

HOW ETHNIC CIVIL WAR TRANSFORMS INTO RELIGIOUS CIVIL WAR: EVIDENCE FROM CHECHNYA

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Abstract

Many studies have proved that civil war in which religion is central issue is bloodier and longer than civil war in which religion is peripheral issue. Yet, few studies try to analyze how religion can transform Ethnic Civil War with religious divides into Religious Civil War, especially when the rebels identify themselves as Muslims. Currently, there are two conventional arguments on factors transforming ethnic civil war into religious civil war: the structural and the mobilization explanation. Using the Chechen war as a case study, this paper finds that the structural explanation failed to explain how ethnic civil war where religion is peripheral issue transforms into religious civil war where religion is central issue. While the mobilization explanation can only partially explain the Chechen civil wars it cannot answer the question how the ethnic civil war turns to religious civil war. The evidence clearly suggests that the involvement of transnational religious actors in the form of foreign fighters is the main factor that transforms ethnic civil war with religious divides into religious civil war.

Keywords: religion, Islam, transnational religious actors, Chechen Civil War.

Introduction

Many scholars have tried to examine the relation between religion and civil war, particularly since religious-based civil wars have been increasingly common throughout the world. Overall, between 1940 and 2000, there were 133 civil wars out of which one-third can be classified as religious-based civil wars.¹ After 2000, 50% (7 out of 14) of the on-going civil wars can be classified as religious-based civil wars.²

Another thing that should be noted in the relationship between religion and the dynamic of civil war is the disproportionate role of Islam and Christianity in civil wars. From all thirty two cases of interreligious civil wars, Islam was involved in 25 wars (78%) and Christianity was involved in 22 civil wars (69%). Moreover, half of the interreligious civil wars occurring from 1940 to 2000 were wars between groups which identified themselves with either Islam or Christianity. Civil war is twice more

1 Monica Toft, "Religion, Civil War, and International Order", *BCSIA Discussion Paper* 03 (2006), 1-37.

2 *Ibid.*, 4.

likely to occur when the rebels identify themselves as Muslim and the dominant state religion is Christianity.³

Though religious-based civil wars have increased in number over time, many civil war literatures have found that religion does provoke civil war.⁴ Explanatory variables such as ethnicity along with socio-economic factors are still better in explaining the cause of civil war.⁵ It is widely accepted that religion does not cause civil war. Yet many studies have found that in ethnic civil war with religious divides between the conflicting parties, religion has an effect on the dynamic of the civil war, either in intensifying the war or prolonging the duration of the war.⁶ Furthermore, the civil war becomes deadlier and longer if the civil war has transformed into condition where religion is a central issue.⁷

Therefore, it is clear that religion is unlikely to cause civil war with religious divides; rather, factors such as ethnic differences along with socio-economic factors are still better in explaining the causes of a particular civil war. However, by the time that the civil war is in the progress, religion has an effect on the dynamic of civil war by transforming the civil war in which religion is the peripheral issue into the civil war in which religion is central issue.

The above discussion leads us to the question of how separatist or ethnic civil wars in which religion is peripheral issue, can be transform into religious civil wars in which religion becomes a central issue. For instance why did civil wars in Bosnia and Kosovo stay as ethnic civil wars while civil wars in Chechnya, Kashmir, and Ethiopia were transformed into religious civil wars? Moreover, given the fact that civil war is twice more likely to occur when the rebels identify themselves as Muslim, it is important to understand how ethnic civil war with Muslims as a rebel group tends to transform into religious civil war. Therefore the key question is: how does religion become a central issue in ethnic civil wars with religious divides whereas in others it

3 See Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Monica Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (2007), 97-131.

4 Jonathan Fox, "The Rise of Religious Nationalism and Conflict: Ethnic Conflict and Revolutionary Wars, 1945-2001," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 6 (2004), 715-731.

5 Kraue Volker and Susumu Suzuki, "Causes of Civil War in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa: A Comparison," *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (2005), 160-177.

6 Susanna Pearce, "Religious Rage: A Quantitative Analysis of the Intensity of Religious Conflicts," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17, no. 3 (2005), 333-352.

7 See Andrej Tuscisny, "Civilizational Conflicts: More Frequent, Longer, and Bloodier?" *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 4 (2004): 485-498; Phillip Roeder, "Clash of Civilizations and Escalation of Domestic Ethnopolitical Conflicts," *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 5 (2003), 509-540; Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel, Repression and Resistance in the Islamic world* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).

does not, especially when the rebels identify themselves as Muslims? By answering this question, the paper seeks to address a gap in the civil war literature regarding the factors transforming ethnic civil war into religious civil war which remains underdeveloped. It is necessary for scholars to provide an explanation for a causal mechanism on how non-religious civil wars can evolve into religious civil war and understanding this transformation would be the first step for policy makers to deal with this kind of problem in the near future.

Using the Chechen civil wars as a case study, this paper argues that both the structural and mobilization explanations fail in explaining how civil war with religious divides transforms into religious civil war. Furthermore, it is argued that the spread of *Salafi-jihadist* ideology via the involvement of transnational actors is the main factor that transforms civil war with religious divides into religious civil war.

Defining Central Terms

Religion

Before a further discussion on the topic, several terms used in this paper should be clarified. The first term that should be clarified is religion. Though this term is widely used in many scholarly works ranging from sociology to psychology, few scholars agree on the definition of religion. Theology scholars define religion as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude; so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”⁸ However, this definition of religion seems comprehensive yet too personal. This article uses a sociologist’s definition of religion by looking at three primary aspects of religion in order to define religion. The first aspect is religion as a belief system. Unlike other belief systems, religion has powerful doctrinal prepositions that shape society’s world view.⁹ Through its powerful doctrinal preposition, religion can create a strong social commitment among the adherents. Thus, people tend to form a more closed group based on religious belief. The second aspect is religion as identity. Not only does religion serve as a belief system in society, it can also be an essential part of identity formation for a society. In some societies, religion becomes the prime factor in determining identity along with ethnicity. The term ‘ethno-religious group’, in which ethnic groups define their identity as a combination of ancestral heritage and religious affiliation shows how important

8 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 31.

