To illustrate this, Muslims greet each other by saying *as-salāmu ʿalaykum*: "Peace be upon you." The habit of Muslims greeting themselves in this way derives from a verse in the Koran: *Their greeting to one another will be "Peace!"*[71] On the one hand, the Koran encourages Muslims to use peace when greeting each other in daily life. On the other hand, the general judgment is that Islam spread by the sword. However, the Koran forbids Muslims to use force to convert people to Islam:

"*There shall be no compulsion in acceptance of the religion…*"[72]

The provision "no compulsion in religion" reflects common sense in Islam. Thus, considering the choice of "conversion or death" as a principle of Islam is a contrarian to the core of religion. Moreover, the Koran emphasizes that God sent the Prophet Muhammad as a mercy, not a tyrant, to humanity.

We sent you not, but as a mercy to the realms[73]
We are most knowing of what they say, and you are not over them a tyrant…[74]

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[71] Koran., 10:10.
[72] Koran., 2:256.
[73] Koran, 21:107.
[74] Koran, 50:45.

The Prophet preached the strict monotheism in society wherein people believed idolatry. Thus, in the period of pre-Islamic ignorance, the Prophet and Muslims faced a great deal of torture and humiliation. The Koran describes the situation of the early believers in the following verse:

> *And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them harshly, they say words of peace.*[75]

The Koran commands Muslims to adopt the pacifist tendency rather than violent acts in their early years in Mecca. The duty of the Prophet was to be patient towards those who oppressed believers.

> *"Await in patience the command of your Lord…"*[76]

Furthermore, the Koran also refers to universal values such as compassion, justice, and tolerance, as the other world religions. The concept of compassion reflects Islam's true spirit, despite the idea that jihad is the center of Islam.

Koranic verses encourage believers neither war of aggression nor resorting to violence. The verses in the Koran where Allah permits war are for Muslims to defend and protect themselves, not oppress others. The Koran qualifies war by the words *fi'sabililah*, i.e., "in the way of Allah." Thus, Muslims are only permitted to fight when wars are inevitable. Besides, fights should be in the way of Allah, not for individual ambitions, personal gains, or invading lands.[77]

Considering the profound damage war has done to human history, my aim here is, of course, not to justify war. Yet, the first Muslims exercised their right to self-defense; thus, Islam

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[75] Koran, 25:63.
[76] Koran, 52:48.
[77] Ibid.,13-14.

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still exists among the world's religions today. Besides, the Koran aims to promote peace, not violence and terror, and opposes any behavior that could mean cruelty to humanity. Thus, the Koran and the Prophet's life emphasize that a peaceful and patient approach to people is Islam's basic principle.

The Prophet Muhammad has also an eminent position in the Islamic tradition as he has been an extraordinary role model for believers with his teachings and behavior.

After his prophethood, Muhammad preached an absolute monotheism in Mecca, where the city's faith was formed by idolatry. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad encountered extremely harsh opposition from the Meccans. The Meccan polytheists exerted heavy boycotts, including social and economic sanctions, on the early Muslims. Moreover, Meccan pagans insulted and tortured those who refused to renounce Islam in the 7th century.[78] Nevertheless, the Prophet had never resorted to violence against Meccans.

When the early Muslims could no longer endure the Meccans' persecution and torture, the Prophet permitted his followers for the first migration to Abyssinia, ruled by a Christian king.[79] The Prophet allowed Muslims to immigrate to the Christian king's land, demonstrating that he did not conflict with Christians and even had trust in the Christian ruler that ensured freedom of worship to Muslim refugees.

Since disbelievers of Mecca realized that the Prophet would not have stopped preaching, they reached a consensus on murdering the Prophet to protect their interests. Therefore, the Prophet and a considerable number of the first Muslims migrated to *Yathrib*, Medina, to live in peace.[80] After the *Hijrah* (emigration), the Prophet achieved harmony and reconciliation between

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[78] Lings, Martin. *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources*. (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983), 79.
[79] Ibid.,80.
[80] Ibid., 118-120.

the immigrants, the people of Medina helping Muslims, and the Jews living in Medina. The Prophet aimed with the pact to constitute a single community in which believers of different religions had equal rights.[81]

Moreover, the Prophet dictated numerous letters and delegated envoys to call non-Muslim kings, sultans, and other rulers to Islam in the region during his prophethood.[82]

The letters of the Prophet to non-Muslims leaders demonstrate that the Prophet may aim to prevent any possible conflicts between nations. These letters are an important example showing the Prophet Muhammad's contributions to peace. Thus, one can argue that the Prophet's priority is to ensure regional and global diplomatic relations.

Another instance showing how the Prophet contributed to peace is his attitude during the conquest of Mecca. During the conquest of the city in 630, the Meccans thought that the Muslim army would have slaughtered them. According to the Meccans, the day of conquest was when the Muslims would finally take their revenge by massacring the people of Quraysh. Thus, for them, it was "the day of God's abasement of Quraysh." However, the Prophet said: "This is the day of mercy" and prohibited any acts of violence against Mecca's nonbelievers.[83] The Prophet's use of peaceful methods to resolve conflicts rather than violence is crucial to note here.

Considering the examples offered in Prophet Muhammad's history and the Koranic verses, it is possible to state that peace is rooted in Islam both etymologically and traditionally. As mentioned earlier, the Prophet aimed to establish peace and prevent conflicts between the early Muslims and their neighbors, yet many wars occurred in the Islamic tradition.

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[81] Ibid., 125-128.
[82] Ibid., 260.
[83] Lings, Martin. *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources*. (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983), 297-298.

3.4 Warfare in the Islamic Law and the Transformation of Jihad

Conflicts have adverse consequences in international relations and socio-economic spheres of societies. When nations failed to reach a compromise by peaceful methods, they impose violent acts or inhumane sanctions.

The Arabic word *harb* is the general term for war, but jihad is a well-known concept referring to warfare. Wars are permissible in the Islamic law, namely, some verses of the Koran and the Prophet set the patterns for wars. As it is stated in the Koran:

> "*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors.*"[84]

In particular, Surah 2:193 says wars are permissible and also provides understanding of jihad as warfare:

> "*And fight them until no more oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.*"

It is essential to distinguish the times and circumstances that caused Koranic verses to be revealed. As indicated in verses 2:190-193, the opponent was polytheists Mecca's people who marched to Medina to wage war against the early Muslims. With the above verses, wars became permissible for Muslims, as self-defense, not for aggression.

However, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks and suicide attacks in the West, scholars, politicians, and the mainstream media have associated the term jihad with violent-based modern warfare.

In his several books, Robert Spencer, the supporter of the counter-jihad movement, specifies jihad as the extremist international terror threat. He argues that the Prophet Muhammad was the first authority that started waging war against Christians. Since then, Islamic jihadists

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[84] Koran, 2:190.

have continued the Islamization of Christian lands. Spencer also accuses Islamic sects of neither reform nor rejection of the doctrines that motivate jihad.[85]

John Kelsay, whose expertise is the morality of warfare in Western and Islamic traditions, outlines jihad's transformation during "regime change." In this process, tyrannical, or Islamic, governments adopt *al-shari'a*, "Islamic law," to rule the Muslim community. Islamic law imposes obligations that the Islamic State's citizens should obey. Alongside paying taxes and honoring the ruler, jihad's participation is one of the Islamic law commitments.[86] In his theory, "Shari'a reasoning," Kelsay demonstrates how rulers and influential Muslim scholars played a critical role in the development of Islamic law including jihad.[87]

After the attacks of Islamist organizations increased over the last two decades, the West perceived the concept of jihad as "holy war." Yet, there is not a verse in the Koran that associates jihad with holy war. Terminologically, jihad derives from the root of Arabic word *jahada* that means to strive or to exert efforts. Yet, the Western media translates jihad as "holy war."

However, *al-ḥarb al-muqaddasah* is a term equivalent to holy war in Arabic.[88] Thus, "ironically" the Islamic world is alien to the fact that jihad means holy war. Moreover, the Koran (25:52) says: *"So do not obey the disbelievers and strive against them with the Koran a great striving."* With this verse, it is explicit that God asks Muslims to fight against disbelievers with the Koran, which demonstrates that the actual jihad is to strive for the virtuous life.

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[85] Spencer, Robert. *Not Peace but a Sword: The Great Chasm Between Christianity and Islam*. (Catholic Answers, 2013), 10.
[86] Kelsay, John. *Arguing the Just War in Islam*. (Harvard University Press, 2007), 39.
[87] Ibid., 52.
[88] Kalın, İbrahim, and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, eds. *War and Peace in Islam: The Uses and Abuses of Jihad*. (Islamic Texts Society, 2013), 57.

In the Islamic tradition, classical Islamist scholars divided the world into two parts: *Dar al-Harb* (Abode of War) and *Dar al Islam* (the abode of Islam). In the Islamic law of jihad, *Dar al-Harb* is the concept that the early Muslim scholars used to specify non-Muslim lands. Muslims' obligation to the Islamic State is to wage war against non-Muslim nations until they become part of the Islamist state.[89] In the absence of agreement and peace, the early Islamic jurists considered non-Muslim territories as the abode (house) of war. However, there are not Koranic verses nor the Prophet's sayings regarding such a division of the world. Therefore, the early Muslim scholars restructured warfare in Islamic jurisprudence under the influence of the statecraft.

3.5 Islamic Jurisprudence and Warfare

After the civil war between Ali and Mu'awiya, the *Ummah*, the Prophet Muhammad's followers, were divided into different sects. Muslims who witnessed the civil war began to question the war in terms of Islamic law. Hence, the first Muslim scholars developed a jurisprudence containing the limitations and justifications of the war. Likewise, after the Islamic expansion to non-Muslim lands gained momentum, there was a requirement to justify the war in the early Islamic period. The earliest Islamic jurists played a significant role in building criteria, justice measures, and warriors' code in war.

As John Kelsay outlines in his book, *Arguing the Just War in Islam*, the Iraqi school is the earliest one that developed treaties dealing with questions from conquered territories.

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[89] Ibid.,71.

Al' Shaybani (d.805) is one of the Islamic jurists that examines the war alongside political ethics. In his approach to warfare, he reveals principles and terms for both the territory of Islam and the territory of war.[90]

Al'Shaybani establishes a classification of people wherein Islam plays a critical role in identifying people within territory. To illustrate, the primary group is Muslims that dominate the territory. Yet, there are also *ahl al-dhimma* "protected people," primarily consisted of Jews and Christians. There are also other people such as "rebels" dissenting the authority, "apostates" renouncing Islam, and "brigands" consisting of criminals.

After such this classification, Al' Shaybani and other jurists determine justifications and the meaning of the war within political-territorial arrangement. According to the Islamic jurisprudence by Al'Shaybani and his colleagues, "war is a means to a political end" in which Muslims call people to Islam as a divinely mandated mission.

In other words, the early jurists argue that "there is nothing particularly good or bad about war in itself" because they view war as a means to an end. Hence, waging war is an element of predicting its probable effectiveness in achieving certain goals. The purpose of fighting is to establish peace, social order, and justice in the territory of Islam.

However, the early Islamic jurists justify war regarding different reasons. To illustrate, the ruler of the Islamic State can wage war against protected people when they violate their obligations determined by treaties. Moreover, it is also possible to fight against the residents of the Islamic territory if they revolt against the Islamic governor.[91]

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[90] Kelsay, John. *Arguing the Just War in Islam*. (Harvard University Press, 2007), 97-100.
[91] Ibid.,99-105.

Al-Mawardi (d.1058) is another jurist that influenced his era in the 11th century. In the time of al-Mawardi, the justification of war shifted from the detailed administrative law to the sovereign of authority. He argues that the authority must have certain qualifications for ruling the territory of Islam. Considering that Muslims' expansions resulted in holding more lands, al-Mawardi's reasoning focuses on "delegates" administering conquered lands. In this sense, his judgements lay on the notion of right authority, and he believes that governorship comes with full authorization to wage war. According to his formulation, the general governor, as commander, has full power for wage war, but he must provide the constitution, equipping, and morale of the army. With such power, the governor can declare war against those labeled enemies living in the territory of War. Besides, the governor can fight against rebels, brigands, and apostates residing in the territory of Islam.

Al-Mawardi indicates two classes: "the first class consists of those who have received the call to Islam but rejected it" and the second one is "those who have not reached the call to Islam." He believes that the latter group was very few because Muslims encountered nations and spread the message of the Prophet. However, the first group are a subject to attack or threat to attack, yet only the governor can decide.[92]

Al-Sulami of Damascus (d.1106) is an Islamic jurist who took the notion of jihad to another level (individualistic) because the Crusades played a critical role in his judicial opinion.

