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Honors Paper

Macalester College

Spring 2008

Title: Ideology Meets the Real World: How State Collapse Affects Islamist Movements

Author: Zachary Devlin-Foltz

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Ideology Meets the Real World:

How State Collapse Affects Islamist Movements

Zack Devlin-Foltz

Honors Thesis with Binnur Ozkececi-Taner

May 2008

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Abstract

When states collapse, so do the most obvious obstacles to violent extremism in their territory. Extremists seem free to recruit and operate from these areas without interference from state security forces. In reality, however, state collapse creates as many constraints as opportunities for extremists. This paper uses theories of sub-state conflict and theories of Islamism to compare Islamist groups in Somalia, Iraq, and Egypt. Groups in collapsed states face a conflict between local political power and extremist ideology; pursuing one often threatens the other. Understanding which one each group will prioritize becomes the key policy imperative for counter-terrorist operations.

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Key Terms and Concepts

- **Islamism** is a political ideology based on Islam. In other words, Islamists seek to create societies designed and governed based on Islamic texts, traditions, and principles. While many associate the term with violence or oppression, Islamist movements are diverse. Differing interpretations and emphases lead Islamists to base widely divergent goals and methodology on the same texts and traditions. To fit this category, an Islamist group must only seek to Islamicize politics, to make political decisions based on the Muslim faith.

- ***Jihad*** is perhaps the most controversial term used in this study. Most non-Muslims know the term to mean, more or less, "holy war." This translation roughly corresponds to one of the two meanings of *jihad,* which literally translates to "struggle." The first meaning refers to the internal struggle against temptation, an individual's struggle to live piously. The second meaning refers to the external struggle in defense of and in the name of Islam. Many Muslims, scholars and lay people alike, disagree as to the justifiable targets and methods of the latter *jihad.* The literature review discusses important sides and arguments in this debate. For the purposes of this study, however, "*jihad*" refers to the external version, pursued through force.

- ***Jihadi*** refers to an individual whose ideology holds that violent struggle against the West is a religious duty for all Muslims. Others may advocate violence in some circumstances and certainly may engage in the internal *jihad* or peaceful external *jihad.* What sets *jihadis* apart is an ideology that mandates violence.

- ***Umma*** refers to the global Islamic community.

- ***Shari'ah*** refers to Islamic law, or the collective rules and codes of conduct for Muslims derived from Islamic texts and traditions.

- ***Sheikh*** refers to an elder or a wise-person, often, though not exclusively, someone with religious expertise.

- ***Ulama*** refers to Islamic clerics as a group or class. Subsequent sections will introduce and explain other terms.

- ***State collapse***, an extreme form of state failure, constitutes the state's loss of military dominance over its territory. The official government may still be a player in non-military realms and may compete for territory against non-state rivals. However, a state has collapsed when a non-state group holds part of its territory or part of its territory is ungoverned: not held by any force. In these areas, the state cannot guarantee basic security, or any other good to its people. Whichever group controls an area militarily can provide or deny life and livelihood to its residents. The literature review details this definition, justifies it methodologically, and explains its theoretical implications.

I. Literature and Theoretical Framework: Violence, Rational Actors, and Ideology

Fearing the Weak

Afghanistan sets a dangerous precedent. A Muslim state collapsed, empowered a fundamentalist regime, and hosted Al Qaeda as it planned and executed 9-11. This progression, from internal conflict to international terrorism, has since become a truism in policy circles. As Patrick (2006: 1) puts it, "it has become conventional wisdom that poorly performing states generate multiple 'spillovers,' including terrorism." If correct, the conventional wisdom is frightening. Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, and several other predominantly Muslim countries appear collapsed or at risk of collapse. If state collapse increases the threat of *jihadi* terror, today's Middle East is a scary place indeed. And there are simple, logical reasons to think it does. States conduct counter-terrorism, so, when they collapse, there is no one left to counter terrorists operating within their borders. Moreover, without a government, the most obvious channels for peaceful change are also gone, removing alternatives to violence. These basic arguments lie beneath the official assumption that state collapse promotes *jihadi* terror. The Department of State's *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* argues: "in ailing states or states emerging from conflict, the risks are significant. Spoilers can take advantage of instability to create conditions terrorists can exploit" (NSCT 2006: 16). A former Department of Defense official goes further:

> Failed states and weak states are fertile ground for terrorism for one primary reason—a lack of central governance and often [a lack of] political and social participation in these states. These weak institutions, this lack of participation [in governance] and real fragmentation of these societies allows terrorists to come in, take root and plan acts of terrorism (qtd. in Young 2006)

The State Department's website, agrees, claiming that weak states are "breeding grounds for violent extremism" (Haass 2003, state.gov). These last two quotations make an explicit link between a state's weakness and the growth of extremism, not just the freedom that extremists have to act. They assume either that a state's weakness radicalizes its population or that extremists flock to collapsed states. In either case, the prevalence of extremism increases as the state's capacity decreases.

Patrick (2006) quotes several other government employees who link state collapse to extreme Islamist ideology and terrorism. Despite its severe implications, however, the link remains relatively un-tested. Patrick (2006: 1) notes of spillover theories in general that "what is striking is how little empirical evidence underpins such sweeping assertions." Even more puzzling, recent academic literature on the violence that characterizes and causes state collapse leaves little room for extremism. These theories emphasize profit, prestige, and identity group hostilities in explaining sub-state violence. Some argue that individuals take up arms because they benefit from the fight, either monetarily or in the power and status that comes to soldiers and militiamen. Others find that most sub-state violence occurs when ethnic groups, clans, and other identity-based communities go to war out of mutual fear and hatred. Though very different, both of these theories predict that those motivated solely by ideas cannot survive in collapsed states. Profit-seekers and communal warriors organize more quickly and fight more rationally than self-sacrificial ideologues. Literature on Islamism, as well as Islamists' own statements, suggests that they are motivated by ideas. They eschew non-Islamic identities and willfully sacrifice personal wealth, well-being, and status (in broader society) in order to pursue extreme, ideological goals. So, unless *jihadis* are simply

disguising their self-interested and communal motives, sub-state conflict theories predict that state collapse will weed them out.

This project asks: how does state collapse affect Islamist movements? Does it make them more radical? Does it give them more freedom to pursue conservative or extremist agendas? Does it bind them into communal conflicts or pit them against drug traffickers and other fighters of fortune? Or does it allow them to exploit these conflicts to their own advantage? Answering these and other questions will allow policy makers and academics to analyze the risks posed by weak states with more clarity. It could help policy makers avoid countering non-existent terrorism. If collapsed states do not pose significant terrorist threats, security policy can ignore them or can focus on humanitarian objectives. If policy makers are right, and collapsed states do pose threats, this study will clarify why they are threatening so that policy makers can more-easily recognize threats in stable states or in weak states as they fail. For academics, this study will help bridge the gap between theories of sub-state conflict and theories of Islamism. It will clarify the potential role of ideologues in collapsed states as well as the actual role of ideology in Islamist movements.

Towards these ends, this study compares case studies of Islamist groups in one stable state (Egypt), and two collapsed state (Iraq and Somalia). The rest of the thesis proceeds as follows: the remainder of this chapter reviews the state collapse/sub-state conflict and Islamism literatures to develop the puzzle described above in more detail; the second chapter analyzes Al Qaeda as a theoretical prototype for internationally threatening Islamism; the third chapter describes the comparative method both in general and in its application to this project; the fifth through seventh chapters analyze case study

Islamist groups in Egypt, Somalia, and Iraq; and the final chapter concludes by comparing the cases and drawing lessons for policy and theory from their trends and their differences.

Collapsed States: Security Vacuums, Identity Groups, and Interests

This section first reviews literature on state collapse, opting for a security-focused definition. Later sections will use this definition to identify cases in which the state has collapsed. Focusing on one variable (security) and on extreme examples makes choosing and comparing cases easier and clearer. Rather than measuring the states ability to fulfill myriad responsibilities, this study picks the most basic responsibility and analyzes states which fail to fulfill it. Next, this section moves to conflict literature, categorizing and reviewing theories of sub-state conflict, the type of violence most-likely to plague a collapsed state. Rather than explaining state collapse, as several scholars have sought to do (See Rotberg et al 2003, 2004; Reno 1997a, 1997b), this study analyzes the political/security context after it has occurred. This is usually a violent context, rife with competing armed groups. Scholars use two principal theories to characterize this violence: identity-based conflict and interest-based violence. Each model has its own predictions and implications. The so-called "new wars" theses then attempt to synthesize the models into over-arching theories of modern sub-state warfare.

Despite their differences, identity group and economic interest theories share an important prediction: the death of ideology. Both argue that selfish or communal motivations, pursued rationally, drive sub-state conflict. As Schafer (2001: 215) puts it, "uneasy with widespread popular images of civil wars as barbaric and primeval, they [scholars] have been prompted to search for explanations of their conduct which would

make them appear more rational." Ideology became an unintended casualty of this rush to rationality. If people take up arms solely because they fear a rival ethnic group or expect to benefit personally from fighting, those motivated by ideas will struggle to gain and maintain influence in collapsed states.

If this is the case, we would expect avowedly Islamist groups to either have ulterior motives or to have very little meaningful power in collapsed states. Literature on Islamist movements finds most to be politically strategic, adapting their images and tactics to increase their appeal. However, they are fundamentally ideological, committed to transforming society according to Islamic principles. No study has yet analyzed whether this allows them to adapt and survive in collapsed states while maintaining their ideological character. If so, movements like Al Qaeda, that have constant long-term ideologies may be able to operate in collapsed states. If they can and do adapt, the next question becomes how they adapt, and whether they become more or less likely to threaten the international community.

State Collapse Literature: A focus on security and violence

Harvard University's "Failed States Project" convened several experts for four years of research designed to better define, theorize, and empirically test the failed state concept. This work produced the largest and most comprehensive collections (Rotberg et. al. 2003, 2004) of case studies and theories specifically designed to explain and analyze failed states. Both works define failed states as "convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants" (Rotberg 2003: 1). These include education, health care, and transportation infrastructure, all goods that are

at least partly provided by the state. Rotberg et al (2003, 2004) make clear, however, that security is unique in this list. As they put it:

> There is a hierarchy of political goods. None is as critical as the supply of security, especially human security…usually, however, individuals and groups cannot easily or effectively substitute privately arranged security for the full spectrum of publicly-provided security. The state's prime function is to provide that political good of security…plausibly, the extent of a state's failure can be measured by how much of its geographical expanse is genuinely controlled (especially after dark) by the official government (Rotberg 2004: 3, 5-6)

Accordingly, they also identify one responsibility as the clearest metric of function/failure: territorial control.

Other definitions rely on indexed measures of several criteria. For example, the World Bank's *Governance Matters* data set ranks world states based on "i) Voice and Accountability; ii) Political Instability and Violence; iii) Government Effectiveness; iv) Regulatory Quality; v) Rule of Law, and, vi) Control of Corruption" (Kaufmann et al 2005: 1). This metric allows poor-performing states to still score well in certain areas. However, as Patrick (2006: 11) points out, "Most of the countries with the weakest governance are either in conflict or recovering from it, have experienced recurrent bouts of political instability, and rank among the lowest in terms of 'human security.'"

Similarly, *Foreign Policy Magazine* (FP) and the Fund for Peace (FfP) produce an annual "Failed States Index," rating states based on 12 "social, economic, and political/military indicators" (FSI 2007, FAQ and Methodology). In their 2007 analysis, FP and FfP emphasize that the world's worst-governed states are not always those with the weakest executives. They highlight the Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Chad as cases in which a "strongman" leader has more or less chosen to make his state weak while making his own regime safer (FSI 2007, Leading the Way to the Bottom).

The index method, then, highlights the diversity of state weakness—the broad spectrum of ways a government can fail its population. In exchange for this breadth, these measures lose some specificity and analytic power. How are researchers to examine state failure's effects if Zimbabwe's dictatorship and Somalia's lawlessness are similarly "failed?" Accordingly, this study follows Rotberg et al (2003, 2004) in assuming that security is the most basic responsibility of a state and that, therefore, the inability or unwillingness to provide it is the clearest indication of state failure. In this perspective extreme state security failure becomes "state collapse." Rotberg et al (2003, 2004: 9) define a collapsed state as one in which all political goods come from non-state sources and "security is equated with the rule of the strong." In other words, there is no meaningful state at all.

This study focuses on these extreme cases because they are easier to identify and specify. It is easier to prove that a state is collapsed, than to convincingly place a weak state on a continuum. A state that still provides some security may also provide other goods like rudimentary food support, or medical services, forcing researchers to weigh these various goods in order to measure the extent of the state's weakness or capacity. By contrast, when the state provides no security and does not have any meaningful control over its territory, it also cannot provide or guarantee any other political goods to its people. In studying collapsed states, this study accounts for the cumulative effects of a state's failure in all its responsibilities. Comparing these cases to non-collapsed states isolates the impact of full collapse, regardless of the relative importance of individual political goods that the state may provide.