9 Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967).

religion is in forming identity.¹⁰ Religion as an identity is entirely different with religion as a belief system. People can identify themselves as a member of particular religious group despite the lack of commitment on its particular belief system. As a belief system, religion can be politicized by some groups which make religion become a political ideology. The third aspect is religion as an institution.¹¹ Many religious study scholars confirm that to some extent, religious belief systems transform into some sort of institution.¹² According to Durkheim, religion is not only a unified system of beliefs and practices but also unites adherents into a single moral community such as a church.¹³ However, though the world's religions, especially the Abrahamic faiths, tend to have their own religious institution, they have different degrees of institutionalism. For example, unlike the Roman Catholic Church and Shia Islam, which have an ecclesiae institution with formal bureaucratic structure, in many other religions such as Protestantism and Sunni Islam, idiosyncratic factors play an important part in religious institutions. Therefore, the traits of individual religious leaders have a significant role in religious institutions.

It should be noted that in this paper, the term 'religious institution' refers to formal institutional organization that represents the religion in the given time and place. It does not refer to social institutions such as marriages or family. This institution might be the more formal religious institution such as the Catholic Church or Mufti Council. In religion with less complex organization and formal bureaucratic structure, the religious institution might refer to religious community with some informal hierarchical structure lead by individual religious leaders who have a significant role in the society such as charismatic Imam or Priest.

Religious Divides

Another important term used in this article is religious divide. In the civil war literature, religious divides, religious polarization and religious difference are sometimes used interchangeably. This article prefers to use religious divides to refer the divisions among society, where the conflicting parties adhere to different

10 Jonathan Fox, "Religion and State Failure: An Examination of the Extent and Magnitude of Religious Conflict from 1950 to 1996," *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 1 (2004), 55-76.

11 Kristian B. Harpviken and Hanne E. Røislien, *Mapping the Terrain: The Role of Religion in Peacemaking*, (Oslo: PRIO Working Papers, 2005) [database on-line]: Available at:http://www.prio.no/files/file46875_mapping_the_terrain_stateofheartpaper__jul05_.pdf, last accessed on 29 June 2012.

12 Hervé Carrier, *The Sociology of Religious Belonging* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965).

13 Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of religious life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 56.

religious tradition or identity.¹⁴ In other words, religious divides as used in this article refers to identity-based division in which religion become one part of the constitutive identity among the groups. In this case, there is a religious divide when the two parties maintain separate religious identities.

Civil War

The term internal conflict encompasses situations ranging from communal violence to civil war. Yet many scholars use the term internal conflict interchangeably with intra-state conflict, civil war, or internal violence. However, civil war is different from other types of internal conflict since there are some requirements to defining conflict as a war. In this paper, I will use definition provided by the Correlates of War (COW) Project to define civil war. According to COW, internal conflict can be defined as a civil war if the focus of the war is to gain control over which the winning party would govern as the political unit. Secondly, there must be at least two groups of organized combatants where the state was one of the combatants. Thirdly, there must be at least 1000 battle deaths per year on average and the ratio of total deaths must be, at least, 95% to 5%, meaning the stronger side had to have suffered at least 5% of the casualties.¹⁵

Religious Civil War

In this article, the term religious-based civil war is used to refer to civil wars with the presence of a religious divides in which the conflicting parties have different religion or denomination. However, this term is very broad and includes civil wars in which ethnicity is sometimes defined by religious identity¹⁶. Moreover, religion might have nothing to do as a cause of the conflict between parties that belong to different religions. In fact, conflict between parties who belong to different religions may be caused exclusively by political or economic issues. Hence, there must be a rigid definition on what should be called religious civil war. Monica Toft classified religious-based civil war into two categories; civil war in which either religious belief or practice is a central issue, and a civil war in which it is a peripheral issue in the conflict. According to Toft, to determine whether religion is central in civil war, one need to look at whether “the state or a rebel region would be ruled

14 Jo Lindberg, “Running on Faith? A Quantitative Analysis of the Effect of Religious Cleavages on the Intensity and Duration of Internal Conflicts,” MA thesis, University of Oslo.

15 Meredith R. Sarkees and Frank Wayman, *Resort to War: 1816 - 2007* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2010).

16 The term ethno-religious group in civil war literature well illustrate how in some ethnic groups, religion is one of the most constitutive part in defining their identity. For further discussion see Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Religion, Ethnicity, and Self-Identity: Nations in Turmoil* (Salzburg: Salzburg Seminar, 1997).

according to a specific religious rule".¹⁷ It means that religion becomes a central issue in the civil war if the parties sought to establish the religion's ideology. An example of this would be the case of civil wars in Afghanistan and Sudan where one of the conflicting parties tried to establish the rule of religion in particular place. To determine whether religion is counted as a peripheral issue is by looking at whether the government party or the rebels identify themselves with a specific religious tradition and identity. An example in which religion is a peripheral issue would be the conflict in the Balkans where religion is functioned more as an identity instead of some set of rule and idea.¹⁸ Therefore, in this paper, civil war is defined as a religious civil war if religion is a central issue in the civil war, while, civil war in which religion is peripheral issue will be called ethnic civil war with religious divides as opposed to religious civil war.

The Factors Transforming Ethnic Civil Wars into Religious Civil Wars

At least there are two widely accepted arguments on how ethnic civil war transforms into religious civil war. The first argument focuses on the religious institution. The second one emphasizes on the role the ruling political elite.

The first argument holds that the civil war with religious divides is more likely to become a religious civil war if there is a strong relationship between religious institutions and government institutions, political elites, rebel or opposition groups.¹⁹ In their study on church participation in rebellion, Kowalewski and Greil found that if there is a social contract that is mutually beneficial between the church hierarchy and government elites, the church is more likely to support the government and at the same time be less likely to cooperate with opposition groups.²⁰ While these scholars tend to focus only on the direct relationship between state institutions and religious institutions, other scholars found that the characteristics of religious institutions themselves may have effect on the dynamics of internal conflict. According to Basedau and De Juan, religious institutions such as Catholic Church are able to affect the dynamic of internal conflict either by inciting violence or by calling for peace.²¹ Moreover, according to Basedau and De Juan, a

17 Toft, "Getting Religion?" 100

18 Ibid., 97

19 See David Kowalewski and Arthur Greil, "Religion as Opiate: Church and Revolution in Comparative Structural Perspective," *Journal of Church and State* 32 (1990):511-526; W. Cole Durham, "Perspectives on religious liberty: a Comparative Framework," in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Legal Perspectives*, ed. John D. van der Vyver and John Witte Jr. (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1996), 24-60.