Al-Sulami states that to extend the territory of Islam is a duty that the Prophet and the early caliphs constituted. The ruler's obligation is organizing and leading at least one annual expedition. He considers the duty of carrying out expeditions as a custom inherited from the

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[92] Ibid., 111-115.

Prophet and the early caliphs, yet subsequent rulers failed in the custom or neglected the duty. Besides, he considers Franks' incursions into Islamic lands as a God's judgment in response to not carrying out that custom. In response to the Crusades, Al-Sulami states that all Muslim cities are obligated to aid the Muslim land under attack in case of necessity. Yet, when there are not Muslim forces to defend Islam's territory, it becomes an obligation for every Muslim individual to fulfill God's command, namely participating in jihad. Al-Sulami's preoccupation is to make jihad as an individual duty, and he considers jihad (the duty of fighting) as the sixth pillar of Islam.[93]

As mentioned above, the early Islamic jurists designate two classes: *Dar al-Harb* and *Dar al Islam.* In addition, they determine justifications and obligations for war. For example, killing noncombat including women, children, servants, and slaves is forbidden. Moreover, a commander's responsibility is to call the enemy to Islam and try to persuade them before initiating a war against them.

However, the Koran and the Prophet permit wars as self- defense as a last resort. The early Islamic jurists' preoccupation of war is particularly about territories, expansion, and conquests. The Prophet, after returning from battle, told his followers, "We return from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." The greater jihad for Muslims, according to the Prophet, is an inner struggle against one's greed, ego, selfishness, and evil.[94]

As John Esposito outlines in his book, *Great World Religions: Islam*, jihad has two broad meanings: non-violent and violent. In general, jihad is the obligation of pursuing and realizing God's will. God requires believers to strive for a righteous life through jihad. In addition, God

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[93] Ibid., 116-117.
[94] Esposito, John L. *Great World Religions: Islam*. (The Teaching Company, 2003), 20.

leads Muslims to expand the Islamic community through preaching, writing, teaching, being a role model, etc. The "defensive" jihad or "struggle" was revealed in the Koran after the early Muslims migrated to Medina due to Meccans' oppressions.[95]

Not every individual has the same perception of jihad. Besides, the concept of jihad has been transformed from its essence in the Koran into a political element by rulers and the early Islamic jurists.

In the last two decades, jihad became a notion that radical Islamist organizations had adopted to justify their violent acts against the West. Contrary to Islamic law and the verses of peace and tolerance in the Koran, contemporary "jihadist movements" carry out suicide attacks killing hundreds of people. Furthermore, they target buildings representing the West's political and secular life, such as embassies and shopping malls.

However, as mentioned earlier, the Koran and Islamic jurists also forbid Muslims from killing innocent people and regard the People of the Book as "protected people." Besides, there is no precedent demonstrating that the Prophet waged war for aggression or conquests. Even so, wars have occurred in Islamic history.

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[95] Ibid., 20.

Chapter Four: Secular Motivations Underlying So-Called Holy Wars

Violence has a very complex and multifaceted background. In fact, social, political, economic, cultural, and religious factors cause violent acts worldwide. Throughout history, particularly in the Medieval period, wars occurred between Christians and Muslims. Namely, when Pope Urban II declared war on the Islamic world, Europeans came together for military expeditions. In an act of self-defense or as a counterattack, Muslims faced the Crusader army, continuing to fight for two centuries.

It is important to note that the Middle Ages was a violent time. Disagreements between rival kingdoms, economic collapse, and political instability drove people into wars. During the battles between Christians and Muslims, warriors wore religious symbols, including crescents and crosses, on their uniforms rather than royal emblems. Hence, those catastrophic military expeditions led by the Church were classified as "holy war" or "religious wars."

However, religious motivations were not the main purpose of the Crusades. Religious reasons, such as the reclamation of holy lands, the desire to end Islamic sovereignty in the region, and securing pilgrimage routes, were only the tip of the iceberg. Instead, worldly and secular motivations were the driving force behind these so-called holy wars. Ignorance of theology and scriptures, political and economic interests of the church, the Muslim desire for world domination, and other psychological and ideological reasons spurred conflicts between Muslims and Christians. Likewise, differing viewpoints and subsequent othering both lent to extremist organizations' outbursts of violence largely targeting civilians.

4.1 Lack of Knowledge About Theology and Misinterpreting Sacred Books

One can consider Holy Books as the primary sources of religion that constitute the essence of religions — and the books of all Abrahamic religions mostly emphasize pluralism, tolerance, and peace. Nevertheless, these sacred texts also contain scriptures about war. As mentioned in previous chapters, jurists and clergy played a critical role in transforming theology and misinterpreting sacred scriptures to conform to their self-interests. Consider, for example, how classical Islamic jurists encouraged the idea of perpetual war between Muslims and non-Muslims by referencing the terms *Dar al-Harb* and *Dar al-Islam*. Jihadists assume that the concept of *Dar al-Harb* refers to the non-Muslim territory; thus, fighting against foreigners is permissible until they accept the rule of the Islamic State.[96] The classical Islamic scholars' jurisprudence has divided the world into two parts wherein Islam is considered a source of hostility toward non-Muslims.

However, it is noteworthy that none of the Koranic verses mentions such division or classification. On the contrary, the Koran regards Jews and Christians as *Ahl al-Kitab* (the People of the Book).[97] With that, the Koran calls people to an interfaith initiative, rather than perpetual war. Moreover, the Prophet did not attempt to classify the world; rather, Muslim scholars developed this classification after the Prophet passed away during the early Abbasid dynasty (750-1258CE).[98]

Likewise, the New Testament aims to establish peace and adopts pacifism as a core teaching. Yet, Christian theologians established the concept of "just war" to rationalize violence.

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[96] Hassan, Muhammad Haniff. Revisiting Dar Al-Islam (Land of Islam) And Dar Al-Harb (Land of War). (2007), 1-4.
[97] Koran, 3:64, 199.
[98] Ibid.,1-4.

For example, the Pope summoned Christians to war with the statement "God wills it" (*Deus lo vult*), and so, thousands of Europeans went to war and died in "the name of God." The phrase *Deus lo volt* hails from Latin. However, in the Middle Age, only the most educated classes knew Latin, while the average schools did not include Latin in the curriculum.[99] Thus, it is possible to argue that most warriors went to war solely through blind devotion to their religious leaders, without knowing the true meaning of "*Deus lo volt*." After the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther in the 16th century, the Church lost its absolute hegemony over society, which led people to begin reading the holy book in their own language.