Conflict Literature: ethnic violence, economic violence, and the weakness of ideology

"Rule of the strong," as Rotberg et al (2003, 2004) would put it, implies conflict. When the state does not monopolize violence within its borders, sub-state groups can use violence to compete for territory, wealth, political power, or other ends. Understanding conditions within collapsed states, then, means understanding the motivations, characteristics, and implications of internal or sub-state conflict. Since the end of the Cold War, scholarship in this area has followed two trends. The first examines ethnic and inter-communal conflict, analyzing the ways identity, prejudice, and fear motivate groups to fight and kill each other within countries. The second applies political-economic/interest-based approaches to analyze the material incentives to do violence within states.

Identity-Group Conflict: Sub-State Security Dilemmas

Following genocide in Rwanda and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans scholars throughout the 1990's and early 2000's sought to define the theoretical requirements, conditions, and catalysts for inter-group violence. Their basic model uses realist theories of inter-state conflict to argue that group identities and constructed inter-group antagonism can create a situation in which conflict is virtually inevitable.

Posen (1993) was the first to apply the "security dilemma" to sub-state, inter-group conflict. In realist theory, the security dilemma refers to situations in which states, perceiving each other as threats, may go to war by acting rationally even if none of them desires to fight. Posen (1993) shows how ethnic groups come to see each other as threats and how threats can spiral into active violence. Uncertain of other communities' intentions, each side will look to history for clues. Where no official history exists, or

where official history is biased, popular perceptions are subject to chauvinism, ethno-centrism, and inflammatory identity politics. Aspiring leaders in all groups can gain politically by casting a rival group as belligerent and themselves as the only leader prepared for the coming conflict. Once empowered, these leaders and their perspectives dictate military buildup. This buildup, itself, signals greater threat to other groups, vindicating their extremist politicians. As threat levels rise, other factors, such as indefensible group borders, encourage all groups to make the decisive first strike. Ultimately, one or more groups will attack one or more others and ethnic war will ensue.

Kaufman (1996) points out that some ethnic fear or chauvinism is "mass-led" rather than constructed by self-serving elites. Popular perceptions may exist first, forcing leaders to take extreme positions, rather than the other way around. Regardless of its origins, however, ethnic antagonism is self-reinforcing. Once one population believes it has a right to dominate another or needs to pre-empt another's aggression, aspiring leaders will have to prove that they are willing to lead the violence. This environment leaves little space for leaders with peaceful preferences (Kaufman 1996: 156-157).

Roe (1999) draws from research on "societal security" to explain the sources of inter-group hostility (see Waever 1995). This latter perspective argues that, when an identity group feels threatened, it will respond by strengthening its own identity (Roe 1999). Thus, when one ethnic group addresses a perceived threat (i.e. a minority language), its suppression of that threat only threatens another group (i.e. those who speak the language). In turn, the second group will act to protect its own identity by strengthening and solidifying it, thus making it more threatening to the first group.

Ultimately, this vicious cycle of threats can become violent as groups carry their mutual fear or loathing to its logical extreme.

Roe's (1999) article affirms that, while group antagonisms may be constructed, they can still have very real security implications. Regardless of their constructed quality, when group divisions are antagonistic, they encourage worst-case threat perceptions, chauvinism, and violence. Moreover, while identities may be flexible during peace, inter-group violence hardens them so that the conflict reinforces its own causes. The need for protection forces individuals to choose a group, while inter-group mistrust forces each side to decide who is worthy or trustworthy enough to accept. This encourages strict, blood-based definitions of identity groups that leave little room for neutrality, negotiation, or reconciliation. Under conflict conditions, where extremists rule the day, each group will characterize its rivals as belligerent from birth, by nature. The end result is a conflict that all sides see as unavoidable, whether or not the identity fissures that created it are inherent or constructed, mass-led or elite-created.

Individual Interests: bloody profits, personal power, and warlords

War is tragic but it may not hurt everyone involved. Especially in the 1990's, scholars argued that sub-state conflict could represent the self-interested choices of those who benefit from violence. Using individual interest approaches, several authors posit that leaders and fighters may maximize their personal benefit by starting, prolonging, or intensifying conflict.

Reno (1997b) argues that, with the end of Cold War foreign aid, the patronage politics that had long sustained weak states in the developing world have broken down. As executives lost the option of buying loyalty with funds from the super-powers,

powerful individuals within their countries began to develop independent followings, militias, and commercial networks to replace pay-offs from above. Contesting each other and the weakened state for territory, resources, and recruits, these disparate strong-men find much to gain from violence. When local finance dries up, strong-men turn abroad, selling commodities or allying with neighboring states to obtain funds (Reno 1997a). These leaders use some of their conflict funds to offer wealth and political influence to the poor and once-marginalized youth who become their foot soldiers. Where young men do not have comparable peaceful opportunities, the high-risk, (relatively) high-reward life of a militiaman can be attractive. As a result, groups and their leaders become dependent on income that they earn only as long as violence continues. Whether revenue from selling stolen commodities, fees extorted from international aid organizations, or funding from a rival state that seeks to de-stabilize its neighbor, conflict finance will dry up absent a conflict. Accordingly, in Reno's (1997a, b) conception, no leader will favor a reconstituted state, unless he/she is guaranteed to dominate it. Otherwise, continued conflict and dispersed authority is risky but personally preferable.[1]

Weinstein (2005) uses economic incentives to explain inter-rebel balance of power, a unique focus on rebellion's internal dynamics, rather than on the conflict as a whole. Here, the relative size of economic and social "endowments" available to armed groups determines which group will dominate contested territory (Weinstein 2005: 602). Weinstein (2005: 602) assumes that "a number of potential rebel entrepreneurs compete

[1] Other perspectives, most notably Collier and Hoeffler (2002), emphasize "loot-able" international commodities, whose sale finances longer and more intense conflict. Since rebellion is expensive and high-risk, armed groups are more likely begin and continue war if they have or can plunder valuable trade goods. However, several studies have challenged Collier and Hoeffler's (2002) conclusion since its publication (see Ross 2004, Sambanis 2004, Fearon 2005). Still, failed states literature continues to assume that economic incentives prolong and intensify sub-state violence (see case studies in Rotberg et al 2003).

to challenge the government in any given country," but that these groups may differ in the strategies available to them. Those with primarily economic endowments (loot-able commodities, external support, etc.) can use immediate economic payoffs to recruit fighters. Those without large economic endowments will instead promise future gains to their members based on the hope of conquering territory or the whole state. "Once we take over," they claim, "our people" will enjoy the spoils of war, be they land, equal rights, government jobs, elections, or any other long-term goal. Fighters will only believe such promises if they think the group leadership credible. In this model, credibility is largely a function of "social endowments," or a group's connections to traditional leaders, ethnic identities, religious communities, and other groupings whose members know and depend on each other (Weinstein 2005: 602-603).

Groups based on social endowments will usually have more committed and disciplined fighters as they attract those willing to fight for a political or religious cause or for their group's protection.[2] By contrast, groups who buy their recruits attract those who will disregard orders and group goals in search of personal gains. Depressingly, immediate payoffs are a much faster-working recruitment tool, suggesting that "in a race to form the dominant rebel group" leaders relying on bribed fighters will emerge first and "crowd out" rivals who need time to activate their social endowments. Accordingly, Weinstein (2005) predicts that where economic incentives are available, groups of profit seeking militants will dominate rebel activity. These, he posits, are more likely to abuse

[2] The group survival motive here mirrors the implied motivation for fighters in ethnic-war theory. The difference is that Weinstein, rather than assuming that all individuals necessarily fight for their identity group, treats such community defense as one among several potential reasons for a fighter's commitment. Each individual may choose not to fight, to fight to defend his/her ethnic group, to fight for a political cause, or to fight in exchange for pay and opportunities for looting/extortion. Ethnic war theory says nothing of the decision to fight, instead assuming (perhaps reasonably) that when a group is threatened, its members will provide willing fighters.

civilians and engage in criminal activity with no regard for political goals, legitimacy, or an ultimate end to the conflict (Weinstein 2005: 621-623). Though Weinstein's model assumes that all rebel groups exist primarily to challenge the state, fighting each other along the way, his conception easily applies to violence in a collapsed state as well. Whether or not the state is the prime target, armed groups will still compete for control of territory, resources, and populations. The balance of economic and social endowments within all or part of a collapsed state will determine the nature of violence in that area.

Wennmann's (2007) analysis makes Weinstein's conclusions yet more pessimistic. He argues that war financing is fungible and can come from many sources. Armed groups can easily adjust their funding strategy to continue paying for their violence under changing circumstances and constraints. Under most circumstances, any armed group can obtain an economic endowment. Where one endowment runs out or is otherwise denied, fighters who so choose can always find another. This suggests that almost all sub-state conflicts will be dominated by those groups willing to use economic payoffs to obtain and motivate their foot soldiers.

Other Interest-Based Theories

In the late 1990's humanitarianism practitioners and academics wrestled with the alarming realization that their well-intentioned activities could, in fact, prolong or intensify conflicts. Anderson (1999) compiled several studies and identified five principle ways in which humanitarian aid affects conflict: aid resources can be stolen by warring parties, aid reinforces economies of violence/coercion, aid affects distributions between warring groups, aid releases local resources for conflict, and aid legitimizes leaders who facilitate its delivery (Anderson 1999: 39). From this perspective, rational

fighters will respond to the new incentives created by humanitarian aid, many of which will encourage them to fight. Terry (2002) adds to this bleak picture, suggesting that refugee camps and refugee populations can protect, strengthen, and recuperate armed groups. Fighters may hide among refugees, using them as a shield while stealing food and medical aid and recruiting new fighters among young camp residents. Again, humanitarian actions may incidentally create incentives that encourage violence.

Similarly, in a recent work, Crawford and Kuperman (2006) argue that the expectation of humanitarian assistance or intervention increases the risk of violence in countries where minority groups have significant grievances. This occurs due to moral hazard, in which the expected aid reduces the expected effects of government retaliation, encouraging rebellion by angry factions. Though this theory refers to rebellion against a functioning government, it applies equally-well to conflict in a collapsed state. If there are two sub-state identity groups, one of whom is militarily dominant, the weaker group will be more likely to strike first or refuse to lay down its arms if it believes the international community will limit its suffering in the mismatched fight.

Still other perspectives analyze obstacles to negotiating an end to sub-state conflicts. Often peace, or peace on certain terms, does not favor important conflict parties. Stedman (1997: 10-11) places potential "spoilers" on a continuum from "limited" to "greedy" to "total." Limited spoilers have specific goals, like ethnic-group recognition, and will end their violence if negotiation can meet these ends. Greedy spoilers make cost-benefit assessments and take what they can get, expanding their goals when the cost of achieving them is low and contracting them when it is high. Total spoilers seek complete power over the conflict society and will not soften this demand in

pursuit of peace, no matter what the cost of war. Importantly, Stedman (1997) suggests that radical ideological movements are usually total spoilers since their goals are so extreme and rigid as to disallow compromise. Stedman's (1997) is the only model reviewed here that explicitly accounts for extreme ideological movements. It suggests that Islamist extremists are un-deterable, total spoilers unwilling to accept peace unless entirely on their terms. Moreover, Stedman (1997) would predict that Islamist extremists will not adjust their tactics significantly in response to changing circumstances; they will remain violent and extreme to the bitter end.

Synthesis: The New Wars?

Clearly, the identity-group war and individual economic interest approaches predict very different trends in sub-state warfare. What if antagonistic ethnic identities coincide with loot-able resources and crumbling state patronage networks? In such a case, Reno (1997a, b) and Weinstein (2005) would predict that self-serving guerillas of fortune would dominate armed conflict. However, Posen (1993), Kaufman (1996), and Roe (1999) would expect mutually-threatening ethnic groups to draw the most important battle lines. Anderson (1999), Terry (2002), and Crawford and Kuperman (2006) would warn that humanitarian actions, real or expected, could reinforce and prolong both economic and inter-group violence. Meanwhile, Stedman (1997) would tell us that the intensity and likely duration of the conflict depends on the types and intensity of the goals held by fighters and their leaders. In short, literature on armed conflict provides no consensus predictions. Existing scholarship does not say for sure what conflict looks like in collapsed states or what types of collapsed states encourage what types of conflict.

Kaldor (1999) attempts to reconcile these divergent viewpoints with her theory of "the new wars." At first siding more with the ethnic war theorists, she argues that "the new wars are about identity politics" and "the new identity politics is about the claim to power on the basis of labels" (Kaldor 1999: 6). However, while identities motivate conflict onset, economies of violence allow them to persist. For Kaldor (1999), the new wars require new finance methods, as violence prevents state taxation and domestic production. These alternatives include familiar concepts such as external sponsorship, local looting, and black market trade, all of which "can only be sustained through continued violence so that a war logic is built into the functioning of the economy" (Kaldor 1999: 9). This aggregate perspective generalizes the individual economic incentives of Reno (1997a, b), Weinstein (2005), and Collier and Hoeffler (2002) to argue that an entire economy can come to depend on conflict.