20 Kowalewski and Greil, "Religion as Opiate: Church and Revolution in Comparative Structural Perspective," 515.

21 Matthias Basedau and Alexander De Juan, *The 'Ambivalence of the Sacred' in Africa: The Impact of Religion on Peace and Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Hamburg: GIGA

crucial factor that makes religious institutions contribute to the escalation of a conflict is when religious institutions lose their nonpartisan stance in the conflict. It can be seen, for example, when religious elites that control religious institutions are involved in the conflict directly.²² The Rwandan genocide can be an example of the latter where the Catholic hierarchy had institutional ties with Habyarimana regime, which explain the silent of Catholic Church on the Rwandan genocide.²³

From the discussion above it transpires that religious institutions, either religious organization or religious clerics, may have an effect on transforming ethnic civil war. Therefore, according to the structural explanation, civil war with religious difference is more likely to transform into a religious civil war if religious institutions and elites support the rebel group.²⁴ However, there are two caveats on this argument. First, the argument can hardly explain the occurrence of the religious civil war where there is less strong religious institution organizational capability in transforming the civil war, such as in Chechnya. Second, the argument is mainly derived from cases where the rebels identify themselves as Christians. Since it is mainly derived from the cases where the rebels identify themselves as Christians, the argument might not be able to provide a strong causal mechanism in the case where the rebels identify themselves as Muslims.

Contrary to the structural explanation, the second argument holds that civil war with religious divides between conflicting parties is more likely to become a religious civil war if the political elites decide to use religion as a source of mobilization for their survival. This explanation is known as mobilization explanation. In this explanation, political elites refer to the ruling political elites who take in charge of the government. In the case of the rebel government, the political elites refer to the political elites in the rebel territory who are in charge in the struggle against the central government.

One of the scholars who presents this explanation is Monica Toft. To answer the puzzle as to why religion becomes a central issue in some civil wars, she proposes the religious outbidding theory in which the central argument is that, when the political elites find that their survival is under immediate threat, they will try to reframe issues of contention as religious issues.²⁵ This can happen because the ruling political elites want to outbid the opposition group by invoking religious issues so that the ruling political elites can gain support from domestic audiences to prolong their chance of survive.

Working Papers, 2008) [database on-line]; Available at <http://ideas.repec.org/p/gig/wpaper/70.html>, last accessed on 20 July 2012.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 11.

25 Toft, "Getting Religion?", 100.

According to Toft, there are four conditions in which her theory can be seen to explain the transformation of civil wars into religious civil wars. First, one of the parties must be immediately threatened. Second, resources that are needed for eliminating the threat can be attained by invoking religious terms in conflict. Third, there must be a religious hatred between the conflicting parties, though this does not necessarily have to be deep. Fourth, the government parties control public access on information.²⁶

Essentially, according to the religious outbidding theory, the ruling political elites play an important role in transforming civil war into religious civil war in order to increase their opportunities to continue to maintain their power. Using the Sudanese Civil War as a case study, Toft shows us that the more political elites prefer to use religious bids for their survival the more likely it is that the civil war becomes a religious civil war. Despite being narrowly focus on political elite preferences, Toft's argument is better at explaining how civil war transforms into religious civil war in the Muslim world. However, Toft's argument can only explain the case where the ruling government is the party who incite religion in the civil war. It neglects the possibility that the non-state actors who are not the ruling political elites can transform the civil war into religious civil war.

Given the above discussion, the two previous conventional explanations may not really explain the religious civil war transformation especially if the rebels identify themselves as a Muslim. Moreover, both are insufficient to address the role of transnational non-state actors in transforming ethnic civil war into religious civil war.

In the wake of 9/11, many scholars have tried to study the effect of transnational religious involvement in the form of foreign fighters in insurgencies across the Muslim world. In his recent article entitled 'The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters', Thomas Hegghammer tries to examine the impact of Muslim foreign fighter in many internal armed conflicts across the Muslim world. He shows that since the 1980s, armed conflict in the Muslim world has uniquely experienced a rise in foreign fighters in armed conflicts ranging from Bosnia to Philippines. Many of these internal armed conflicts were basically local armed conflicts fought by the local rebels, yet they attracted many foreign Muslim fighters to fight along with the local rebels.²⁷ According to Hegghammer, the rise of foreign Muslim fighters is due to

26 Ibid., 103.

27 Jonathan Fox, "The Rise of Religious Nationalism and Conflict: Ethnic Conflict and Revolutionary Wars, 1945-2001," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 6 (2004), 715-731.
Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security* 35, no. 3 (2010), 53-94.

the spread of what he called populist pan-Islamism which was disseminated by the Saudi Islamists whom are mainly follower of *Salafi-Jihadist* ideology.²⁸ The pan-Islamist movement encouraged all Muslims to defend the land where there are Muslims populations. They believe that every land where Muslim lives is the homeland of the entirety of the Muslim people. By establishing a global network of charities mainly based in the Arab world, these transnational groups can easily mobilise individuals to fight as foreign fighters in a particular Muslim area.²⁹

Hegghammer's article shows how foreign Muslim fighters' involvement is increasing significantly in so many internal armed conflicts in the Muslim world after 1980s. He argued that the spread of the *Salafi-Jihadist* ideology propagated by the oil rich countries such as Saudi Arabia is the main factor in encouraging Muslim to fight war in other countries in the name of religion.³⁰ Despite being able to explain the emergence of Muslim fighters in several civil wars in the Muslim world, however, the article does not provide an explanation on whether their involvement has transformed ethnic civil war into religious civil war. Indeed, this article only sought to investigate the extent to which the involvement of transnational religious actor in the form of foreign Muslim fighters assisting the local rebels is able to globalize the idea of Jihad in the Muslim world.