Furthermore, the Pope's call to the First Crusade occurred three centuries after the Caliph Umar conquered Jerusalem in 639 by collaborating with local political leaders, who were mostly churchmen.[100] Namely, assuming that an approximately three-century delay occurred before "the revealing of the divine will (*Deus lo volt*)" would be a contradiction in the Christian tradition. Another rising question here is why Pope Urban II carried out this will of God but the former Popes did not? You may answer this question by considering the interrelationship between the Pope and European kings. Pope Urban II utilized ecclesiastical politics and held council at Clermont to establish a ground for the Crusades.[101]

The Pope attempted to originate "divine orders" for the Crusades, and the Islamic jurists' classification created a division between civilizations. Hence, it is possible to claim that scholars' "misinterpretation" of sacred scriptures can cause religiously motivated violence.

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[99] Moran, Jerome. "Spoken Latin in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance." *Journal of Classics Teaching* 20, no. 40 (2019): 20-24.

[100] Catlos, Brian A. *Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power, and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihad.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, (2014), 219.

[101] Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades: A History.* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 56-58.

In the contemporary era, for example, Osama bin Laden declared war on the Judeo-Christian world and issued a fatwa obligating all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens and their allies. Bin Laden and other extremist organizations' attempts to call the Muslim world to jihad is an outcome of misinterpreting passages in the Koran. Their further goal is convincing Muslims to carry out terrorist attacks in the West. To accomplish this goal, extremist organizations and their leaders "hijack" Islam by misinterpreting the texts based on judicial opinions to support their ongoing calls for violence.[102] Yet, Allah explicitly forbids killing and promotes saving lives in the following verse:

> *"...if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind..."[103]*

In her book, *The Path to Salvation: Religious Violence from the Crusades to Jihad*, Heather Gregg highlights the general misconception that specific passages in sacred scriptures promote religiously motivated violence. She states that sacred scriptures have existed for centuries, but violent acts in the name of faith occur at some time, not always. Instead, according to Gregg, it is the interpretations of scriptures and doctrines fuel religious violence, not the scriptures and doctrines themselves.[104]

The Christian "just war" doctrine and the Islamic jurisprudence for warfare are important concepts in understanding theologians and jurists' roles in legitimating religious violence. Gregg also argues that several variables such as social and political circumstances can underlie religious violence. Hence, investigating secular reasons behind religious leaders' interpretations for

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[102] Esposito, John L. *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), 20-23.
[103] Koran, 5:32.
[104] Gregg, Heather Selma. *The Path to Salvation: Religious Violence from the Crusades to Jihad*. (Potomac Books, Inc., 2014),19-23.

religiously motivated violence is crucial to understand that so-called holy wars occur some of the time but are not always to blame in instances of violence. To illustrate, both the U.S.' desire for spreading democracy to the Muslim world and the rise of globalization, which caused cultural and economic inequality, present social, political, and economic circumstances that threaten religious organizations. Those religious groups' reactions often incite violent acts around the globe.[105]

4.2 Political Conflicts Underlying So-Called Holy Wars

Religion's intention is not violence, as seen in sacred scriptures, yet as a result of its association with politics and cultures, religious authorities can cause violent acts. The Papacy used religion as a driving force to launch the Crusades because there were not another suitable tools, other than religion, to unite Westerners due to political unrest in Medieval Europe. During his sermons, the Pope presented the Seljuk Turks as a barbarian race who had seized lands from the empire of Byzantium. Therefore, the Pope urged Europeans to stop fighting each other and instead get united to wage war against enemies of God. He also added that killing them was a holy act and it was a Christian duty to exterminate Turks from Christian lands.[106]

As heard the Pope's preaching, the main goal of the Crusades was to eliminate the Turks who were attacking the Christian empire of Byzantium. The political and economic power shift from Christians to both Muslims and Turks caused the Pope to drive warriors to battle. In this scenario, the Pope created religious nationalism. With both the politicization of religion and the Church's influence on politics, the Church ceased wars between kingdoms in Medieval Europe by making common cause against "enemies of God." There were two distinct liberating goals

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[105] Ibid., 26-29.
[106] Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), 3-4.

underlying the Pope's declaration of war: to free eastern churches, particularly the church of Jerusalem, from Muslims, and to succeed the liberation of people who were the Church's baptized members.[107]

Similarly, the growing Islamic influence in the Arabian Peninsula and the Turks' invasions in Anatolia both posed a devastating threat to the existence of the Roman empire. In the same way, during the papacy of Urban II, the Byzantium Empire was losing power. As head of the Christian world, Urban II's duty was to protect the Roman Empire by providing military assistance. Otherwise, the Pope would not have upheld his title and status as the guardian of the Christian world; thus, jeopardizing his position.

In line with the duty of regulating recruitment, the Church had authority and control over the crusaders. The papacy empowered local priests to enforce the fulfilment of vows.[108] The threat of excommunication, of course, was a suitable instrument that the Church held against potential recruits. In Medieval Europe, excommunication could have ranged from restricting certain rights to suspending membership in a congregation or the Church as a whole. The Papacy, especially Pope Gregory, threatened kings and lords with excommunication for his own territorial ambitions.[109]

Politics and the governmental system have been a source of pressure for the Islamic world. In today's society, most Muslim states are still seeking liberation — as seen in the Arab Spring in 2010 — while the rest have adopted the Islamic regime. In pre-Islamic Arabia, Arabs had no central political organization or administration. There were small Arab kingdoms with some variation of governmental structure, yet outside powers such as the Byzantine and Sasanian

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107 Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades: A History*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 61.
108 Ibid., 112.
109 Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), 424.

empires held these kingdoms under their protection or patronage.[110] Arabs were living in tribal

systems that tied them with kinship. The post-Islamic settlement changed tribal solidarity.

Prophet Muhammad became a political and religious leader of the Islamic State, and fulfilled

Muslims' inquiry regarding governmental, religious, economic, and diplomatic affairs. Thus,

Prophet Muhammad's authority was extraordinarily important for his followers. He was both a

political leader and the prophet of God. To disagree with him could have been challenging God

Himself.[111] It is not to say that the Prophet was a dictator, yet Muslims' obedience to the ruler

might spring from tradition in which the early Muslims obeyed the prophet.

After the death of the Prophet, Muslims faced many problems in terms of leadership.