Munkler (2002) provides another take on the "new wars." He affords "ethnic and religious oppositions" as well as individuals' search for "power and wealth" the capacity to prolong and intensify sub-state conflict (Munkler 2002: 6-7). He also echoes Stedman (1997: 13) in declaring that conflict will persist as long as those "most prepared to resort to violence" want it to. For Munkler (2002), what these conflicts share is complexity, rather than a particular pattern. As he puts it:

> "the various monocausal approaches...fall short of the mark. Yet the impenetrable web of motives and causes, which often leaves no prospect of lasting peace, is a direct consequence of the fact that it is not states but para-state players that confront one another in the new wars" (Munkler 2002: 8)

So, where Kaldor (1999) assigns clear conflict roles to identity (initial motivation) and interests (perpetuation), Munkler (2002) argues that both are important, with no particular priority. Instead of favoring a particular motive, Munkler (2002: 7) concludes that the

new wars most often occur and persist in "regions where a major empire held sway and then fell apart." States in such areas never developed the robust governmental structures and national identities that prevent sub-state conflict in the western world (Munkler 2002: 8-10). This structural argument, while broad and inclusive, does not help us predict when each type of conflict will occur or when conflicts will include elements of both identity and individual interest.

Conclusion: ideology; irrelevant or ignored?

No doubt the collapsed-state security environment is complex. Munkler (2002) does well to acknowledge this complexity. No single theory or model explains all that goes on when the state goes away. Furthermore, broad as it is, the literature on state failure and sub-state conflict also simplifies and omits a great deal. Most significantly, the literature reviewed here generally ignores ideology. Some authors lump it in with ethnicity and identity, as in Weinstein's (2005) list of potential social endowments: "shared ethnic or religious identity, shared political beliefs and ideology, or tight social networks" (Weinstein 2005: 607). Others clearly favor ideology, even as they dismiss its potential influence. For example, Reno (2005: 150) laments that sub-state conflict often "affords ideologues little time and resources to gain popular support." Reno (2005) assumes that ideological movements are less destructive than ethnic or economic interest groups but that they will ultimately be overcome by these latter factions.

While academia has largely left it out, ideology's apparent importance to Al Qaeda ensures that others will focus on it. The Department of State's claim that weak states are "breeding grounds for violent extremism" looks more controversial through the lens of sub-state conflict theories. Far from agreeing that the decline or collapse of state

security crowds out *good* ideologues, policy makers fear that collapsed states create and enable *bad* ideologues.

Thus far, these perspectives have met head on in one particular debate—on how to characterize the violence in Iraq. Stephen Biddle's (2006) article "Seeing Baghdad Thinking Saigon," criticized Iraq-Vietnam comparisons by arguing that most of the violence in Iraq represented a "communal civil war" rather than an "ideological battle" as occurred in Vietnam. Echoing the ethnic war hypotheses, Biddle (2006) argues that hardened identities define most of Iraq's battle lines, despite U.S. rhetoric about an ideological struggle against Islamist terror. In a recent response to Biddle, Kalyvas and Kocher (2007) argue that, in both Vietnam and Iraq, ethnic and ideological violence were/are very difficult to separate from one another. Ethnic tensions will underlie apparently ideological conflicts, and vice versa.

Thus, ideology's role in collapsed states remains under-theorized and under-analyzed, despite its importance to U.S. policy. This study fits directly into the gap between collapsed-state scholarship and collapsed-state policy. It asks whether Islamist extremists are distinct from the rational actors of interest and identity group theories or whether their ideological motivations warrant a grouping of their own. The next section reviews academic literature on Islamism, exploring its perspectives on the rationality-ideology question.

Islamism: Veiled Rationality?

Suicide bombers are not selfish—at least not in the material, earthly sense assumed by conflict literature. How do the rational actor perspectives, which assume that self-interest and fear motivate sub-state conflict, explain Islamist terrorists' willingness to give up *all* their material well-being for a cause? Are Al Qaeda's extremists simply well-disguised power-seekers or ethnic militiamen, or do they constitute a separate category of armed group that requires its own model and its own policy responses?

As the previous section argues, prevailing theories of rational choice in sub-state conflict break down into those emphasizing individual interests and those focused on identity-group hostility. Both, however, employ rational choice and material interests. As a result, they would likely predict that Islamists use their ideology as a front or a tool towards more-tangible and immediate ends. Individual interest perspctives would focus on the desires of individual Islamists for power or riches, while ethnic war theories would suggest that the ideology reinforces ethnic antagonism and fear. In either case, the true, underlying motive for Islamists' violence is not a long-term—an extreme, utopian vision—but much simpler interests.

This section begins by reviewing literature on Islamism, paying special attention to the relationships between ideology, group and individual political power, and violence in modern Islamist movements. It then examines messages released by and scholarship focused on Al Qaeda. It asks whether Al Qaeda's international, violent Islamist movement appears ideologically driven or consistent with a self-interested group, merely using ideological rhetoric for other ends. The analysis section will ask similar questions about other armed Islamist groups to determine if and how the answers change when the

state collapses. Accordingly, Al Qaeda will provide an important standard for comparison. Al Qaeda is the most prominent of a handful of violent Islamist organizations that operate on a global scale. Its leaders provide ideological guidance to like-minded *jihadi*'s the world over. Hence, the degree to which a violent Islamist movement shares messages and strategies with Al Qaeda is an important measure of the potential international threat it poses.

Finally, this section argues that Al Qaeda does not fit sub-state conflict models very well. Scholarly literature suggests that, while Islamist groups hold transcendental goals and use universal religious language, they also respond to local conditions and alter their ideology, or at least their rhetoric, to fit their political context. In this respect, Al Qaeda appears no different. However, Al Qaeda distinguishes itself by its dedication to violence and to terrorism as a tactic to be used regardless of the context. Its members appear willing to kill, die, and sabotage whether or not this is the best method of obtaining the group's stated goals. In addition, these members come from several countries and ethnic groups and Al Qaeda has made efforts to include diverse grievances and struggles under its ideological umbrella. In these aspects, it appears that international violent *jihadi*'s depart from sub-state conflict theories by displaying a willingness to pursue long-term, universal goals at the expense of short-term self interest and without relying on primordial identity groups. Their commitment to violence at all costs and in all circumstances does not fit well into any theory of rational choice. This study ultimately seeks to resolve the contrast between this reality and conflict theorists' prediction that ideological groups will not last long in collapsed states.

Islamism as Revival

Active in earlier time periods, Islamism only truly rose to prominence in the 1970s, as an ideological alternative to secular Arab nationalism. This latter doctrine was in crisis in the 1960s, failing to deliver on promises of post-independence glory and strength. Specifically, in the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israeli military dealt Egypt, the exemplar of Arab nationalism, a crushing military blow. At the same time, skeptical Muslim populaces began to call in nationalists' domestic promises of economic growth and political liberalization. Islamists seized this moment of turmoil to present both a critique of secular ideology and a religious alternative, with utopian promises (Ajami 1992). Though firmly situated in the political context of the day, this new movement drew on supposedly transcendental ideas and solutions, its leaders professing commitment to eternal principles regardless and even at the expense of their personal interests. Their goals were timeless, even if their growing influence was unique to the present.

Esposito (2002) argues that today's Islamists fit a historical pattern of Islamic revival movements. Ibn Taymiyya, a medieval religious scholar, sparked the first of these movements in response to the Islamic Caliphate's defeat and conquest by the Mongolian Empire. He responded to this humiliation by enjoining fellow Muslims to return to the ways of the Prophet Muhammad, finding strength in strict religious obedience. In both context and message, Taymiyya foreshadowed today's Islamists: Muslim ideologues respond to the *umma*'s humiliating military defeat at the hands of a non-Muslim rival by offering an explanation and a plan for recovery based on Islamic history.

For most Islamists, the idyllic Islamic past is best represented by Muhammad and his followers, their piety and strength providing the model towards which the Muslim community should strive. For Esposito (2002), two aspects of Muhammad's legacy are most important: *higra* and *jihad.* Meaning "flight" or "migration," and "struggle," respectively, these terms refer generally to Muhammad's efforts to preserve, expand, and purify the Muslim community. When Mecca became too dangerous and inhospitable, Muhammad moved the fledgling Islamic community to Medina. Once there, he strengthened the community by emphasizing two struggles. The first was personal, where each Muslim fought his own selfishness and impulses in order to live a more Islamic life. The second was communal, where the Muslims fought (often violently) to defend and spread their civilization. The *higra* to Medina and the subsequent *jihads* (both personal and communal) arise frequently in any Islamist discourse. They show disaffected Muslims how to deal with impiety from within and threats from without. Muhammad's patience and devotion were ultimately rewarded as his Muslim community not only survived but spread to control much of the known world (Esposito 2002: 34-35). No surprise, then, that ideologues turn to his example when the Islamic community seems in dire straights.

Ajami (1992) addresses the most recent Islamic revival and its leaders' deft matching of historical vision and political context. For him, secularists' hostility to religion made their subsequent failures easy targets for Islamists. The secular nationalist and socialist movements, dominant in the Arab world of the 1960's and 70's, considered religion an out-dated and reactionary force. It impeded modernity and distracted individuals from worldly progress and practical struggles. Secular leaders in Egypt,

Syria, and elsewhere promised that their "modern" ideology would bring strength to the Arab nation. Defeating Israel would demonstrate this strength, but when, in 1967, Israel decimated the Egyptian and Syrian forces arrayed against it, the nationalists' credibility also lay broken in the wreckage. Islamists claimed vindication. Ajami (1992: 65) interprets their arguments as follows: "had the Arab states waged war along the only true lines—religious lines—victory would have been theirs." In preaching national and class struggle, "Syria and Egypt [made] cowards and inept soldiers out of a community that had a history of glorious victories" (Ajami 1992: 65).[3] In other words, the secular ideologies divided the once-great Islamic civilization into artificial nations and classes. Had the Muslim community, or *umma*, fought united, Israel would not have stood a chance.

The Islamist view at once explains the Arabs' weakness and predicts their return to strength, if they return to religion. The vanguard Islamists, exemplified for Ajami by Kishk and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, look to the past for the "authentic" religious roots of their societies' strength. But they are not conservative or passive. They encourage "opposition to corruption and inequalities," challenging existing rulers with their claim that "legitimate rule must be Islamic rule" (Ajami 1992: 73). Their combination of critique of the present and confidence for the future provided what Ajami (1992: 71) calls "solace and consolation" to the defeated Arabs, gaining such great influence that "previously more or less secular pan-Arabists began to display greater piety."

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[3] Here, Ajami refers to Muhammad Jalal Kishk's arguments. He cites Kishk texts published in Arabic in 1965, 1967, 1969, and 1970. According to Ajami, all posit that Arab societies declined when they adapted themselves to western ideologies, from liberalism to secular nationalism to Marxism. According to Ajami, Kishk argues that the only appropriate organizing principles for Muslim societies derive directly from Islam.

Pipes (1996) characterizes Islamism as an effort to mimic the West. Often foreign-educated scientists, Islamist ideologues promise the strength, wealth, and technological advancement of the West, but propose to get them through Islam. They interpret western advantages in economic development, scientific progress, and military power as rewards for the West's commitment to its ideology. If the U.S. and Europe prospered through dedication to liberal-democracy, then Muslim societies languish because they have abandoned their Islamic roots. The solution, then, is to find Islam's ideology, restoring the *umma*'s strength by re-organizing it along religious lines. For most Islamists, this means more carefully emulating the prophet Muhammad and the Islamic empire he founded (Pipes 1996 52-56, 60-64).

These authors place Islamism in long-run, historical perspective. They show that efforts to re-make today's Muslim societies in the image of Muhammad's share this goal with past revival movements. When the Islamic world appears humiliated or backward, Muslims may seek ideological solace in a turn to the past and the supposed glory and power that characterized the first generation of believers. The leaders who provide such consolation and hope do so out of a combination of opportunism and ideological commitment. Many, like Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, had existed long before the 1970's. Others, however, may have formed or joined the movement to exploit its new political power to their own advantage. Understanding the competition between the desire to realize transcendental utopia and the temptation to seize new opportunities for power is crucial to understanding Islamism in collapsed states. The conflict literature argues that only those groups willing to sacrifice ideological purity for political/military/economic advantage will survive in sub-state conflict. Thus, one would

expect Islamists in collapsed states to compromise ideology or be overwhelmed by those who do. The next section examines Islamism in practice and in power, asking how Islamists interact with their immediate political environment.

Islamists on the Ground

Several recent works attempt to dig past Islamists' transcendental appearance. These authors identify the power of pragmatic politics, beyond or behind ideology. For some authors, Islamists' political strategy trumps their long-term goals, while for others, both are important and the compromise between them determines the movement's character.