Research Design

A "Before-After" Research Design

Since the current article's objective is to investigate a causal mechanism emerging from commonly accepted hypotheses that religion has an effect on the dynamic of civil wars, this research uses a case study approach employing process tracing method. According to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, there are several comparative case study research designs. The best known is the method of "controlled comparison".³¹ Ideally, the controlled comparison method should compare two "most similar" cases which are comparable in all aspects except for the independent variable. However, these cases are less likely to appear in the real world. Therefore, George and Bennett suggest that instead of finding two different cases, it is better for the researcher to divide a single longitudinal case into two sub-cases in what they call the "Before-After" research design.³² Following this research design, I will investigate the Chechen Wars which can be divided into two periods;

28 Ibid., 56.

29 Ibid., 57.

30 Ibid, 60.

31 Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennet, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2004), 81.

32 Ibid., 166.

the first Chechen war (1994-1996) which was heavily separatist and nationalist civil war, and the second Chechen war (1999-2009) which was becoming a religious civil war.

Justification for the Case Selection

To determine which civil wars can be treated as religious civil wars, I relied heavily on the dataset provided by Monica Toft. Monica Toft listed forty two civil wars from 1940 to 2000 of which twenty five are coded as religious civil wars where religion is a central issue and the other seventeen are coded as religious civil wars where religion are peripheral issue (see Appendix 1).

In this article, I will examine the research question using the Chechen Wars as case studies. There are several reasons why Chechen civil wars fit this study. Firstly, since the research question focuses on Muslims as rebels, the case study should represent the case where the rebel parties identify themselves as Muslims. By this requirement, there are several cases in the list of religious civil war which should be dropped such as the Sudanese civil wars (1955; 1983). Secondly, due to fact that when pairing religion in the war, Islam and Christianity were engaged most often, the case study should represent the case where the dominant state religion is Christianity. Thus, cases such as Kashmir civil war (1988) should be taken out from the list. Thirdly, since one of the hypotheses being tested is considered to be more likely to occur after the 1980s, hence, the Cyprus Civil Wars, the Ethiopian-Ogaden civil war (1977), and Indonesia-Aceh civil war (1953) are not suitable for this research since they occurred prior to the 1980s. Though there were religious based civil wars after 1980s, the Algeria (1992), Afghanistan (1980s), Iran (1980s), Syria (1980s), and Tajikistan (1992) civil wars should be dropped from the list since from the beginning those civil wars were religious civil wars without any significant religious difference between the warring parties. While in the case of the Bosnia and Kosovo Civil Wars, no preliminary evidence suggests that these two civil wars are religious civil war in which religion is a central issue. Given the above reasons, therefore, the Chechen civil war fits with the research design. The data used in this research relies on secondary data, mostly coming from historical reports, analysis on Chechen Civil war by scholars, and journalistic reports.

The Case Study: Chechen Civil Wars

The role of Islamic Institution and Political Elites in Chechen Civil War

Islam has been an integral part of North Caucasus history for hundreds of years. It is believed that Islam reached the North Caucasus back in the eighth to eleventh centuries where the Arab Empires sent emissaries to this region. However, only at the end of the 17th century and until the 19th century did mass Islamization of

Chechen people and the establishment of Islam as integral part of Chechen culture and society took place.³³ The Chechens developed its own unique Islam which is different from Arab Islam. As suggested by Tishkov, Chechen Muslims tended to embrace moderate view of Islam in the form of Sufi *tariqah*, a branch of Sunni Islam which tends to seek a spiritual journey to God. Since Sufi *tariqah* emphasized more the spiritual journey to God, they did not preach the implementation of Islamic Sharia law. Hence, customary law (*adat*) still played a major role in Chechen society.³⁴

Even though Islam has been removed from Chechen society for a long time under communist rule, it still played an important role in the Chechen society. In the era of communism, Islamic traditions were still practiced inside the house though mostly they were celebrated as merrymaking holidays instead of religious holidays. Following the *glasnost* (openness) policy which emerged in the mid-1980s, Islam increasingly appeared in the public life of the Chechen people. Islam was openly preached, the Qur'an was translated in local languages, and the pilgrimage to Mecca was widely initiated.³⁵ Many scholars tend to believe that the *glasnost* era lead to the rise of Islam in Chechen society. The so-called New Muslims phenomenon emerged in Chechnya the *glasnost* era.

Yet, not all Chechens turned to their belief in Islam during the *glasnost* era. Many Chechens had no interest in religion. Besides, the resurgence of religion was isolated from the aspiration toward independence. Islam has never played an important part in the movement toward independence. The Islamic resurgence phenomenon was mainly occurring in social and cultural area. For instance, the declaration of sovereignty made by Dzhokhar Dudayev, the first elected president of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, was purely secular without any reference to Islam.³⁶ Furthermore, his dream of a Chechen state would be a western-style state governed by a secular government with a secular constitution.³⁷ Dudayev himself was a typical Soviet atheist with no knowledge of Islamic teaching in any significant sense. Though Islamic rhetoric was less influential in political area prior to 1993, it would soon enter the political discourse amongst politicians.

The liberalization policies eventually created instability in the central Soviet government. One of the most important liberalization policies held by Gorbachev

33 Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 78.

34 *Ibid.*, 179.

35 *Ibid.*, 25.

36 Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 58.

37 Aleksei Malashenko, "The glitter and poverty of Chechen Islam" in *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* ed Genadiy Chufirin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 300.

was the restructure of communist political institutions (*Perestroika*).³⁸ Responding to *Perestroika*, on 25 November 1990, a National Congress of Chechen People (NCChP/OKChN) was established under the leadership of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, Yusup Soslambekov, Beslan Gantemirov, and Yaragi Mamodayev. In the same month, and at its first national congress, the NCChP declared the establishment of the Chechen Republics. But the Republic was still considered as a part of Russian Federation by the central government in Moscow. Since the nationalists needed a new leader for a new nation, NCChP invited the former Major General of the Soviet Union, Dzhokhar Dudayev, to be head of the Executive Committee of the NCChP due to his high profile record as the only Chechen who became a General in the army of the Soviet Union.