They asked: Who should be the leader of the Islamic State? and what qualifications and power

should a leader have?[112] Disagreements about how to interpret religion caused division and

disintegration within Muslims. Hence, different schools of jurisprudence and sectarian groups

entered in the Islamic world. Muslims have repeatedly differed in terms of interpreting the

Koran, the Sunnah, and jurists' opinions.[113] On the one hand, the early Muslims' political and

constitutional concerns fueled civil war. On the other hand, God considers all Muslims as

brothers and asks them to reach a settlement in cases of conflict, as seen in the following verse:

> *"The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear*
>
> *Allah that you may receive mercy."[114]*

Arabs had no central political organization in the pre-Islamic era. The Prophet

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[110] Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and The Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from The Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. (Routledge, 2016), 14.
[111] Ibid., 40.
[112] Ibid., 43.
[113] Charles, Kimball. *When Religion Becomes Evil: Five Warning* Signs. (HarperCollins e-books, 2008), 52.
[114] Koran, 49:10.

established the Islamic State within a political system, yet he did not intervene in choosing the Muslims' next leader. After the four major caliphates, conflicts between Muslims escalated over the issue of leadership. When political figures could not find justifications in Islam's sources, they appointed jurists designing the logic of war.

During the Crusades, the Islamic jurists played a critical role in reforming the philosophy of war, namely jihad. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the jurists reformed the concept of jihad and warfare. Although the Koranic meaning of jihad is an internal and spiritual struggle, it has become physical and violent version. As such, the notion of jihad has become an individual "terrorist" act by extremist militant organizations in the modern world.

4.3 Jihad as an Ideology of Terrorism in Today's World

Political interests and ambitions have been main reasons underlying the reformation of jihad. Considering that extremist militant organizations have taken the concept of jihad to another level, it is possible to argue that religion is an excellent tool for abuse. Yet, analyzing extremist groups' discourses and actions demonstrates that political motivations govern their violent acts.

Al-Qaeda is a well-known radical organization throughout world. Osama bin Laden is a world-famous radial Islamist and was the organizer of the 9/11 attacks, which demolished the World Trade Center, severely damaged the Pentagon, and caused the death of thousands in the United States. Bin Laden's political awakening dates back to 1973, when an American airlift guaranteed Israeli victory over Syria and Egypt in the Yom Kippur War, and Saudi Arabia's king imposed an oil embargo on the West. Besides, during Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, bin Laden offered his service in defending the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against Iraqi troops, yet the Saudi royal family invited American and other Western states' troops into the Land of the Two

Holy Sanctuaries instead.[115] The royal family's cooperation with the West created bin Laden's "*jihadist*" ideology and hostility toward the West.

The Anglo-American invasion of Iraq created a fruitful recruitment era for bin Laden. By referencing Winston Churchill's use of poison gas in Iraq in the 1920s, France's colonial war in Algeria in the1950s, and many Westerns invasions and murders in the region, bin Laden made an inference that "we must kill. Your innocents are not less innocent than ours."[116] To justify his cruel ideology of killing innocent people, bin Laden reformed *jihad* as an individual act and used it against "nonbelievers." When he was declaring a global jihad against the West in 1996, he held the Judeo-Christian world and their allies responsible for the oppression, injustice, hostility, and massacres in the Islamic states — but political unrest and monarchy in the region.[117] Stateless terrorist groups including al-Qaeda utilize religion to legitimate their cause. Bin Laden did not have a national identity because his citizenship was revoked by Saudi Arabia, so he used Islam to recruit followers and justify violence.

In his letter to the Ummah (the people of Islam), he referenced the Koran, hadith, and Islamic scholars' jurisprudence of war to call Muslim brothers across the world to wage war against the enemies of God, namely the Israelis and Americans.[118] By the end of September 2001, the U.S., alongside British and French air supports, launched a military operation on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for not delivering bin Laden to American justice. As a counterattack, bin Laden once called Muslims to rise up and defend Islam, and threatened

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[115] Lawrence, Bruce, ed. *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden*. (London: Verso, 2005), 10-13.
[116] Ibid.,117.
[117] Ibid.,41.
[118] Ibid., 46.

Americans with death.[119] At every opportunity, he attempted to drag all Muslims into so-called

global jihad. In his speech, he pointed out that the battle was not between the al-Qaeda

organization and the global Crusaders but between all Muslims and the global Crusaders.[120]

However, when thoroughly analyzing his speech, there is no significant evidence

demonstrating religious motivation. On the contrary, radical organizations more deeply engage

in political causes. Bin Laden's pride and desire for territory invaded by imperial powers were

the main causes underlying his hatred and hostilities toward the West; hence, his organization

mainly targeted the lifestyle of secular. Islamist organizations target not only political and

economic power structures such as embassies, but also other centers of secular life such as

shopping malls, cruise boats, and coffeehouses.[121] To illustrate, the September 11 attacks on the

Twin Towers, which were symbols of the capitalist system and the West's superiority,

demonstrate how the militant group under bin Laden's command targeted secular buildings, not

religious ones.

In his writings, bin Laden target Jewish and Christian enemies, and he argues that

political negotiation or religious dialogue cannot be methods for answering to enemies. On the

contrary, the proper Islamic answer to enemies should be violence and "holy wars" organized by

Islamic clergies.[122] Moreover, his statements often referenced many scholars who lived between

the 7th and 13th centuries to justify terrorism, yet these scholars' judicial opinions were

influenced by either political leaders or the Crusades in their time. In this way, bin Laden has put

Islam in jeopardy by using antiquated doctrines of warfare.

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[119] Ibid., 120-122.
[120] Ibid., 125.
[121] Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Vol. 13. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2017), 72.
[122] Selengut, Charles. *Sacred fury: Understanding Religious Violence*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 40.

4.4 The Expansion of Territory Through So-Called Holy Wars

Western European Christians might have considered the Crusades as a holy act and spiritual way to accomplish God's will, yet economic and territorial interests played a critical role in the Crusades as well. The primary goals of the Crusades were to cease Muslims' conquests into Christian lands and to reconquer lands that Muslims had already captured such as Jerusalem.

Archeological work confirms that the Arabian Peninsula had a number of gold and silver mines, and the Arabs had extensive mining operations from the 5th century to the early Abbasid period (750-1517)[123] Considering that most conflicts, even today, result from a search for raw materials and territory, gold and silver mines in the region would have been an intolerable temptation for the Crusaders.