Roy (1997: 69) accepts that Islamism originally aims at societal transformation: "all Islamist movements advocate a total reshaping of the society along Islamic principles…Islamists are revolutionary." When they gain power, however, a "contradiction between state logic and *shari'a*" forces Islamists to "cast into Islamic terms a political strategy" (Roy 1997: 69). Pious intentions notwithstanding, Islamists adapt to political and economic constraints and needs as would any other movement. Mundane and material responsibilities force Islamists in power to shelve, change, or even violate their ideological plan.

Ayoob (2004: 1) argues that, though Islamists attempt to "de-historicize" Islam and its political implications, both "are determined by the contexts within which they operate." He agrees that Islamists present political solutions as grounded in the prophet's example and a return to the authentic roots of Muslims' strength. In reality, however, their specific political actions depend on the political situation that confronts them. Moreover, Ayoob (2004: 2) asserts that Islamists' "political activity…is generally

confined within the borders of [a] state." Accordingly, he is careful to separate Islamists' actions from their rhetoric. While they *speak* of transnational, religious ideas, Islamists *act* according to their local context.

Ismail (2006) affirms that Islamism is a contextual phenomenon. As she puts it, "the development of Islamist movements was conditioned by a particular micro-setting and specific processes tied up with changing social conditions," thus producing Islamist variants characterized by "multiplicity and diversity" (Ismail 2006: 26-27). However, Ismail also emphasizes the roles of what she calls Islam's "discourse." Islamists respond to political situations by re-casting and re-applying religious concepts, keeping the same universal, historical and religious claims, but adapting them to the context. While Islamists may retain constant religious concepts as their goals, they continuously re-interpret these concepts to keep their stated ideology relevant.

In more recent perspectives, Hamid (2007) and Leiken and Brooke (2007) argue that Islamists' commitment to conservative religious views is balanced with a willingness to adapt to political conditions. Hamid (2007) emphasizes moderate Islamists' support for democracy and political liberalization. Leiken and Brooke (2007) focus on Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, arguing that "instead of pursuing a divisive religious or cultural agenda, the Brotherhood has pushed for more affordable housing" and other practical, short-term goals. In these perspectives, Islamists may retain long-term revolutionary visions, seeking to re-construct their societies in the image of a past ideal, but in the day to day of national politics they support elections, lobby for judicial reform, and work to improve basic social services.

Furthermore, in Esposito's (2002) history, the roots of this pragmatism appear even in earlier revivalist movements. Besides Taymiyya, modern Islamists also look to Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab for inspiration. Al-Wahhab's alliance with the house of Saud laid the foundation for Saudi Arabia's present-day cooperation between clerics and statesmen. While Muhammad's example encourages cross-tribal Muslim alliance, Wahhab aligned with the Saudi tribe for practical reasons. He gave them religious legitimacy and they gave him their attention, the opportunity to influence the statesmen who controlled the Arabian peninsula's most powerful military.

The theories of Islamism reviewed thus far divide into two main categories. The first, the historical theories put forth by Esposito (2002), Ajami (1992), and Pipes (1996) explain the ideological origins and appeal of Islamism. All stress feelings of humiliation and indignity experienced by Muslims in the 1970's. Esposito (2002) stresses the Prophets example of patience and perseverance in the face of external threats, Ajami (1992) focuses on the humiliation brought by the Arabs' defeat in 1967, and Pipes (1996) emphasizes Islamists' desire for an Islamic ideology that could lead Muslims to modernity. These three explanations share an emphasis on Islamisms' ideas and rhetoric, rather than its practice. They explain Islamism as an alternative to secular Arabism or a response to the strength and the spread of western liberal-democracy. Thus, they help explain why Islamism is popular as an opposition movement in many countries whose ruling regimes are secular and/or allied with the West.

A second group of theorists focuses on the effects of Islamism's immediate political context on its practice. Roy (1997), Ayoob (2004), Ismail (2006), Hamid (2007), and Leiken and Brooke (2007) all find that Islamists generally hold revolutionary

religious goals but that they usually sacrifice these, to an extent, in the name of political strategy or practical necessity. While most the other theorists assume that Islamists are opposition activists/politicians, vying for popular support, Roy (1997) focuses on the extreme case in which Islamists are actually in power. This context magnifies the need for Islamists to compromise on their most conservative objectives in order to fulfill the day-to-day requirements of governance while maintaining legitimacy with the public. Unlike the first group, all of these authors emphasize the constraints placed on Islamist ideology by the political context. Any Islamist who seeks influence will have to adapt to local and national political conditions.

Taken together, these authors suggest that Islamism is not a purely ideological movement. Though its ideas may be transcendental, providing a permanent ideological alternative to secularism of all kinds, they necessarily change and adapt in different political environments. At first, these perspectives would seem to fit best with ethnic war theories, which assume that groups act rationally, maximizing their own power and security in a given situation. Islamists, rather than slaves to their transcendental ideals, appear willing and able to alter their tactics, re-cast their messages, and even compromise their ideology in order to adapt to their political environment. What may separate them from the armed groups of conflict theory, however, is the scope and definition of their membership. While Ayoob (2004) argues that Islamism is generally a national phenomenon, none of the authors reviewed in this section suggests that Islamism simply reinforces primordial identities.

Moreover, most authors credit Islamists with some degree of ideological commitment, contradicting the assumption that individuals have only material interests.

If anything, Islamists act like political parties, tailoring their appearance so as to maximize their potential membership, while maintaining some degree of commitment to their fundamental principles. In conflict theory, however, violence largely eliminates those with ideological scruples, favoring armed groups and individuals who freely exploit economics and identity politics. The next section examines two main theories of Islamist violence in order to determine whether conflict, as a political context of its own, affects the balance between ideological commitment and political expediency in Islamists' actions.

Violence

For a strictly rational actor, like those assumed by sub-state conflict theories, violence is a means. Individuals fight because they expect to gain from fighting (or fear losing from not fighting). Similarly, for most ideologues, violence is a method of progressing towards a set of long-term goals. Ideologues will fight when it seems the best way to remove obstacles to and lay foundations for their ideal society. In this vein, Hafez (2003) argues that state repression and exclusion create Islamist militants. Denied meaningful political participation and brutalized by security forces, the Islamist opposition turns to violence for lack of a better alternative (Hafez 2003: 199-201). On the surface clearly contextual, this argument also includes an important revolutionary/ideological component. This theory assumes the a-priori existence of the "Islamist opposition" (Hafez 2003: 200). Always present and politically active, the Islamist movement turns violent in response to political conditions. Hafez does not appear to believe that Islamists groups define themselves based on ethnicity or design their strategies in search of immediate, material benefits. Islamists of his type are none

the less rational ideologues, maintaining a commitment to broad change, while adjusting their methods in response to political conditions. This perspective neatly combines historical explanations of Islamism's ideological appeal with theorists who predict its contextual adaptation. It also requires only limited modifications of sub-state communal conflict theory: each group acts rationally only it pursues an ideological vision, not mere survival.

On the other hand, Kepel (2002) treats the most-violent fringe of the Islamist movement as fundamentally different from the mainstream. In general, he argues that Islamists' political appeal depends on their ability to unite disparate social classes. Though more specific, this theory fits easily into the group of Islamism theorists who emphasize its contextual adaptations, arguing that its appeal rests more on its place in greater politics than the appeal of its ideas in particular. In explaining transnational violence, however, Kepel's (2002) theory diverges from the others. He argues that, in the 1990's, economic interests divided Islamism's main constituent classes, the urban poor and the pious middle class. Without this united power base, Islamist movements faced declining political relevance. A handful of extremists within Islamist movements proved unwilling to watch their ideology slip into history. Instead, they took to terrorism and insurgency, imposing their own relevance through force.

However, Kepel (2002) complicates this picture, pointing out that the majority of violent Islamists in the 1990s had fought in the anti-Soviet struggle in Afghanistan. For Kepel (2002), these seasoned fighters with extreme goals simply had to continue fighting; they could not do anything else. When their host countries refused to give them battles to fight or when foreign populations refused to incorporate them into local struggles, they

needed new direction. In such a context, writes Kepel (2002: 219), the *jihadis* developed a new ideology whose "first doctrinal principle was to rationalize the existence and behavior of militants." In other words, extremists' violence is constant, while ideology evolves to justify it in a changing political context.

Kepel's (2002) perspective seems consistent with a contextual view of Islamists as a whole. It predicts that Islamists seek power by adopting the causes of different social classes. However, it separates the violent fringe from the rest of the Islamist movement. Neither political context nor revolutionary vision is the most important motivation for Al Qaeda and other international *jihadi* groups. Members of these groups self-select, adopting movements and ideologies that justify their violence. They join not out of ethnic affinity or political strategy but out of a desire to do violence, to be with others who do violence, and to create a unified message that justifies it. In a softer version of this theory, the extremists could be those whose ideological goals are so extreme that they prevent or prohibit compromise. These individuals might share certain goals with other Islamists, such as reconstituting an Islamic Caliphate on the Prophet's model, but they also share a belief that Muslims must wage violence against all those standing in the way of these goals. For these individuals, fighting a Holy War is, itself, an Islamic duty or goal rather than a mere means to other objectives. Though victory will consist in creating an Islamic state, the war itself has value and takes precedence over all other methods.

Though more dramatic and more extreme, Kepel's (2002) theory may still have value in explaining some individuals' seemingly irrational commitment to violence. The case study sections will look for individuals who seem more committed to the fight than

its stated goals, as these will fit Kepel's (2002) model. Alternatively, Hafez's (2003) conception predicts that Islamists will sometimes fight and sometimes use other means, with the choice to do violence or not dominated by political conditions.

Conclusion: Islamists in Sub-State Conflicts

The theories of Islamism reviewed in this section suggest several key questions and tests that later chapters will apply to case studies. First, they all argue that Islamists are committed to their ideology. While Islamists will tradeoff some commitment in the name of political strategy, their true goals are based on interpretations of Islamic principles and their political implications. Combined with sub-state conflict theory, this suggests that Islamists cannot play any meaningful role in collapsed states. They will quickly be weeded out of armed conflict as less-scrupulous groups outmaneuver them by paying fighters and/or employing extreme communal rhetoric. Islamists' only option is to remain out of local political life, using the state purely as a safe haven without making any attempt to hold territory or influence local politics. As soon as their presence becomes inconvenient for self-serving armed groups and individuals, they will be driven out.

Importantly, however, Kepel's (2002) violent *jihadi* extremists do not necessarily require local influence. Most of their goals are so extreme and far-reaching that local influence could not make great progress toward them. More-importantly, their main goal may be *jihad* itself. If these groups can find external enemies against whom to wage *jihad*, they can satisfy this goal without contending with more-powerful local forces. The next chapter examines Al Qaeda, an extremist group that has used collapsed states as safe havens, to test this theory against Hafez's (2003) more conventional version. Doing so

will provide a worst-case for comparison against which to analyze other Islamist groups. It will ask whether there are Islamists willing to do violence under all circumstances. If so, later cases will look for evidence that such individuals are active in collapsed states and, if so, what relationship they have to broader Islamist groups and to the local political context.

II. AL Qaeda: Prototype of Threat

Osama Bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri lead Al Qaeda and serve as ideological guides for Al Qaeda-inspired global *mujahideen* everywhere. These militants occupy a relatively small, fringe position in the Islamist movement as a whole. Unlike most Islamists, they have decided to employ violence, even violence against civilians. Unlike most violent Islamists, they have decided to focus their violence on western, especially U.S., targets. Al Qaeda is the primary example of violent Islamism that directly and primarily targets western countries. Understanding what sets this group apart from non-violent Islamists and violent Islamists with a domestic focus is crucial for those hoping to analyze new and developing security threats. This section uses Al Qaeda to build a profile of the internationally-threatening, violent Islamist group. This type is distinct from other forms of Islamism in important and recognizable ways, so that outside observers can identify it. Accordingly, later sections use the Al Qaeda profile as a standard with which to compare other Islamist movements, asking how the overlap changes in collapsed states.

This section uses the same structure and methods as the case study analyses. It first examines Al Qaeda statements and rhetoric to construct a picture of the group's ideology. Next, it uses secondary reports of Al Qaeda's targeting, recruitment, and other activities to test its adherence to its stated ideology. It begins by addressing the two main branches of sub-state conflict theory, arguing that neither explains Al Qaeda. This is not surprising given that the theories address domestic groups and assume that they will pursue individual or identity-group interests at home. Al Qaeda's membership and operations are international, as is its rhetoric.

Rhetoric: Grievances, Threats, and a Masked Theology

Declared Grievances and Declared Goals

Al Qaeda rhetoric is thin on goals. Most speeches are laundry lists of grievances and threats, distinguishable only by the addition of current events. Al Qaeda is clear on the immediate course of action: war. Beyond that, things get quite murky.