The movement toward separatism became clearer when the third national congress of the NCChP was held in September 1991 and the NCChP declared that the Checheno-Ingushetia Supreme Soviet is illegitimate and, therefore, there should be a parliamentary and presidential election on the 27th of October.³⁹ Furthermore, on October 8, 1991, the NCChP declared itself as the only power in the republic.⁴⁰ In the election, though the election turnout was only 10-12%, Dudayev won the majority of the votes and became the first president of the Chechen Republic.

From the beginning, the ideology of the NCChP, the nationalist movement in Chechnya, was of ethnic nationalism that aimed to solve the problems faced by the nation of Chechnya. Its founding fathers such as Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, Yusup Soslambekov, Beslan Gantemirov, and Yaragi Mamodayev were all secular nationalists.⁴¹ Moreover, as the first President, Dudayev's vision of the Chechen state was one of a representative democracy under secular law. Indeed, at the second national congress of the NCChP in 1991, there was an idea to create Chechen Islamic State proposed by a very minor group which called itself the Islamic Rebirth Party. Yet, the idea was rejected by Dudayev and his followers who kept insisting that the future Chechen Republic should be a constitutionally secular state.⁴² Thus, it is clear that at the beginning the nationalists were driven by secular ethno-nationalist ideology in their move to separate from Russia.

Though at the beginning, Dudayev and the NCChP had never envisaged Islam as part of their political goal, both would finally turn to Islam. The growing opposition towards his regime led Dudayev to use Islam as a political tool to unite all of Chechens under his leadership. Moreover, the fact that Russia supported the opposition movement created a fear in Dudayev who would use Islam as ideological

38 Tracey C. German, *Russia's Chechen War* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 9.

39 Ibid., 38

40 Tishkov, *Chechnya*, 62.

41 Lieven, *Chechnya*, 56.

42 Malashenko, "The glitter and poverty of Chechen Islam," 301.

tool towards achieving his political goal. It is odd how a seemingly secular politician uses Islam as ideology for his political purpose, but in the case of Dudayev it shows us that even religion can be used by secular politicians for concrete pragmatic objectives.

In November 1992, Dudayev issued decree No.2 that asked "All Muslims in Moscow to turn Moscow into a disaster zone in the name of our freedom from *kufir* (infidel)".⁴³ Though he did not use the word jihad, his decree was basically a call for jihad against Russia. He started to use religious words to incite hatred toward Russia. Moreover, in 1993, Dudayev invited the well-known Chechen Islamic clergyman Abdul-Baki to Chechnya. He hoped that Abdul-Baki would be a spiritual pillar for his regime. Though at the end, Abdul-Baki criticized Dudayev's regime and later forced Dudayev expel him from Chechnya, his efforts to incorporate the clergy in his regime showed that Dudayev was willing to do anything to make his regime seem more religious.⁴⁴

Although Dudayev tried to use Islam as a tool to mobilize the Chechen people to fight against Russia, the role of Islam was still limited in the Chechen War. As the Russian ethnologist Tishkov suggested, contrary with the belief that 1990 to 1994 was the era of Islamic revival, many Chechen people began to lose their belief in an Islamic revival. The revival of the so-called "New Muslim" only caused greater public antipathy in Chechnya towards Islam. Dudayev and his followers who were trying to use Islam as a source of mobilization have given 'the revival of Islam' a bad name. These "New Muslims" use Islam to serve their pragmatic purposes. In the eye of Chechen people, these New Muslims were encouraging corruption and they were seen as the enemy of the Chechen people.⁴⁵

The role of Transnational Religious Actors Involvement in the Chechen Civil Wars

When the war broke out in December 1994, Islam was not the main motivation for Chechens to fight against Russia. According to Anatol Lieven, for Shamil Basayev who later became the leader of Islamic jihadist group in Chechnya, the central motivation of the war was to expel Russian from Chechnya. For many young Chechen men who fought against Russia, their interpretation of jihad was more a fight against the Russians than a fight against the infidels. Islamic symbols such as jihad have indeed become an integral part in the first Chechen War, but the phrase is becoming synonymous with the Chechen struggle of national identity instead of struggle to establish the Islamic state.⁴⁶

43 Ibid., 299.

44 Emil Souleimanov, *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing Group, 2007), 60.

45 Tishkov, *Chechnya*, 168-170.

46 Lieven, *Chechnya*, 138.

The First Chechen War officially broke out in December 1994. At the initial stage from December 1994 to May 1995, Russia was able to continue its offensive against Chechen fighters and forced the Chechen fighters to retreat to the mountains of the Caucasus in the South. However, the Russian army offensive was not without fierce resistance. Thanks to the leadership of local war commanders, most of whom previously served as Soviet officers, Chechen fighters were capable of infiltration into the area occupied by Russian troops leading to casualties on the Russian side.

In March 1996, as the election period in Russia was getting closer, Yeltsin offered a ceasefire. However, Dudayev rejected any kind of ceasefire and kept struggling to drive out Russian troops from Chechen territory.⁴⁷ In April 1996, Dudayev was killed by missiles from a Russian aircraft.⁴⁸ Even though they had lost their highest commander, Chechen fighters kept morale high since many of the soldiers did not fight in the name of the government but in the name of clan and family.⁴⁹ Dudayev's position was taken by another nationalist, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, who was an Acting president for the Chechen Republic.⁵⁰ Unlike, Dudayev, Yandarbiyev was willing to end the conflict. In May 1996, he went to Moscow and signed an agreement on the cessation of military activities which secured Yeltsin's re-election for Russian presidency.⁵¹ Two month after the Moscow Peace treaty, fair and free elections were held in Chechnya.⁵²

The First Chechen War was a bloody war. It is estimated that 100,000 civilians were killed and more than 250,000 people were injured in two years of conflict. Furthermore, the war resulted in the total destruction of infrastructure. Many factories and plants had been heavily bombed and the Chechen capital, the centre of economic activity, had been totally destroyed. Moreover, 15% of Chechnya's cultivatable soil was covered by mines and almost 90% of Chechen men found themselves without jobs.⁵³

47 Ilyas Akhmadov and Miriam Lansky, *The Chechen Struggle: Impedence, Won, and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 77.