The Arabian Peninsula had a significant geopolitical position for trades until Europeans discovered alternative trade routes at the beginning of the 15th century. The Roman Empire was gaining a significant amount of revenue from its trades of spices, perfumes, and other high-value luxury goods from the Indian Ocean basin.[124] Yet, the Byzantine empire encountered financial issues due to prolonged wars and power-shift in trade routes. The Islamic state's conquest of the Roman empire's vital cities such as Jerusalem and Damascus further undermined the economy of the Christian Empire.

Christian kingdoms in Europe waged wars to annihilate Arabs in Spain, whereas the Byzantine Empire was at wars with Muslims for controlling Anatolia. Looking deeper into these wars, nations were fighting to expand their territory. Muslim moves against Christian territory

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[123] Ibid.,20.
[124] Kennedy, Hugh. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. (Routledge, 2016), 19.

and nomads' raids deep into Byzantine Armenia were major provocations that resulted in conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the 11th century. When the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantine army at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, Anatolia became a vulnerable region where the Turkman nomads could settle.[125] In response, the Pope declared the First Crusade to aid the Byzantium Empire and regain control of territory that Muslims had conquered.

However, the preparation of the Crusades was expensive, and crusaders needed funds. To provide resources for military expeditions, the Pope had a directing power to impose the high rate of taxation on individuals, lords, and kings.[126] Feudalism, which the king possessed all the land and parceled out to lords in exchange for their political supports, might have led unprivileged Europeans to participate in the Crusades. For warriors, victory was not always the triumph of virtue. It could also mean the rewards of plunder and booty.[127] It is not to say that all the Crusaders participated in military expeditions because they were land hungers, yet looting was also a motive behind the Crusades. After the Crusaders reconquered Jerusalem, Christians controlled the Muslims' pilgrims' routes. Hence, many Christians attacked the rich Muslim caravans and killed Muslims who were making pilgrims.[128]

In terms of economic and territorial gains, the Crusades did not only attack Muslims but also other Christian denominations and the Jews. Take the sack of Constantinople, as an example, which the Franks attacked the Christian Greeks and plundered the city during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The Crusaders stole the ancient Greek-Roman relic collection, raped

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[125] Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades: A History*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 56.
[126] Ibid., 287.
[127] Esposito, John L. *Unholy war: Terror in the Name of Islam*. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2002), 7.
[128] Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), 244.

nuns, and killed innocents during the sack of the city.[129] There is no religious motivation behind the crusaders' violent acts, but territorial and economic gains.

The concept of *razzia* (raid) had been deemed normal and acceptable for the Arabs since the Pre-Islamic period. The Arabs believed that a tribe could make raids on an enemy tribe if it was for the essentials of life.[130] The Arab's tradition of looting became justified with the Islamic State.

As a reaction to the Crusades, the classical Muslim jurists developed a warfare doctrine, which created a significant division between Islamic and non-Islamic houses. In the latter, infidels were ruling the territory; therefore, waging war against inhabitants within territory was permissible until the entire land either adopted Islam as faith or submitted to Muslim rule.[131] The enthusiasm for jihad was in demand among the early Muslims, so they attacked the House of War (*Dar al-Harb*), namely Christian territory for rewards in both worlds. Muslims who fight in jihad deserve to collect booty as reward in this world. Besides, the Koranic verses, 22:58-59, promise paradise to those of Muslims who emigrated and killed or died for the cause of God. Given that, the Islamic jurists and rulers kept the doctrine of jihad alive by preaching that the jihad meant both the attractiveness of martyrdom for paradise and the more tangible rewards such as booty and plunder.[132]

Take the battle of Uhud as an example, which the Prophet had instructed a group of Muslim archers to take up their position on a hill to hinder enemy attacks from the rear. However, the Muslim army managed to break the enemy lines, and the way of enemy camps was

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129 Ibid., 386-387.
130 Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. (Anchor, 2001), 34.
131 Lewis, Bernard. The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror. (The Modern Library, New York, 2003), 38.
132 Laïu-Thōmadakē, Angelikē E. *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*. (Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 39.

open. Hence, there was a rush to loot the belongings of the enemies fleeing the war. When the

chosen archers saw their fellows about to enrich themselves with enemy booty, most of the

archers left their position for plundering.[133] Such disobedience of the chosen archers

demonstrates how a desire for booty motivated Muslims, and so they violated the Prophet's

command.

The Crusades and the Islamic State's expansion deep into lands were formal military

actions, yet those wars mostly described as "religious wars." However, the primary goals of

Christians and Muslims were very worldly such as resources, the expansion of trade routes, and

territory. Religious difference played a critical role in providing a justification of war and in

recruiting thousands of warriors.[134] Religious authorities abused faith for their worldly

ambitious. Competition for territory and a desire for controlling trade routes escalated economic

and political tensions between Muslims and Christians in the Middle Age. Thus, the so-called

holy wars fueled outbursts of violence targeting civilians and caused bloody massacres —

although God of the Book of People forbids the murder of innocents.

4.5 Psychological Motivations Behind So-Called Holy Wars

Religious violence has mostly been associated with scriptures and specific theological

issues. However, in addition to abused scriptures and earthly motivations, psychological reasons

might have caused the so-called holy wars.

The psychological perspective analyzes violence by dealing with anger, envy, and

frustration. Psychological theorists argue that the accumulated aggression, jealousy, and friction

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[133] Lings, Martin. *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources*. (London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983), 181-183.
[134] Catlos, Brian A. *Infidel Kings and Unholy Warriors: Faith, Power, and Violence in the Age of Crusade and Jihad*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, (2014), 325.

within any society must find an outlet. Otherwise, internal conflict and rivalry would destroy the group itself. Those blindly involved in religious wars are unaware of the psychological motivations driving them into battles; hence, they both maintain and provoke a specific holy struggle.[135] Put bluntly, "so-called" holy wars against rivals were a way of revealing the propensity for violence.

Consider, for example, the Medieval Europeans suffered from internal conflicts and rivalry among kingdoms, the Crusades were the best way to get rid of Christians' aggression and anger. In order to save the Christian world from the political conflicts in Europe, which jeopardized both social order and tax collection, Pope Urban II created the concept of "holy war" against outsiders, mostly Muslims and Turks.

As mentioned in Selengut's book, Rene Girard highlights the importance of religious institutions for well-being of society because religion can defuse people's anger and aggression by providing ritual sacrifice. Thus, religion encourages the expression of controlled anger and aggression, yet one cannot inflict violence on a member of the same faith.[136]

Girard sees violence as a result of envy and jealousy and calls it "mimetic desire," which is the wish to trade places with others.[137] Considering that the Islamic State flourished economically, scientifically, and culturally during the Golden Age of Islam, lasting between the 8th and 14th centuries. Christians struggling with economic collapse may have seen the Islamic State as an ideal, powerful, and wealthy state. Such mimetic desire may have been one of the driving motivations for Christians to launch the Crusades in order to eliminate and destroy the Islamic State.