Osama Bin Laden frequently releases statements expounding on America's "crimes" in the Middle East, as well as its faults at home. These arguments, sometimes directed to western populaces and often released to the mainstream media, aim to de-legitimize western governments and their counter-terrorist policy and rhetoric. Towards this end, Bin Laden frequently adopts the grievances of western opposition politics. He criticizes U.S. elections, the pro-Israel lobby, and the military industrial complex (Bin Laden 2003, 2006 in Ibrahim 2007: 210-211, 223). He also takes on America's moral character, denouncing "fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling, and usury" as practiced and tolerated in the U.S. (Bin Laden 2002 in Ibrahim 2007: 202). Based on its complaints alone, Al Qaeda's message is little more than a jumbled mix of extreme right and left wing critiques often heard in the West itself. As such, it paints Al Qaeda as a reasonable and understandable resistance movement. In this picture, Bin Laden is deeply aware of America's faults, deeply scarred by America's transgressions, and deeply committed to ending them. Westerners may despise his methods and disagree with his interpretation of history or verdict on the West's morality and worth, but, Bin Laden argues, they must recognize that his violence against the U.S. is a response to U.S. actions.

In his published "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," Bin Laden alludes to a plan that he never really provides. After

listing several grievances, he begins a paragraph by saying "from here, today we begin the work, talking and discussing the ways of correcting what had happened to the Islamic world" (Bin Laden 1996). The rest of this and subsequent paragraphs reverts to enumerating "injustices" done to Muslims by the West (Bin Laden 1996). Returning to methods later in the document, Bin Laden declares that "it is essential to hit the main enemy who divided the Ummah into small and little countries and pushed it, for the last few decades, into a state of confusion," blaming the West for division in the Muslim world (Bin Laden 1996). As Bin Laden puts it "the Zionist-Crusader alliance moves quickly to contain and abort any 'corrective movement' appearing in the Islamic countries (Bin Laden 1996).[4] Without defining or describing these "corrective movements," Bin Laden goes on to list ways that Muslim regimes allied to the U.S. have stifled domestic dissent (Bin Laden 1996).

Bin Laden then moves to *jihad,* citing Ibn Taymiyya to argue that war against infidels is both an Islamic duty, and an important source of unity within the Muslim community. Even this unity, however, is not seen as a goal but, in fact, as a necessary evil:

> If it is not possible to push back the enemy except by the collective movement of the Muslim people, then there is a duty on the Muslims to ignore the minor differences among themselves; the ill effect of ignoring these differences, at a given period of time, is much less than the ill effect of the occupation of the Muslims' land (Ibn Taymiyya, quoted in Bin Laden 1996).

Bin Laden then lifts and repeats another key quotation from Taymiyya: "No other duty after Belief is more important than the duty of jihad" (Bin Laden 1996).

[4] "Al Qaeda often refers to Israel and the West (principally the U.S.) as "the Zionists" and "the Crusaders," often using both terms together and adding "alliance" to emphasize their collaboration in a global front against Muslims.

So, in his seminal declaration of war, Bin Laden offers grievances and incitement, but no real objectives. He argues that the U.S., Israel, and moderate Arab regimes are "in the way," though he never reveals what they block. He blames the West for a host of problems in the Muslim world, but neglects to say what improvement would look like. One possible explanation is that Bin Laden believes the *umma* to be naturally good, a community corruptible only with great effort. In this view, the *jihadis* need only remove the barriers put in place by the "Crusaders" and their allies. Righteous Muslims will take care of the rest.

In other statements addressed directly to western electorates, Bin Laden often offers truces based on the simple logic of reciprocity: "any state that does not encroach upon our security automatically guarantees its own" (Bin Laden 2004 in Ibrahim 2007: 219). In a document entitled "Why We are Fighting You," Bin Laden answers simply: "Because you attacked us and continue to attack us" (Bin Laden 2002 in Ibrahim 2007: 197). Here, again, Bin Laden paints Al Qaeda in reasonable, fundamentally human, terms. As he puts it "shall a man be blamed for protecting his own? Self-defense and punishing the wicked in kind—are these shameful 'terrorism'?" (Bin Laden 2004 in Ibrahim 2007: 216). On the domestic front, Bin Laden speaks of reformers and dissident clerics to whom the Saudi (and other Arab) regimes "closed all peaceful routes" (Bin Laden 1996). Essentially making Hafez's (2003) argument, Bin Laden claims that, by imprisoning the opposition and silencing its views, Arab dictators forced Islamist movements to become violent.

"What would you do in our place?," Bin Laden seems to ask us. Most reasonable people would respond by referencing the millions of Muslims who do not interpret

western policies as a war against the *umma* and who do not feel that wholesale slaughter will improve their lot. But that is not the point. Bin Laden seeks to depict his actions as rational and, if not understandable, predictable and avoidable. He wants western countries to see Al Qaeda violence as a result of their own choices. Once they begin thinking this way, Bin Laden hopes to intimidate them into deciding that the fight against him is not worth its consequences. Convincing westerners that his violence is negotiable is a crucial first step for Al Qaeda's leader.

These two justifications, "*jihad* will remove obstacles to pious reform" and "*jihad* is a mere response to aggression," are related. The first is, in large part, an extension of the second. Taken together, they argue that violence against the West is not only a reasonable and proportional response to violence by the West, but will also remove the key obstacles to Islamic progress, as those also emanate from the West. By combining these two notions, Al Qaeda follows Islamic revivalist traditions: offering both solace and promise in the same message. However, where Taymiyya and Wahhab prescribed a broad return to fundamentalist tradition, Al Qaeda suggests *jihad* alone. In striking at the West, *jihadis* will satisfy their desire for revenge while opening the door to a better, more-Islamic tomorrow. If, on the other hand, the West realizes its ills and goes home, Bin Laden promises that Muslims will be content to build their utopian empire in peace.

Split Messages

The previous section's conclusion is compelling for some Al Qaeda rhetoric. However, Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri present another face in another setting. Raymond Ibrahim (2007: 3) translates what he calls Al Qaeda's three "treatises." These rarely-translated documents have been posted on radical Islamist websites but have never been

released in the mainstream media. Ibrahim (2007) urges researchers to separate them from the audiotapes, videotapes, and speeches that are often released in or translated into English and published by al Jazeera and other media outlets. The "theological treatises," are "more important" as they reveal the "religious" reasons for Al Qaeda's violence (Ibrahim 2007: 2). The other messages are mere "propaganda," providing only the "official" reasons for Al Qaeda's attacks (Ibrahim 2007: 2). According to Ibrahim (2007), Al Qaeda's true, underlying objectives rule out the truce proposals and reciprocity so important to the group's better-known messages.

These more-fundamental arguments are religious, grounded in Al Qaeda's interpretation of Islamic texts and supported by quotations from famous Islamic scholars. Taken together, the theological texts argue that Muslims have a religious duty to disassociate from non-Muslims, oppose any government not based on *shari'ah*, and wage virtually indiscriminate violence in the name of the *umma*.

The first of the treatises affirms the principle of "Loyalty and Enmity," which, Al-Zawahiri argues, requires Muslims to shun non-Muslims in all situations. This treatise describes and justifies the religious dimension of Al Qaeda's conflict with the West. As Al-Zawahiri puts it, "Allah Exalted has forbidden us from taking infidels as friends and allies, and aiding them against the believers, by either word or deed" (Al-Zawahiri 2002 in Ibrahim 2007: 99). Al-Zawahiri cites various Islamic theologians arguing some variation of this idea. Several of these emphasize that Muslims should treat with kindness and respect non-Muslims who have not taken any aggressive action against Muslims. These authors emphasize the following Quranic passage:

> Allah does not forbid you from those who have not made war against you on account of [your] religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, from showing them kindness and dealing

> with them justly. Surely Allah loves the doers of justice (quoted in Al-Zawahiri 2002 in Ibrahim 2007: 85).

Al-Zawahiri endorses this passage and scholars interpretations of it, all of which declare that war against infidels should be defensive. Its should not target any non-Muslims who have not first attacked Muslims. At face value, this position is clearly consistent with Bin Laden's emphasis on reciprocal relations with the West. Less reassuring is the fact that Al-Zawahiri and Bin Laden could interpret the West's actions as attacks, even if the West saw them as conciliatory. Such an impasse would prevent peace, but would still accomplish Al Qaeda's goal of portraying their violence as a simple response to the West's actions. More fundamentally, however, Al-Zawahiri's conclusion contradicts this reciprocal, defensive stance on *jihad* just a few paragraphs later. He calls on all Muslims to join the *jihad* and, in the following paragraph, praises all those who are "giving and sacrificing in the cause of liberating the lands of the Muslims, making Islam supreme in its [own] land, and then spreading it around the world" (Al-Zawahiri 2002 in Ibrahim 2007: 113). In this section, he stops short of declaring the effort to expand Islam a duty incumbent upon all Muslims. However, he makes clear that Al Qaeda favors this path.

Ultimately, Al Qaeda's widely known lists of grievances and its theological arguments are mostly compatible. Both conclude that Muslims have a duty to resist attacks on the *umma* with force. Both include support for Israel and secular Arab regimes among the "attacks" prosecuted by the West which require Muslims to respond. Neither offers detailed plans for reform, emphasizing instead the need to struggle against the status quo and to let Muslims and Islamic law, free of western interference, take care of the rest. The one potentially deep contradiction between these two messages is Al-Zawahiri's suggestion that he favors offensive *jihad* to expand the realm of Islam to the

entire world. This opinion, not supported by the Quranic passages or religious scholarship that Al-Zawahiri himself cites, is not central to the treatise, but has important implications. It suggests that Al Qaeda's talk of truce and of reciprocal relations with the West was mere propaganda.

It is impossible to know Bin Laden's and Al-Zawahiri's intentions definitively. For the purposes of this study, however, it suffices to notice the leaders' focus on *jihad*, whether offensive or solely defensive. Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri unite diverse grievances and general religious principles to justify violence against the West. If the justifications are inconsistent, the grievances somewhat ad hoc, and the ultimate goals unclear, the method of violent *jihad* is consistent. Even if Al Qaeda does not believe in offensive *jihad*, it is currently waging what it views as a defensive *jihad* against the West and is unlikely to stop. In "Why We are Fighting You," Bin Laden lays out conditions for a truce that, even if genuine, are too extreme to be conceivable. Beyond the cessation of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world, he demands that the U.S. eliminate the "debauchery that has spread among you...fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling, and usury" (Bin Laden 2002 in Ibrahim 2007: 202). "If you fail to respond to all these conditions," he continues, "then prepare to fight with the Islamic *umma*." Effectively, then, Bin Laden has pledged a perpetual war against the West. If Kepel (2002) reads them correctly, Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri remain constant on *jihad*, while varying or failing to clarify other positions, because justifying war is their true objective.

Sub-State Conflict

Importantly, Al Qaeda rhetoric makes little to no mention of either communal identity or opportunities to profit from violence. Though he calls it a necessary "ill," Bin

Laden explicitly calls for Muslim unity discouraging Muslims from dividing themselves along any other lines. Similarly, Al Qaeda leaders do not emphasize material welfare, even though their imagined Islamic utopia is likely quite comfortable. That identity groups and economic incentives do not play a central role in Al Qaeda's messages does not prove that they are unimportant. The next section examines Al Qaeda's actions to see what these reveal about the group's intentions. If these are truly communal or economic, Bin Laden's and Al-Zawahiri's actions will betray their ideological promises, seeking not to punish or intimidate the West but to obtain dominance for their community or wealth power for themselves.

Practice: Violent and Isolated

Targeting and Leaders' Histories

The MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base lists several attacks carried out by Al Qaeda since 1995. These took place in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Turkey, Bangladesh, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Indonesia, and the United States (MIPT 2007). They targeted civilians of many types with the most common casualties falling into the "government," "business," and "diplomatic" categories and the sites of attacks often symbolizing western influence (MIPT 2007). These choices reflect Al Qaeda's commitment to an anti-western *jihad*. Moreover, these attacks do not seem to single out particular identity group, killing Muslims, Christians, and members of multiple ethnic groups. Moreover, these hit and run and suicide operations do not generate profit for the attackers and do not give Al Qaeda's leaders access to resources, land, or direct political power.