48 Tishkov, *Chechnya*, 82.

49 John B Dunlop, *Russia confronts Chechnya: roots of a separatist conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 164.

50 Robert W. Schaefer, *The insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus* (Oxford: Praeger, 2011), 160.

51 Dzhabrail Gakaev, "Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya" in *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, ed. R. Sakwa, (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 29.

52 Ibid.

53 Brian G. Williams, "The Russo-Chechen War: a Threat to Stability in the Middle East and Eurasia?" *Middle East Policy* 8, no. 1 (2001), 128-148. (Williams 2001, p.132).

Besides the economic crisis and increased criminal activity, the other thing that followed after the first Chechen war was the emergence of the *Salafi-Jihadist* ideology amongst both Chechen warlords and society which created a rivalry between local Sufi tradition and harsh foreign *Salafi-jihadist* ideology. Furthermore, the advent of the *Salafi-Jihadist* caused a massive radicalization of both the warlords or politicians and the ordinary people which was encouraged by the brutality of Russian troops during the war, creating a deep hatred of Russia in the heart of the Chechen people. This ideology was brought and disseminated by the foreign fighters who gained a significant role in Chechen society.

According to Al-Shishani, Arab fighters had a marginal role in the outcome of the First Chechen War. However, by mid-1996, they gradually became a major force in Chechnya. Before his death in 1996, Dudayev always distributed funds to local commander to secure his control. After Dudayev's death, his successor, Yandarbiyev had a close relationship with *Salafi-jihadist* groups that were eager to raise money from Gulf States for Chechen fighters. In return, on August 1996, he issued a decree regarding the establishment of Sharia court in which the Arab fighters were invited to work as judges. After the peace agreement was signed, many other charity organizations run by the Arab fighters operated in Chechnya.⁵⁴

Furthermore, under the leadership of Khattab, the Arab fighters built good relationship with local warlords. Many prominent nationalist warlords finally embraced *Salafi-jihadist* ideology because of good relationship built by the leaders of the Arab fighters. Two warlords turning to *Salafi-jihadist* who had a great impact on the political environment during the interwar period were Zelimkan Yandarbiyev and Shamil Basayev.⁵⁵ Both of them were neither Islamists nor employed radical Islamic rhetoric in the first Chechen War.⁵⁶ It seems that the war had radicalised these warlords since, as many sociologists would argue, religious faith will be strengthened during the war as a source for personal comfort as well as a means of interpreting an extreme situation.⁵⁷

For Yandarbiyev, his radicalization is more pragmatic in purpose. According to Lieven, in a lawless situation and with no military hierarchy and military code, the need for military discipline played an important part in the establishment of Sharia court. Stricter laws such as Sharia could establish public order under war conditions

54 Al-Shishani, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Fighters in Chechnya*, 9.

55 Other Chechen local warlords that had been radicalised as well as had a connection with the Arab fighters were, Salman Raduev, administrative chief of Gudermes city, Arbi Baraev, Movsar Baraev, Ruslan Gelaev, And Movladi Udugov. See Julie Wilhemsen, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Islamisation of the Chechen Separatist Movement," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 1 (2005), 35-59.

56 Ibid., 24.

57 Ibid., 25.

where each clan and armed group could loot other clans' and armed group's premises.⁵⁸ Hence, as an acting president, Yandarbiyev's bet on Sharia law was to restore order in the Chechen society.

For Basayev, his radicalization process was more personal. One of the leaders of the Arab fighters, Khattab, was a close friend of his and had a great influence on Basayev's views. According to one of Basayev's friends, he changed his world view after meeting with Khattab: "He started moving from freedom for Chechnya to freedom for the whole Arab world. He changed from a Chechen patriot into an Islamic globalist".⁵⁹

With their presence backed up by prominent warlords and their idea embraced by several political actors as well as with foreign money pouring in to Chechen people, the transnational Islamist actors with their *Salafi-jihadist* ideology had gradually increased their role in Chechen politics. Though it became a major power in Chechen politics, its influence was not yet dominating in Chechen society. *Salafi-jihadist* ideology was usually seen as a foreign religion for most of the Chechen people. According to Souleimanov, only 5% to 10% of the Chechen population embraced the *Salafi-jihadist* ideology.⁶⁰ Even though it was only embraced by a small part of the Chechen population, as one prominent Chechen ethnologist, Dzhabrail Gakaev argues, the coming of the *Salafi-jihadist* ideology has torn Chechen society apart.⁶¹

Though the *Salafi-jihadist* movement gained more support from the Chechen society during the Chechen presidential election on 27 January 1997, it was the moderate Chechen leader who was known for his willingness to cooperate with Russia, Aslan Maskhadov, that won the election. He beat two other candidates that have a strong relationships with the Arab fighters, the charismatic Shamil Basayev and Zelimkan Yandarbiyev, by gaining 64,8% of vote while Basayev got 23,5% and Yandarbiyev got 11,7%.⁶² The election demonstrated the Chechen people's preference for moderate Islam. Maskhadov's strong supporters mainly came from Sufi adherents who opposed the *Salafi-jihadist* ideology and traditional Chechens who disliked this ideology. Among the leading Sufi clerics who supported Maskhadov was Akhmad Kadyrov, the Grand Mufti of Chechnya.

58 Lieven, *Chechnya*,

59 Sharon LaFraniere, "How Jihad Made Its Way to Chechnya," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 26 April 2003, A01.

60 Souleimanov, *An Endless War*, 6.

61 Gakaev, "Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya," 27.

62 Laurent Vinatier, "Political v Military power: Contrasting Basaev and Sadulaev's Roles," *Chechnya Weekly* 36, no. 6 (2005), 39.