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[135] Selengut, Charles. *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 49.
[136] Ibid., 51-52.
[137] Ibid.,53.

Similarly, radical Islamist organizations' terrorist attacks in the West can result from mimetic desire as well. Members of such terrorist organizations mostly target secular life symbols such as politics and economics in the West because their own national states have not achieved political stability nor economic independence.

Bin Laden's discourses and writings are concrete examples demonstrating how radical Islamists nourish hatred and aggression towards Westerners and Americans. Considering that most Muslim states have been under the authority of despotic leaders, Muslims in the region would seek to flee their countries to inhabit liberal and wealthy Western states.

Charismatic leadership is an instrument that can motivate and encourage followers to participate in violent acts. Through persuasion, eloquence, or brainwashing, a charismatic leader can even cause a "revolutionary suicide." Charismatic leaders differ from other leaders because they can formulate and articulate an inspirational vision. Besides, such these leaders consider that their existence and mission are extraordinary. By establishing a "collective identity," they increase the possibility that followers would engage in both "self-sacrificial" and "cooperative behaviors" to achieve the mission.[138]

Charismatic leadership has been a driving force in wars. The direction of charismatic religious leaders — or the ecclesiastical leadership — played a significant role in "holy wars." The ecclesiastical leadership occurs in all belief systems, and such this leadership considers itself as God's representative on earth. Hence, ecclesiastical leaders are entrusted to fulfill the divine mandate.[139] It is possible to claim that Pope Urban II had a charismatic leadership because he

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[138] Conger, Jay A., Rabindra N. Kanungo, and Sanjay T. Menon. "Charismatic Leadership and Follower Effects." *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior* 21, no. 7 (2000): 747-767. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/1099-1379(200011)21:7%3C747::AID-JOB46%3E3.0.CO;2-J

[139] Selengut, Charles. *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 211.

inspired and convinced the Christian world to fight against Muslims.

Likewise, Saladin, *Defeater of the Crusaders*, was a charismatic leader as well because he defeated Christians. After reconquering Jerusalem, Saladin had gained legendary status among Muslims and Christians. European painters and poets' sympathetic works portraying Saladin demonstrate Saladin's influence on Western tradition. Alongside Saladin, other Muslim leaders, such as the Mamluk sultan Baybars and Nur ad-Din emerged as a charismatic leader, by uniting and motivating Muslims against the Crusaders [140]

The Pope and other Muslim leaders, primarily Saladin, had psychological and emotional influence on followers in their time. Hence, charismatic leadership enabled them to declare war and mobilize the masses.

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[140] Riley-Smith, Jonathan. *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*. (Columbia University Press, NY, 2008), 64.

Conclusion

We must conclude that religion exists and still has a notable influence on society. Despite the fact that most belief systems regard violence as an immoral and unfair act, politicians, intellectuals, scholars, and the mainstream media continually associate the concept of religion with violence in the contemporary world. It is beyond dispute that terrorist attacks conducted by extremist religious organizations have played a significant role in creating a stereotype that religion promotes violence. Accordingly, the phenomenon of religious violence received the most attention among scholars after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. And so, the amount of literature regarding religious violence reached its peak. Countless scholars view religion as a threat to the modern world due to its absolutist and divisive structures, whereas some social science scholars, such as William Cavanaugh, view the phenomenon as a "myth."

Religion and violence are two mutually exclusive concepts, with neither a direct nor definite correlation between them. Nevertheless, most people argue that religion has acted as the main catalyst for several significant violent acts spanning history, including the Crusades during the Medieval period and jihadist movements in the modern era. As a result, religion has become the go-to motive when explaining or promoting violence in the context of religious beliefs.

There is no concrete evidence in the basic teachings of religion that bluntly justifies and encourages violence. On the contrary, religion evokes sincerity, hope, salvation, justice, peace, and compassion. Hence, those who argue that religion is a source of violence refer to Christian and Muslim war traditions. Historically, the Crusades and jihad respectively rely on the myth of

religious violence, and religious authorities intended to excuse violent acts during "holy wars" by developing religious doctrines like "just war." On both sides, Christian and Muslim mainstream figures incorporated the religious concepts of the crusades and jihad in war propaganda to justify initiated and returned violence without reference to subsequent causes.

Secular motivations, such as politics and territorial expansion, were largely behind religious warfare in the Christian and Islamic traditions, yet these belief systems were hijacked by clergymen to recruit followers and justify violence.

The strengthening of the Islamic state in Jerusalem and the ensuing transition of power in the region caused the emergence of a new politics based on holy wars. Although Jesus and the early Christian community' principles evoked peace, pacifist tendency, valuing others, and sharing with those in need, violence entered the Christian tradition after it became the state religion of Rome. When Christians refused to participate in the army, the Church exploited religious doctrines to support political and economic interests of the state. It is challenging to know whether or not the Church under the Roman Empire falsified the biblical manuscripts.

Yet, it is explicit that pre-medieval theologians, such as the bishop of Hippo Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, played a critical role in developing the doctrine of the "just war." Within the "just war" theory, theologians concluded that Christians should resort to violence when they could not resolve conflicts through peaceful methods. Besides, the "divine" authority of the empire had the right to initiate war. The theory of "just war" enabled sovereign authority to declare war, namely wars became permissible in the Christian world. And so, the moral theory of the just war determined the criteria that provide satisfaction in inciting violence.

The Crusades are so-called religiously motivated military movements that occurred in the Medieval period. Pope Urban II addressed the crowd of clergy and people for launching the

Crusades to reconquer Christian lands from Muslims in the beginning of the 11ᵗʰ century. With the legacy and influence of the Church, fanatic-Christian Europeans marched to recapture holy lands for pilgrimage. Eventually, they committed massacres of the Muslims, Jews, and even other sects of Christians on their journey. Therefore, it is hard to answer Steven Runciman's question: "Were the crusades the most glorious and romantic of the Christian adventures, or of the last barbarian invasions of the medieval period?"