Lawrence Wright (2006) analyzes Al Qaeda leaders' path to the global *jihad.* The anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan looms large. As Wright (2006: 150) puts it, after the conflict the "Arab Afghans," Arabs who had gone to Afghanistan to fight, "sought a new direction in their lives." Many were not allowed to return home. Their families and governments had disowned them and they lacked experience in anything besides guerilla warfare. This context fits Kepel's (2002) argument that extremist ideology developed, first and foremost, to justify the only way of life its proponents knew how to lead. Al-Zawahiri spent years in jail in Egypt for his views, while Bin Laden repeatedly led his followers into dangerous and uncomfortable situations, often viewing this act in itself as part of his struggle. By living simply and accepting pain and risk of death, the fighters would glorify their religion and dishearten their enemies. Bin Laden's ascetic displays made life difficult for his followers, weeding out all but the most devoted and causing the leader himself a great deal of suffering (Wright 2006: 193-201, 247-249). As Wright (2006: 248) put it, "bin Laden drew strength from privation and seemed oblivious to the toll such circumstances took on others." When one of his followers complained of hunger, Bin Laden reminded him that the Prophet Muhammad and his followers had endured much worse. In embracing poverty and hardship, not to mention risking death, Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri show zeal and a desire to transcend material interests. In their self-sacrifice, Al Qaeda leaders belie the selfishness assumed by individual interest theories.

Recruiting and Membership: Particular People at Particular Times

Marc Sageman (2004) examines in depth the social context and psychological profiles of those who choose to join Al Qaeda or allied global *jihad* movements. He

finds several necessary but insufficient conditions that make recruitment of *mujahideen* possible. Among these are social, political, and familial factors largely beyond the control of the recruit. However, he also affirms, "I have no doubts that the *mujahideen* were sincerely devout Salafists" (Sageman 2004: 94).[5] Moreover, these men are not only conservative, but display a remarkable willingness to forgo comfort, wealth, and life for their religious beliefs. Most members are married with children and come from middle class backgrounds and yet are "willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause" (Sageman 2004: 97). Sageman (2004) flatly rejects that Al Qaeda members are materially rational. Instead, he argues that the deep bonds that develop between fighters reinforce extreme goals and uncompromising willingness to sacrifice for them. In his words, "their awareness of their own readiness to transcend their self-interest fosters a special view of themselves and others like them" (Sageman 2004: 155). Where a "rational individual" committed to the goals of the *jihad* would have reason to abstain from fighting, free-riding on the sacrifices of others, Al Qaeda members derive self satisfaction directly from membership in a community defined by the willingness to die (Sageman 2004: 153-155).

Sageman (2004), a clinical psychologist and expert on social networks, refutes convincingly the view that Al Qaeda fighters are selfishly, materially rational. In combination with Wright (2006), this would seem to rule out the standard economic interest explanations as inapplicable to Al Qaeda. The ethnic/identity group warfare perspective, however, seems more useful. Sageman's (2004) emphasis on shared, community-wide commitments appears to fit. Al Qaeda members fight out of commitment to their version of Islamism and a belief that the West poses a threat to the

[5] "Salafi" essentially means "one who follows the predecessors." It is a general term describing Muslims who believe that the first generations who lived with and immediately after the Prophet Muhammad lived the best Islamic lives. Good Muslims, in this view, will attempt to live as these early generations did.

Islamic community as a whole. Moreover, in the inter-group warfare perspective, an action, irrational for the actor, can still be a "rational strategy for the group as a whole" (Sageman 2004: 154).

However, the communal warfare theories take membership in the community as a given. Ethnic or religious identity is known from birth and either cannot change or is made less likely to change as conditions become more threatening. Individuals commit violence, not in the name of particular beliefs or religious goals, but because they feel that their membership in an identity group requires them to fight. Self-defense or group chauvinism convinces them that, because they are who they are, they must fight those who are not. By contrast, Sageman (2004) and Wright (2006) devote entire chapters to the decision the join Al Qaeda's *jihad* and the process of defining who should be members and what they should do. A social and personal process leads individuals to abandon old lives and old identities to devote themselves to Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda members' geographic diversity (down to inclusion of western converts from Christianity) as well as its willingness to adopt causes as ethnically wide-ranging as Bosnian nationalism and Moro separatism in the Philippines suggests that primordial identities are, at best, a minor part of Al Qaeda's self definition (Sageman 2004: 52-53, 70-73).

Conclusion: The Prototype

Al Qaeda's rhetoric and practice give us a model of an internationally threatening *jihad* group. Both analyses suggest that Al Qaeda does not fit conventional theories of sub-state conflict. Rather, Bin Laden, Al-Zawahiri, and their followers unite around a shared commitment to wage *jihad.* Though they claim that their holy war is negotiable, in practice it seems intractable. The group's cease fire demands are unreasonable and its

members appear motivated and cohesive in large part because they are all eager to do violence and to give their own lives.

The group as a whole may act rationally in the sense of adapting to changing political conditions and molding its rhetoric to expand its political relevance. This would account for its changing and updating lists of grievances. Its long-term goals, however, are ambiguous and unexplained. The focus of most Al Qaeda Messages suggests that *jihad* itself, rather than any societal transformation, is the group's main goal. Though Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri may not believe in offensive *jihad*, they have declared their strikes at western civilians to be defensive and understandable. Accordingly, they become a duty incumbent upon all Muslims. As in Ismail (2006), Al Qaeda adapts its ideological discourse to fit current political conditions, adjusting general, theological ideas for the temporary context. Kepel (2002) argues that Al Qaeda's rhetoric is effectively ex-post justification for violence, which itself is Al Qaeda's only real goal. The movement's leaders are veterans of other struggles who do not know or desire any peaceful way of life. Their arguments merely provide causes for which to carry on fighting.

Finally, since Al Qaeda membership depends on commitment, rather than primordial identity, it has the option of appealing to disparate ethnic communities. Moreover, recruits will be willing to forgo personal comfort and gains to earn membership in a community defined by its members' willingness to kill and die for a cause. In this sense, violent Islamist organizations display some characteristics of "total spoilers" (Stedman 1997) or "socially-endowed rebels" (Weinstein 2005) from sub-state conflict theory. They attract militants who do not seek profit and who do not join out of

loyalty to a primordial identity group. Rather, those who volunteer do so out of commitment to the group's ideas and its internal culture.

The following sections will compare other violent Islamists to Al Qaeda. They will outline the groups' stated ideologies' and their actions, as this section did for Al Qaeda. Then they will analyze these outlines to determine whether the groups follow Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri in committing to anti-foreign *jihad* under all reasonable circumstances or whether communal conflict and violent profits are their true motivators.

II. Comparing Weakness

This chapter outlines the project's comparative strategy, describes and justifies its cases, and, finally, explains key variables, hypotheses, and data. One hypothesis represents the assumption that state failure breeds violent *jihadi* ideology. Another represents the communal warfare prediction that hostile identity groups drive conflict. A third represents the interest-based hypothesis that economic endowments determine who fights in and who dominates sub-state conflict. Each hypothesis has specific, falsifiable predictions for each case study.

Variable-Focused Comparison

This project uses a variable-focused comparative method that tests the relationships between specific variables across multiple cases. Most basically, this project attempts to assess the relationship between state collapse as an independent variable and the influence of *jihadi* ideology as a dependent variable. Ragin (1987: 54-55) argues that variable-oriented approaches are well-suited to hypothesis testing. They start with theories that predict relationships between variables. They then choose cases and data that represent those variables in the real world. When actual data conform to a theory's predictions, the researcher concludes that his/her study supports the theory. When they do not, the researcher concludes that the study does not support the theory. At this point, the researcher must decide why. Here, Ragin (1987) points to a significant advantage of comparative case study methods. Because these studies generally involve a small number of cases, they allow the researcher to learn about each in great detail. This knowledge helps identify important missing variable and conditions not present in the original theory (Ragin 1987: 14). Including these new factors will generate new

predictions, which the researcher can test in turn. This iteration between results and hypotheses allows variable-focused comparison to both test and generate theory (Ragin 1987: 15-16).

Since this project aims to test the relationship between state collapse and international violent jihadism, it falls clearly into the controlled, variable-focused approach. State collapse is actually a collection of variable conditions, the most important of which the state government's lack of military dominance. Literature on sub-state conflict then predicts how armed groups will compete to fill the void left by the state, suggesting two other variables: antagonistic identity groups and opportunities for individuals to profit through violence. These predict whether and with/against whom people in collapsed states will wage violence, as well as who will gain the upper hand in this conflict. Literature on violent Islamism predicts how armed Islamist, in particular, groups will react to the collapsed state context. By comparing different collapsed states with each other and with a non-collapsed state, this project examines the relationship between the state collapse variables and violent *jihadism*, testing the predictions of sub-state conflict and Islamism scholarship. The variable-oriented approach has another important advantage as well. Rather than predicting that Egypt or Somalia or Iraq is more prone to producing international violent *jihadis*, the theories reviewed here make generalizable claims. They argue that any collapsed state, or any ethnically fractured state, or any state with potentially profitable economies of violence is either more or less likely to produce international violent *jihadi* threats. Focusing on variables thus allows for generalizable conclusions because, while all societies differ from each other in certain respects, they may share the key variables in a given theory.

In order to make such generalizations, however, the comparative researcher must control for intervening variables. In other words, if he/she finds that an independent variable often coincides with the dependent variable, he/she must then rule out other possible causes before claiming to have found evidence of causation. In fact, Sartori (1991: 244) argues that "one may engage in comparative work for any number of reasons; but *the* reason is control" (emphasis in original). In other words, comparison's principal purpose is to allow researchers to rule out several potential causes in order to strengthen the evidence for the causal power of those left. High-quality control is then crucial to designing any comparative study.

Control: Choosing the Right Cases and Shrinking the Variable List

A comparative researcher controls most directly by choosing cases. Since it would be unethical or impossible to directly control variables in social research, the next-best option is to choose data from the real world that resemble the ideal conditions an experimental researcher would choose. John Stuart Mill laid down early precepts of variable-focused comparison in his *Two Methods of Comparison* (1888). Mill described what he called the "Method of Difference" (MoD) and the "Method of Agreement" (MoA) of which he suggested the latter for use in "investigation on those subjects where artificial experimentation is impossible" (Mill 1888). Essentially, the MoA entails finding several cases in which a given phenomenon occurs and looking for consistent similarities among them. Accordingly, it does not require that cases be excessively similar or that they differ in only certain respects. It requires only that cases share the dependent variable and differ in enough aspects that the important, potentially causal similarities stand out.

Lijphart (1975) updates Mill (1888), encouraging researchers to choose cases that isolate variation in a particular independent variable, regardless of values of the dependent variable. Lijphart suggests that the researcher hypothesize independent variables first and then choose cases so as to guarantee variation in them. This adjusts for the fact that, in the real world, a researcher is unlikely to find cases of the dependent variable that share only one independent variable. Rather than depending on such extreme isolation, an author can use theory to help rule out irrelevant factors and then choose cases so as to test the effects of those variables best-supported by theory. This approach essentially combines actual with theoretical control.

Using theory to shrink the list of relevant independent variables also helps solve the "many variables, small N" problem (Collier 1993: 15). Comparative studies may have more potential causal factors than cases with which to test them. If these independent variables often move together, it will be impossible to empirically isolate their effects on the dependent variable. Ruling out some variables theoretically increases the chances of an isolated result (Collier 1993: 17-18).

Similar to Lijphart (1975), Geddes (1990) also urges researchers not to choose cases based on the dependent variable. Even if all cases of the dependent variable are all cases of an independent variable, this is not strong evidence of causation. All cases in the population may have both or the cases used may coincidentally show both factors. Accordingly, researchers should add cases in which the dependent variable does not occur. If these also lack the independent variable, the researcher has found much stronger evidence of causation. Geddes (1990) concludes that studies with cases selected based on the dependent variable are useful only in suggesting new hypotheses or

uncovering anomalies that old theories cannot explain. In order to test theories, however, researchers need to choose cases based on random selection or other criteria not correlated with the dependent variable.

This study makes every effort to both reduce the number of relevant variables to be tested and to choose cases that produce variation in them. State collapse is a key causal variable in theories of sub-state conflict and in policy makers' assumed relationship between state capacity and terrorism. The former predict that a violent, collapsed-state context will crowd out Islamist ideologues. The latter predicts that insecurity and political frustration will make collapsed states breeding grounds or safe havens for *jihadis*. State collapse, and the political/military context in general, is also crucial to many theories of Islamism. These argue that Islamists' power depends largely on their ability to adapt to local political conditions, something most of them are fully willing to do. Accordingly, state collapse constitutes a certain type of political context, one dominated by violence, in which Islamists must adapt. Other theories hold that long-term trends in Islam and the international context are more important predictors of Islamists' strength. These often emphasize seminal events (i.e. the Yom Kippur War) and processes set off by them (i.e. the growing power of Islamist opposition parties). This project confines most case analysis to the same, post-911 period. Accordingly, any historical trends in Islam and its relationship with the rest of the world will act similarly on all cases. Variation in *jihadi* influence among the cases can, therefore, be attributed to other variables. In sum, this study chooses cases in order to guarantee variation in state collapse and holds the time period constant across cases in order to shrink the list of other relevant variables.