Despite being supported by a majority of the Chechen people and especially the Sufi *tariqah*, without any strong governmental institutions and infrastructure Maskhadov found himself in the middle of the growing influence of the *Salafi-jihadist* groups. As argued by some scholars, during the interwar period, many Chechen field commanders were acting more like warlords who usually act without following the order from the legitimate government. As result, the Maskhadov regime had to make concessions with some of the strong warlords especially those who were allied with the Arab fighters. To build a political consensus after his victory, Maskhadov appointed Basayev as deputy Chief of the Chechen Army and later acting Prime Minister of Chechen Republic so that he could control Basayev's attitude, which was highly influenced by the *Salafi-jihadist* groups.⁶³

On 7 August 1999, to fulfill their ambition to create the North Caucasus Emirate as well as to support the Islamic separatist movement in Dagestan, *Salafi-jihadist* fighters under the command of Shamil Basayev and Ibnu Khattab launched an attack on the neighboring Russian republic, Dagestan, which is a predominantly Muslim republic. Maskhadov directly condemned the attempt to invade Dagestan but his condemnation could not stop the *Salafi-jihadist* group from invading Dagestan.⁶⁴ The invasion of Dagestan then became the *casus belli* for the Second Chechen War. On 26 August 1999, the Russian federation launched the second Chechen War in response to the invasion of Dagestan by *Salafi-jihadist* group known as Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB).

From its beginning in October 1999, the Second Chechen War has turned into a never-ending military conflict with the element of terrorism attached in the conflict. The cause of the war was not the aspiration for national independence but the eagerness to establish the supra-state emirate ruled under Islamic law. In the First Chechen War, the Chechens opposing the nationalist regime and Chechen independence collaborated with Russia while, in the Second Chechen War, those Chechen who were opposed to the *Salafi-Jihadist* ideology collaborated with the Russians. While in the First Chechen War, the war seemed to be an effort to maintain Russia's territorial integrity, the Second Chechen War was more of a Russian campaign against the Islamic radicalism which threatened the stability of the North Caucasus. Though the Russian troops effectively occupied Chechnya by the mid-2000, the war has been transformed into an insurgency and terrorist activity in the North Caucasus which is still going on until now.

What are the factors transforming the Chechen Civil Wars?

63 Williams, "The Russo-Chechen War," 200.

64 Schaefer, *The insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus*, 165.

By tracing the history of the First and the Second Chechen Wars, it is clear that the structural explanation cannot explain how ethnic civil war transformed into religious civil war in this case. The structural explanation holds that civil war with religious divides is more likely to transform into religious civil wars if religious institutions support the rebel party. In the case of the Chechen War, we find that religious institutions played a minor role in transforming civil war in which religious issue is peripheral into civil war in which religious issue is central. Though religious institutions and religious elites was almost totally annihilated in the Soviet era, the liberalization policy run by Gorbachev regime has restored the religious institution as well as the role of the religious elites in the Chechen society. Yet, as shown in our discussion about the first Chechen war, there was little evidence that the Chechens fought for religious goals.

In the case of the Chechen Wars, there are several factors that made it hard for religious institutions to trigger religious war. The first factor is the nature of religious institutions and religious elites in Chechnya. Unlike mainstream religious institutions either in the Sunni or Shia world which have a strong organizational capability, the Sufi *tariqah* which is predominantly embraced by Chechen people lacks this organizational capability. The Sufi *tariqah* organized themselves in small groups which can hardly be mobilized as one single massive movement. Moreover, Islam in Chechnya lacked religious elites who have a religious authority, such as an Imam or Mufti. Most of the so-called religious elites in Chechen society were the elders whom Chechen people traditionally respect. Indeed, it was a secular government that tried to build religious elites when, in 1995 during the first war, secular president Dzokhar Dudayev appointed the first Chechen Grand Mufti, Akhmad Kadyrov, in order to mobilize Chechen people in the fight against the Russians. Thus, in the First Chechen War, we found that religious institutions as well as religious elites are less significant on making the First Chechen War as religious civil war. The First Chechen War was mainly separatist war motivated by nationalism.

Prior to the Second Chechen War, the religious elites seemed to be in favor for cooperating with Russia to overcome economic crisis. With the *de facto* 'victory' against Russia but in the wake of the economic downfall, it was illogical for the Chechens not to cooperate with Russia. Moreover, the growing 'foreign' interpretation of Islam has worried the existing religious institutions and religious elites who believed that the new ideology would change Chechen society entirely. No wonder, then, that Sufi *tariqah*, the elders, and the Grand Mufti strongly supported Aslan Maskhadov who was willing to cooperate with Russia. Thus, when the second Chechen war erupted either local religious institution or local religious elites did not play an important part in provoking the war. Furthermore, many of them were on the Russia's side when the war broke out.

Unlike structural explanation, it is evident that mobilization explanation can only partially explain the Chechen Wars. The mobilization explanation which argues that civil war with religious divides is more likely to transform into religious civil war if the political elites use religion to mobilize the mass to gain mass support can explain how the secular local political elites turn to religion in order to gain massive support for their struggle to fight the central government. However the evidence from the first Chechen war shows that, although the political elites in Chechnya tried to use religious rhetoric to mobilize the masses, it did not transform the ethnic civil war into religious civil war. As we see in the first Chechen war, the secular elites in Chechnya found that Islam could serve a pragmatic function to mobilize the Chechen people to fight against the Russians. Also, it was effective in antagonizing the government's political opponents that were more inclined to cooperate with Russia. However, this was not enough to shift religion from a peripheral issue to a central issue. The objective of the first Chechen war was still heavily characterized with ethnic nationalism.

In the second Chechen War, we find that it was not the elites who won the election that tried to invoke religion for their survival. On the contrary, the incumbent political elites tried to dampen the pace of radicalization by sharing the government's responsibilities with the *Salafi-jihadist* groups. The establishment of Sharia government in Chechnya was more a failure by Maskhadov to deal with the growing radical group than any deliberate action to mobilize the masses. With the growing power of the *Salafi-Jihadist* ideology, in 1998 leaders of the regime eventually succumbed to the desire of the Islamic radicals who wanted to replace the Chechen secular state with an Islamic state. When the invasion of Dagestan happened, which became the trigger of the Second Chechen War, President Maskhadov was one of the first who condemned the invasion and stated that the Chechen Republic has nothing to do with the invasion. This was the most tangible evidence that the second Chechen war was not invoked by the ruling political elite.