Warfare in the Islamic tradition is also a challenging task because the origin of the term Islam derives from the Arabic root *s-l-m,* which means "submission" or "peace." The concept of submission reflects Muslims who surrender to God's will or law and render peace between themselves and God. Although the main sources of Islam, primarily the Koran and Sunnah, infuse believers with general moral instructions and values, Islam has become a religion that most people associate with both violence and terrorism in recent years. Allah permitted the early Muslims to fight when wars were inevitable as self-defense. Yet, Koranic verses encourage believers neither war of aggression nor resorting to violence.

The Arabic word *harb* is the general term for defining war, but jihad is a well-known concept referring to warfare these days. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks and suicide bombs in the West, most Western politicians, scholars, and the media have associated the term jihad with violent-based modern warfare. Moreover, the West's perception of jihad is "holy war," yet there is not a single Koranic verse associating jihad with holy war. Terminologically, jihad comes from the root of Arabic word *jahada* that means to strive or to exert efforts.

However, as it occurred in the Christian tradition, classical Islamist jurists developed a new version of jihad and divided the world into two parts: *Dar al-Harb* (House of War) and *Dar al Islam* (the house of Islam). In the Islamic law of jihad, *Dar al-Harb* is the concept that the

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early Muslim scholars used to specify non-Muslim lands. According to them, Muslims' obligation to the Islamic state was to wage war against non-Muslim nations until they become part of the Islamist state.

After the Islamic expansion to non-Muslim lands increased, there was a requirement to justify the war in the early Islamic period. Therefore, the earliest Islamic jurists, such as Al'Shaybani, Al-Mawardi, and Al-Sulami, played a significant role in establishing criteria, justice measures, and warriors' code in war. With "Shari'a reasoning," the early Islamic jurists transformed the concept of jihad in the development of the Islamic law to justify warfare. Moreover, jurists' preoccupations presented jihad as an individual duty, which they consider the duty of fighting as the sixth pillar of Islam.

In the last two decades, jihad became a notion that radical Islamist organizations had adopted to legitimize their hatred and hostility against the West. Contrary to Islamic law and the verses of peace and tolerance in the Koran, contemporary jihadist movements organize suicide attacks killing innocent people. Radical organizations mainly target structures representing the West's political and secular life such as embassies and shopping malls, which demonstrates the fact that the motivation behind their cruel attacks is ideology, not religious. Nevertheless, religion became a scapegoat that people regard as a source of the violence.

However, religion was not the sole purpose of the Crusades and jihad as in response to the Christian world. Religious reasons, such as the reclamation of holy lands, the desire to end Islamic sovereignty in the region, and securing pilgrimage routes, were only the tip of the iceberg. Instead, worldly and secular motivations were the driving force behind these so-called holy wars. Lack of knowledge about theology and scriptures, political and economic interests of the church, the Muslim desire for world domination, and other psychological and ideological

reasons spurred conflicts between Muslims and Christians. Likewise, differing viewpoints and subsequent othering both lent to extremist organizations' outbursts of violence largely targeting civilians.

Both the New Testament and the Koran aim to establish peace as a core teaching. The general misconception that specific passages or verses of the holy books promote violence result from misinterpreting the scriptures and doctrines of religion. The Christian "just war" and the Islamic jurisprudence of warfare are concrete examples that demonstrate how theologians could justify violence by using religion.

The Papacy used religion as a driving force to launch the Crusades because there were not another suitable tools, other than religion, to unite Westerners due to political unrest in Medieval Europe. The primary goal of the Crusades was to eliminate the Turks who were attacking the Christian empire of Byzantium. The political and economic power shift from Christians to both the Muslims and Turks caused the Pope to drive warriors to battle. The growing Islamic influence in the Arabian Peninsula and the Turks' invasions in Anatolia both posed a devastating threat to the existence of the Roman empire. In line with the duty of regulating recruitment, the Church had authority and control over the crusaders.

Contrary to those who have sympathy for the Crusades because it was a holy act and spiritual way to accomplish God's will, economic and territorial interests played a critical role in the Crusades. The Arabian Peninsula had a significant geopolitical position for trades, and Muslims controlled trade routes. The Islamic state's conquest of the Roman empire's vital cities such as Jerusalem and Damascus further undermined the economy of the Christian Empire. Looking deeper into so-called holy wars, nations were fighting to expand their territory.

The Islamic state's expansion deep into lands were formal military actions, yet those wars mostly described as "religious wars." However, the primary goals of Christians and Muslims were very worldly such as resources, the expansion of trade routes, and territory. Religious difference played a critical role in providing a justification of war and in recruiting thousands of warriors.

Because the psychological perspective analyzes violence through the lens of anger, envy, and frustration, psychological reasons could have motivated believers for wars. According to psychological theorists, the grown aggression, jealousy, and friction within any society must find an outlet. Those blindly involved in religious wars are unaware of the psychological motivations driving them into battles; hence, they both maintain and provoke a specific holy struggle. Put bluntly, "so-called" holy wars against rivals were a way of revealing the propensity for violence.

As Rene Girard states, "mimetic desire" (envy and jealousy) can be sources of violence. The Islamic State flourished economically, scientifically, and culturally during the Golden Age of Islam, lasting between the 8th and 14th centuries. Hence, Christians struggling with economic collapse may have seen the Islamic State as an ideal, powerful, and wealthy state. Similarly, radical Islamist organizations' terrorist attacks in the West could have been the result of mimetic desire as well. Members of such terrorist organizations typically target symbols of secular life, such as politics and economics, in the West because their own national states have not achieved political stability nor economic independence. Such these mimetic desires psychologically can impact humans and drive them in resorting to violence.

Charismatic leadership is also an instrument that can motivate and encourage followers to participate in violent acts. Through persuasion, eloquence, or brainwashing, a charismatic leader can even cause so-called holy wars. By establishing a "collective identity," they increase the

possibility that followers would engage in both "self-sacrificial" and "cooperative behaviors" to achieve the mission. Therefore, both Christians and Muslims went to battle without any hesitations.

As seen, secular and worldly motivations, abusing and misinterpreting sacred scriptures, desire for expanding territory, political disagreements, psychological reasons, and charismatic leadership are all factors that have lent to so-called "holy wars" in the past. Consequently, the claim that religion promotes violence is not factual but just a myth. Analyzing the early religious theologians' judicial opinions demonstrate how religious violence is a human-made concept, not God-willed commands. To resolve any possible conflicts between different religious groups in the future, political negotiations and religious dialogue between authority figures would be the best solution. Moreover, simply arguing that religion promotes violence would simply fuel conflicts rather than inspire resolutions. Therefore, those who rely on literary analyses can approach religion as a universal truth that aims to establish peace not war.

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