Independent Variables: Varying Collapse

Somalia and Iraq are collapsed states. In parts of their territory, armed groups use violence to compete for political power without meaningful state interference. Egypt, a functioning state, provides a standard for comparison where most political competition is peaceful. Accordingly, the Muslim Brotherhood and Egyptian Islamic Jihad present cases of Islamist groups from a stable state, while the Union of Islamic Courts and Al Qaeda in Iraq provide cases of Islamist groups from collapsed states. Systematic differences between the rhetoric and actions of Islamist groups in Egypt and in the collapsed states may indicate effects of state collapse.

Somalia and Iraq both score near the top of the Failed States Index (FSI) (FSI 2006). Egypt, on the other hand, has its weaknesses but is ranked 36th by FSI and is considered relatively stable (FSI 2006). In security, the variable on which this study focuses in measuring state collapse, Somalia and Iraq perform significantly worse than Egypt. The FSI does not measure territorial control or security specifically, but ranks the "security apparatus" in Somalia and Iraq as the worst two among all countries measured, giving both a score of 10 out of 10 for their contribution to instability (FSI 2006). This criterion measures the extent to which security forces increase violence (by serving the narrow interests of their leaders or political elites) or are unable to prevent violence (because they face "protracted campaigns" against them by rival armed groups) ("Methodology Behind CAST 2006). Similarly, both countries rank poorly on "public services" (including protection from violence), with Somalia scoring 10 and Iraq 8.5, and on "human flight," with Somalia scoring 8.0 and Iraq leading all countries with 9.5 (FSI

2006, Methodology Behind CAST 2006). Egypt, conversely, scores 6.1 on "security apparatus," 6.7 on "public services," and 6.2 on "human flight" (FSI 2006).

Other metrics produce similar results. The World Bank's "Governance Matters VI" report ranks 149 world governments based on several criteria, of which one is "political stability and absence of violence" (Kayffman et. al. 2007: 3). This variable measures the extent to which domestic actors perceive a risk of violent or illegal political change (Kauffman et. al. 2007: 3). In this area Somalia and Iraq both scored between -2 and -3 (with instability increasing at lower numbers) in most years between 2000 and 2006, while Egypt never scored higher than -.99 (Kauffman et. al. 2007: 79-81). This measure also ranks Somalia and Iraq as highly unstable compared to other countries scored. Especially since 2003, their political stability scores are the lowest or among the lowest measured by the report (Kauffman et. al. 2007: 79-81).

The 1990's presented the Egyptian state with several internal security challenges, to which it ultimately responded effectively. In 1992, security forces' drove Islamist militants out of Imbaba (then a large and largely-ungoverned slum), after their leaders claimed to have established an Islamic state in the neighborhood (Kepel 2002: 291). Following the take-over, the government injected "huge sums" of money into Imbaba, replacing the Islamists' social service networks and clerics with others closer to the regime (Kepel 2002: 291-292). The government ultimately imprisoned and killed most of the Islamists' leaders, while those remaining alienated the public with a series of excessively brutal terrorist attacks (Kepel 2002: 294-298). Islamists publicly-involved with anti-regime violence have since fled Egypt (Kepel 2002: 303-304). Its eventual victory over revolutionary elements in the 1990's proves that the Egyptian regime is the

ultimate arbiter of security conditions within its territory. Though it may not be willing to provide all public services to all its people all the time, it can clearly decide who provides them when it so desires. Accordingly, Egyptian Islamists act in a situation fundamentally different from that of Somalia and Egypt. If they take up arms and attempt to control territory or dictate what services the population receives, they can expect an overwhelming armed response from the government.

Within Somalia and Iraq there is significant variation in security and in the state's military control. Though no numerical indices or metrics differentiate intra-state conditions, periodicals and other sources provide good indications. The primary areas in which the UIC and AQI operated during the period studied were those in which the state government had the least influence: South-central Somalia and Al-Anbar province in western Iraq. The analysis sections will analyze the security conditions in these areas in more detail.

In addition, the analysis sections measure the potential for identity-based, interest-motivated, and Islamist violence/politics in each country. They look at each country's recent history to determine how influential these three main motivations are likely to be during the analysis period. Recent experience with identity conflicts, widespread illegal economies, or Islamist opposition movements will indicate a country's a-priori potential for those types of political competition.

By using Somalia, Iraq, and Egypt, this project gains variance in the independent variable. It compares extremely unstable and violent parts of unstable and violent countries with a country that is relatively stable and secure. This variance makes it

possible to test competing theories by looking for outcomes common to the collapsed states but not the stable states.

Controls: International Context, Religion, Islamism

This project focuses on the effects of state failure, ethnic division, and economic endowments, as these are the variables on which it intends to test and evaluate theories. In order to do so, however, it must also rule out the possibility that changes in the dependent variable result from intervening variables not related to the theories in question. The cases and years chosen control for several such variables. Most-basically, the analysis sections examine all cases primarily between 2001 and 2007, holding the post-911 international context constant. Next, the socio-religious structure of all three countries is similar in important ways, though certainly not identical. Each possesses a solidly Muslim population, with Egypt's 90% Muslim the lowest of the three (CIA Factbook). All three countries belong to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a global association of countries with large Muslim populations (oci.org 2007). Egypt and Iraq are pillars of the traditional Middle East and of Arab culture. Somalia, while not part of the Middle East or the Arab world, has always had strong connections to it. Many Somalis trace their ancestry to the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate followers in the Arab-Islamic empires of the 7th Century.

At the group level, this project examines the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in Somalia, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in Iraq, and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) in Egypt. All four groups call for a greater role of Islam and *shari'ah* law in their respective countries' politics, making all four Islamist by this study's definition. All are currently active and thus have chosen or are choosing the

extent to which their stated ideology and practice will overlap with Al Qaeda's. The key similarities listed above remove several obvious factors that might influence the international threat that a group poses. With these variables constant or close across cases, differences in the dependent variable are more likely to stem from differences in the key independent variables.

Variables and Hypotheses: Proxies and the Implications of Theory

Measuring Threat: the Dependent Variable

This study assesses the determinants of international Islamist terrorist threats. More-specifically, it looks for evidence of the frightening scenario posited by many in the policy community: collapsed states taken over by Al Qaeda allies. Al Qaeda is the most prominent and probably the most influential organization in the international *jihadi* movement. Accordingly, groups that mimic Al Qaeda's messages and actions pose international threats. Such groups would follow Al Qaeda in adapting their messages to their political contexts, while maintaining a constant commitment to violence against the westerners and moderate Muslims. If a group claims to be part of Al Qaeda's international struggle against western imperialism, it should attack western targets or targets associated with the West. It should choose, as Al Qaeda did, to eschew opportunities for domestic political and material gain in order to maintain the *jihad* wherever and however it can. By contrast, more-moderate Islamists may follow the contextual hypotheses from literature on Islamism. These vary in their details but make the common prediction that Islamists' actions, not merely their rhetoric, will adapt to the local context so as to increase the Islamists' influence.

To analyze these concepts, this study gathers rhetorical primary sources such as quotations, press releases and written statements from the principal leaders and spokespeople for each armed group and organizes them by main themes. It then uses secondary sources such as local and international media and situation reports from academics, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies to map each group's actions and revealed goals.

State Collapse, Identity, and Economic Interests: the Independent Variables

The key variable in this study is state collapse. As described in the literature review and earlier in this section, this study defines state collapse in terms of security. The state collapse metrics described earlier all show that Somalia and Iraq are significantly less-stable and more violent than Egypt. In Somalia and Iraq, Islamists may face violent competition from several other groups, including the official state, because the official state is incapable of preventing or deterring that violence as a normally-functioning state would. While violence may certainly occur in a stable state, it occurs despite the state's military superiority, evading rather than preventing or repelling official punishment.

State collapse, and the violence that goes with it, lead to divergent outcomes in sub-state conflict theories, theories of Islamism, and policy makers' current assumptions. Both sub-state conflict theories and policy makers predict that politics in collapsed states will be fundamentally different from that in stable states. In sub-state conflict theories, collapsed states will be ideologue-free, dominated by identity-group conflict and profit-seeking violence. Stable states, by contrast, create the political space necessary for ideologues to gain influence. Policy makers, on the other hand, argue that collapsed

states will empower *jihadi* ideologues by removing official obstacles and failing to provide non-radical alternatives for aggrieved residents. Stable states, though they may contain terrorist groups, will be better able to counter them militarily or to out-compete them politically, making their *jihadis* much less influential. Theories of Islamism that emphasize the political context predict that most Islamists in collapsed states will adapt to that context in order to gain influence. In other words, state collapse may make Islamists more or less influential depending on how well they adapt to it. However, since *jihadis* are, by definition, less willing to adapt, state collapse may have an unambiguous effect on their influence. However, this effect could be positive or negative for the *jihadis* depending on the relative accuracy of the sub-state conflict and policy makers' hypotheses. Finally, holding the time period and international context constant means that historical theories of Islamism predict no major differences among Islamists in collapsed and stable states. For these theories, the state's capacity is a temporary variable with only superficial influence on the broader, deeper Islamist movement.

Conflict Motivators: Identity, Interest, and Ideology

State collapse, alone, does not motivate conflict. Rather, it creates conditions under which other motivations can drive violence. For identity-based conflict, identity divisions must be present before the state collapses. Following state collapse, individuals will be forced to join extremists from their identity group in order to ensure their safety from rival groups. The groups' leaders will resort to progressively more extreme rhetoric and tactics against rivals, attempting to secure themselves and to prove to group members that they are capable of countering any threat. Accordingly, in societies with deep

communal divides, identity-based theories predict that Islamists will have to choose groups and emphasize those groups' interests in order to gain influence.

Individual interest theories predict that groups with access to economic endowments will be more sustainable, faster growing, and more brutal than those relying on ideological or communitarian motivations to convince their fighters to fight. Accordingly, in places with abundant lootable commodities or with abundant opportunities for robbery, smuggling, and extortion, interest-based violence will dominate. Here, Islamists will not be influential unless they are willing to eschew ideology in order to pursue profits for themselves or their bribed fighters. To measure economic endowments, this study again uses secondary reports of recent interest-based violence.

Unlike sub-state conflict theorists, Kepel (2002), Sageman (2004) and others argue that Islamists, in general, and *jihadis*, in particular, are fundamentally ideological. They develop their goals and choose their preferred methods based on their interpretation of Islamic tests and traditions. Accordingly, the most-direct determinant of *jihadi* ideology's influence in a society is the number of people in that society sympathetic to its ideas. In order to gauge this variable, this project uses each country's Islamist movement, as a whole, and its history. Presumably, Islamists are more-likely to adopt *jihadi* ideology than are seculars and those prone to *jihadi* action but kept from it by state security forces are likely to engage in other forms of Islamist activity. Therefore, the size and influence the Islamist movement in a given society is an effective predictor of the potential influence of *jihadi* ideology in that society. Having measured this, this project then assesses changes in the size and power of *jihadis* caused by state collapse.

Assessing the Groups: Primary and Secondary Sources

Ideally, one source would provide analogous data for all three cases, allowing for both statistical and qualitative comparison, based on parallel observations. However, no such source exists. Accordingly, this study uses the "second-best" dataset available for each country.

Since Egypt's government is secure and in control of most of its territory, the Muslim Brotherhood cannot occupy neighborhoods or wage open warfare to demonstrate its intentions. Moreover, few of the MB's speeches and declarations are available in English. Accordingly, the Egypt analysis will employ secondary sources, triangulating common conclusions from multiple authors rather drawing original conclusions from primary sources. Though some English-language primary sources are available on the MB's website, experts have noted bias in their content and messages, so the Egypt analysis does not rely on them. Data limitations, therefore, prevent any of the quantitative analysis employed in the Somalia and Iraq cases. Accordingly, comparisons involving Egypt are based primarily on representative examples from secondary accounts.

Articles from Somali and international media provide 334 quotations and statements from UIC leaders during the sample period. These fit roughly into eight categories: '*shari'ah*-based politics,' 'violence as a means of obtaining Islamist goals,' 'jihad/clash of civilizations,' 'economic greed and grievance,' 'communal identity,' 'para-state activity,' 'nationalism,' and 'all other themes.' These categories represent themes that match with sub-state conflict theories or with Islamist and Al Qaeda ideology. The Somalia analysis section then analyzes the relative weight given to each of these themes, as well as representative examples in order to outline the UIC's public

ideology. Its conclusions focus on content analysis of the representative examples. Though a statistical analysis of the number of statements that fit each category would be informative, differences in the type and quantity of sources available for the three cases studies render such a method inappropriate.

The Iraq analysis section uses statements compiled and translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). Within MEMRI's collection of articles and press releases from Iraq, 46 are ideological statements from Al Qaeda in Iraq and Islamic State of Iraq leaders. These are the two most-extreme of Iraq's violent, Islamist groups and may be, essentially, one organization.[6] The sample excludes propaganda posters and other media with few or no words. Again, the analysis places greater weight on representative examples than quantitative analysis due to differences between these messages and those available for Somalia and Iraq.