Indeed, like nationalism or ethnicity, religion can be used as a tool to mobilize the masses to fight the central government, especially in a region where religion is a constitutive part of ethnicity as in Chechnya. However, the religious explanation alone cannot explain how a civil war where religion is a peripheral issue can transform into civil war where religion is central. The Chechen case has shown that though the local political elites invoked religion to mobilize the masses, it cannot transform the civil war into a religious civil war.

In the case of Chechnya an argument relating to the role of transnational religious actors who spread *Salafi-jihadist* ideology in the civil war can explain the transformation of ethnic civil war into religious civil war. The argument holds that civil war with religious divides is more likely to transform into religious civil wars if there is transnational religious actor involvement which seeks the religious goal in

the local civil war. As shown in the Chechen case, in the first Chechen war the foreign fighters were welcomed by the Chechens but they never controlled the course of the war. Their influence remained limited and their presence was considered minimal. However after the war ended, their presence was increasingly significant. For instance, after the capture of Grozny, Khattab, the leader of Arab foreign fighters, was decorated as Brigadier General of the Chechen Republic.⁶⁵

Unlike in Bosnia after the Dayton Accords where the foreign fighters were expelled from Bosnia, after the Kasavyurt Accord no agreement was reached between Chechnya and Russia regarding foreign fighters. Hence, they freely stayed in Chechnya and made some alliances with field commanders who would later become local warlords. These foreign fighters, in the second Chechen war, would be a part of the force that invaded Dagestan.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Second Chechen War would not start just because of the presence of the foreign fighters in the Chechen territory since most of the fighters who started the invasion of Dagestan and later fought in the second Chechen war were local Chechens. It is evident that the spread of *Salafi-jihadist* ideology preached by the foreign fighters that commanded the establishment of Islamic emirates in North Caucasus is the main motivation for the second Chechen war instead of other consideration such as nationalism or ethnicity.

Conclusion

This article suggests that the involvement of transnational religious actors in the shape of foreign fighters spreading the *Salafi-jihadist* ideology among Chechen population were the main factors that triggered the second Chechen war. This finding fills the gap in the current literature of civil war which mainly focuses on religious institution and political elites as factors transforming the ethnic civil war with religious divide into religious civil war. However, the argument proposed by this article cannot be generalized to explain the causal mechanism of other religious civil wars given the limit of the case study research design. Further study and more complicated methods such as a cross-regional comparison study should be employed to rigidly test the argument. For instance, by comparing the Chechen Civil War and the Bosnian Civil War, we can draw more specific factors in explaining why the civil war in Chechnya transformed into a religious civil war whereas the civil war in Bosnia did not. Is it because immediately after the Bosnia's peace treaty, the foreign fighters must leave the region where in Chechnya, there was no such arrangement? Besides a cross-regional comparison study, future research can employ large-N studies to investigate whether the existence of Muslim foreign

65 Wilhemsen, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," 29.

fighters correlate with the likelihood for the ethnic civil war to transform into religious civil war.

If the argument survives the more rigorous study and are capable in explaining other cases, then there must be policy implication as to how to reduce the likelihood of a civil war where the rebels identify themselves as a Muslim from transforming into a religious civil war. The clear implication for policy makers is that ending the involvement of the foreign fighters as well as reducing the spread of *Salafi-jihadist* ideology in every conflict related to Muslims is the best way to suspend the likelihood of civil war with religious divides from transforming into religious civil war.

Appendix 1: List of Civil Wars with Religious Cleavages 1940-2000

State	Start Year	Name / Combatant	Dominant Religion	Civil War with Religion central/ Religious Civil War
Afghanistan	1978	Mujahideen/Taliban	Islam/Sunni	Yes
Algeria	1992	Fundamentalists	Islam/Sunni	Yes
Azerbaijan	1988	Nagorno Karabakh	Islam/Shiite	No
Bangladesh	1972	Chittagong Hill	Islam/Sunni	No
Burma	1948	Karens	Budhist	Yes
Burma	1960	Kachins		Yes
Chad	1965	National Liberation Front of Chad	Islam/Sunni	No
China	1950	Tibet	Taoist	Yes
China	1954	Tibet		Yes
Cyprus	1963	Greek/Turk clashes	Christians/Greek Orthodox	No
Cyprus	1974	Coup/Turkey invasion		No
Ethiopia	1977	Ogaden	Islam/Sunni	Yes
Georgia	1992	Abkhazia	Christian/Georgian Orthodox	No
India	1946	Partition	Hindu	Yes
India	1948	Hyderabad		Yes
India	1956	Naga revolt		No
India	1965	Kashmir		Yes
India	1982	Sikh insurrection		Yes
India	1988	Kashmir		Yes
Indonesia	1950	Ambon/Moluccans	Islam/Sunni	No
Indonesia	1953	Aceh revolt		Yes
Indonesia	1975	East Timor		No
Iran	1978	Revolution	Islam/Shiite	Yes
Iran	1981	Mojahedin		Yes
Iraq	1991	Shiite insurrection	Islam/Shiite	Yes
Israel	1945	Independence	Judaism	Yes
Lebanon	1958	First civil war	Islam	No
Lebanon	1975	Second civil war		No
Nigeria	1967	Biafra	Islam	Yes
Nigeria	1980	Maitatsine		Yes
Philippines	1972	Moro rebellion	Christian/Catholic	Yes
Philippines	2000	Moro rebellion		Yes
Russia	1994	First Chechen war	Christian/Russian Orthodox	No
Russia	1999	Second Chechen war		Yes

State	Start Year	Name / Combatant	Dominant Religion	Civil War with Religion central/ Religious Civil War
Sri Lanka	1983	Tamil Insurgency	Budhist	No
Sudan	1955	First Sudan Civil War	Islam/Sunni	Yes
Sudan	1983	Second Sudan Civil War		Yes
Syria	1979	Sunnis vs Alawites	Islam/Sunni	Yes
Tajikistan	1992	Civil war	Islam/Sunni	Yes
Yugoslavia	1991	Croatian secession	Christian/Easter	No
Yugoslavia	1992	Bosnian civil war	n Orthodox	No
Yugoslavia	1998	Kosovo		No

Source: Monica Toft (2006).

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