Conclusion

Using the method, cases, and criteria outlined in this section, the next section tests three hypotheses against actual data. Each hypothesis has clear implications for the degree of overlap between an armed Islamist group's ideology and Al Qaeda's ideology and for the coincidence of an armed Islamist group's ideology and its actions. The most internationally-threatening groups will both speak and act based on Al Qaeda's uncompromising commitment to international *jihad.* Groups motivated by identity-group conflicts within their area of operation may develop chauvinistic or alarmist identity-

[6] The extent and closeness of their relationship is a matter of some controversy. Some argue that the ISI is an umbrella organization that encompasses current and former AQI members while others argue that the ISI is simply a new guise for AQI. In either case, the ISI has taken over the main messaging responsibilities for AQI's branch of the *jihad*: that which refuses reconciliation with moderates and systematically targets civilians. Accordingly, this study treats both as representatives of the global, potentially Al Qaeda-style, *jihad* in Iraq.

based ideologies, and will act based on the strategic necessities of inter-communal conflict. Groups driven by economic endowments and potential material gain will act to exploit opportunities to loot and extort, rather than to pursue an Islamist vision. For the last two hypotheses, actions speak much louder than words. An identity-motivated group may profess international violent jihadist ideology as a part of defining its group. An economically-motivated group may use international jihadist ideology to cover its selfish, material motives, hoping that this will give it a better local reputation. In both cases, however, the group will not act according to its claimed international goals because its true motivations remain local and non-religious. The next section will attempt to determine which type best describes the Union of Islamic Courts, Al Qaeda in Iraq, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

III. Egypt

Background and Independent Variables

Background: A Stable State with a Troubled History

Egypt's Islamist movements have produced both the relatively moderate Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the *jihadi* Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), a radical and violent group that has since meshed its destructive goals and committed followers with Al Qaeda. MB leaders publicly assure their commitment to gradual, peaceful reform, deliberately distancing themselves from Al Qaeda and the violent *jihadi* movement in general. EIJ leaders, by contrast, form the core leadership that surrounds and advises Osama Bin Laden.

This study focuses on greater Cairo, where both MB and EIJ are or were most influential. Though Egypt is certainly a functioning state, residents in its informal urban neighborhoods receive many public goods (most-obviously, housing) from non-governmental sources. Ismail (2006: xiii) highlights the implications of this situation in her study of the "socio-spatial determinants that shaped the development" of Cairo's Islamists. She blends historical and political-economic analysis to argue that these groups reinvent Islamic language and tradition to appeal to the grievances of politically and economically marginalized residents in Cairo's slums (Ismail 2006: 112-113). They exemplify the willingness of modern Islamists to adapt their messages to their political context. This section establishes what it means that their context, unlike that of Somalia's and Iraq's Islamists, is characterized by a militarily-dominant state, able to control its territory and dictate what goods and services its population receives. It asks

how this context could produce two very different and mutually-hostile Islamist movements.

Ethnic/Identity-group Division: Exploiting Sectarianism

Primarily an Arab, Muslim population, greater Cairo features limited ethnic division. A small Coptic Christian population, however, lives in its own neighborhoods and has its own political party. In most of Egypt, where the Christian population is only about 6%, this identity fault line has not produced significant violence in recent years (Kepel 2002: 285). However, in Upper Egypt, where the Copts account for nearly a fifth of some governorates' populations, Islamists have used sectarian prejudices to their advantage. The Islamic Group (IG), a now-defunct militant organization with roots in upper Egypt, deliberately fed the (usually-inaccurate) perception that Copts were rich and exploitative. This allowed it to launch widely popular offensives against Christian leaders, businesses, and churches (Kepel 2002: 286-287). Analyses during the 1990's agreed that the IG's primary adversary was the Egyptian regime, even if Christians and foreigners made convenient targets along the way (Fandy 1994). Essentially, it appears that the IG's anti-Christian activity was as much a means as an end. By attacking a resented non-Muslim minority, the group hoped to build support and spread militancy among upper-Egypt's Muslims ahead of a wider insurrection against the regime (Kepel 2002: 285-286).[7]

When operating in Cairo, IG and EIJ focused their violence and rhetoric even more-clearly against the regime, rather than any religious or ethnic community (Kepel

[7] Fandy (1994) also argued that the IG's primary grievance was Cairo's dominance in national politics. More-recent analyses, however, represented here by Kepel (2002), Hafez (2004), and Ismail (2006) conclude that Islamist ideology and dissatisfaction with the secular regime were more-important motivations.

2002: 289-290). Even if many Islamists are suspicious of the Coptic community, it is not associated with the regime and the regime is the real obstacle preventing Egypt from becoming an Islamic state. As long as the state remains strong enough to police its territory and wage effective campaigns against violent Islamists, the latter are unlikely to make anti-Copt violence their central strategy.

Interest-Based Violence: Islamists in the Slums

In Cairo's slums, the Islamic Group used economic grievances to help build a support base. They provided social services and appealed to unemployed workers and under-employed college graduates, whose dissatisfaction with the regime was largely economic (Kepel 2002: 289-291). Egypt's sluggish economy and widespread corruption, therefore, provide significant opportunities for organizing resistance and opposition movements. In the 1990's, the Muslim Brotherhood gained control of unions and professional associations. Their influence, alongside the MB's social welfare programs, expanded the group's political influence even as it remained banned from official electoral participation (Bayat 1998: 156-157; Walsh 2003, civil successes). Though the regime's strength makes interest-based violence more difficult, political movements and parties can campaign on the same economic grievances that might motivate violence in a weaker Egyptian state.

Islamism and Jihadis: A Leading Exporter

Sageman (2004: 71) counts 20 Egyptians among Al Qaeda's 32-member "Central Staff." This would seem to suggest that Egypt, more than perhaps any other state in the world, has bred international *jihadis*. However, Egypt's Islamists are a diverse and divided group. Foremost among them is Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, perhaps the best-

known Islamist organization in the world. Founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, the Egyptian MB has since inspired several parallel movements and off-shoots in other Arab countries. In Egypt, the MB has always combined preaching, social services, and political activism (Phelps Harris 1964: 154-155; Ramadan 1993: 154-155). Beginning around 1965, significant *jihadi* strains began to branch off from the MB. These followed Sayyid Qutb, taking motivation from his execution that year by the Egyptian regime (Ramadan 1993: 157). Qutb held that Muslims had a religious duty to wage *jihad* against their governments until these enforced *shari'ah* and dismantled all human-made customs and laws (Ramadan 1993: 156). The Brotherhood leadership rejected these new positions, instead maintaining the MB's traditional gradualist approach (Ramadan 1993: 156-157). However, the new groups chose to impose their own relevance even without the MB's size and infrastructure (Ramadan 1993: 159-160). Ultimately, the *jihadi* factions would kill President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 and form the roots of Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Egyptian contingent within Al Qaeda (Ramadan 1993: 160).

There is no shortage of Islamism in Egypt. Home to the first Muslim Brotherhood and origin of many top Al Qaeda leaders, Egypt's Islamism spans the spectrum from moderate to *jihadi*. . And these branches are deeply hostile to one another. Al-Zawahiri derides the MB for using democratic means (accepting human rule over God's rule) and for drawing Islamists away from *jihad* (Raphaeli 2003, Militant Jihad).

Predictions: Bread and Butter Politics Take Precedence

Egypt's identity divisions are generally not violent. This could be more a result of the state's strength than of harmony between the Muslim and Christian communities.

Nevertheless, the reality is that no armed group has sought to mobilize one identity community against others since the early 1990's and that violence appeared to be a means to other ends. Political-economic grievances abound in Egypt and opposition groups can easily use them to garner support.

Among opposition groups, the Muslim Brotherhood has long been the most influential, with several smaller and more-militant Islamist groups behind it. Many Islamists have used social services to increase their influence, while highlighting the regime's weaknesses. When they have adopted more-violent activities, they have lost pubic support and most have decided to lay down their arms. Those refusing to give up violence, whether former Islamic Group members or hard-line followers of Ayman Al-Zawahiri, have been forced abroad. Faced with a secure state and an unsympathetic population, they have emigrated in search of *jihad.* Accordingly, during the sample period from 2001 to 2007, Egypt's Islamist movement was large and influential, but largely drained of *jihadis*. Egyptian Islamists appear likely to focus on "bread and butter" grievances against the regime, pursuing change and power with gradual non-violence.

Rhetoric: The Party Platform and Internal Debates

The Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and long-term vision went largely unsaid and unwritten until the summer of 2007. Then, for the first time, the group promised to publish a "party platform" that would outline its intentions for Egypt (Elmanshawy 2007). Thus far, the MB has only released a draft version of the platform. Though this document is not yet available in English, this section examines several secondary interpretations and analyses of it in order to triangulate its key arguments.

Islamism in the Draft Platform

In the late summer and fall of 2007, the Muslim Brotherhood published multiple drafts of what it termed a "party platform" (Elad-Altman 2007). The MB had never before published concrete stances on political issues or outlined a clear alternative plan for Egypt (Singerman et al 2007). Accordingly, this move caused a stir among domestic and international observers. A small group of western and Middle Eastern experts published English language reviews and analyses of the document. These analyses addressed a few key questions: why did the MB suddenly write a platform? How well does the platform represent broad internal consensus in the MB? What does the platform reveal about the character of a society run by the MB, should they ever gain power? Expert analyses agree on the basic answers to each of these questions.

The MB seems to have published a platform principally in order to re-focus public attention away from its ongoing confrontation with the Egyptian regime and back to its policies. In a panel discussing in late 2007, Amr Hamzawy stressed that the MB used the platform as a way of "getting back to the public space" by moving headlines away from arrests of its members and back to its ideas (Hamzawy in Singerman et al 2007: 3). Brown and Hamzawy (2008: 11) refer to the platform as a way for the MB to "seize the initiative once again" following a largely-defensive struggle with the regime. In other words, the MB hoped to remind citizens that it had plans for the future, not just survival strategies for the present. Taking a slightly different view, Elad-Altman (2007) argued that the platform was designed to distract the public from a controversial, militia-style demonstration put on by young Brotherhood members in late 2006. In both interpretations, however, the platform constitutes a concerted effort to re-focus public

debate on the MB's constructive political ideas and away from its confrontation with the regime.

Other possible motivations include resolving internal differences and reassuring domestic and international skeptics of the MB's intentions. For example, Marc Lynch stressed the growing generational rift between young, moderate reformers and the MB's old-guard, arguing that the platform was designed to clarify the party line that all members would have to walk (Lynch in Singerman et al 2007: 19). Brown and Hamzaway (2008: 12-13) argue that the platform served to reassure non Brothers that the MB was willing to subject itself to the difficulties and constraints of politics. Moreover, the MB hoped that, by clarifying its views on important issues, it could allay fears that it was, in fact, more extreme and anti-democratic than it appeared on the surface (Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 12).

Though experts do not agree completely on the key motivations for the MB's decision to publish a platform, they do agree on that platform's two most important and controversial positions. First, according to the platform, the MB seeks to establish a *majlis ulema,* or a council of religious scholars that would have the authority to block legislative and executive actions that it deemed contrary to definitive *shari'ah* injunctions (Elad-Altman 2007; Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 4). Where the *shari'ah* is not definitive, the *majlis* would be merely advisory, but the *majlis* itself would presumably decide which cases could be resolved by definitive *shari'ah* rulings. The *majlis'* members, moreover, would be elected by Egyptian religious scholars, with no input from the Egyptian people or parliament (Elad-Altman 2007; Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 4).

Though it only comprises a single page of a 128 page document, the MB's call for a *maglis ulema* seems to belie, at least to a point, the MB's commitment to democracy and popular reforms (Singerman et al 2007: 10; Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 10). It would place ultimate legislative and executive authority in the hands of people whose credentials were religious, rather than democratic. Clearly, then, the authors of the MB's platform depict the movement as committed to a *shari'ah* state, a solidly Islamist objective.

A second controversial provision in the draft platform is the MB's assertion that women and non-Muslims should not be allowed to hold major offices. Though various versions of the draft have slightly different positions, all oppose allowing non-Muslims to be president, and all but one place similar restrictions on women (Singerman et al 2007: 5-6, 10-11, Elmanshawy 2007; Elad-Altman 2007; Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 5). The MB justifies this as compliance with Islamic law and traditions, especially the requirement that Muslims be ruled by a Muslim who is qualified to protect the *shari'ah* (Elad-Altman 2007).

In addition to the draft platform, the Muslim Brotherhood's English website features both original and re-printed articles that address a variety of Islamist topics. Three sections, entitled "MB and the West," "Islamophobia," and "MB VS. Qaeda," depict a clash of civilizations while assuring the MB's role within this clash will remain peaceful. In the first, articles portray the MB as moderate and willing to dialogue with the West, while also criticizing western policies in the Middle East and accusing the West of lumping moderate Islamists in with terrorists (al-Katatny 2007, Dialogue Manifesto; Habib 2008, Muslim Brotherhood is not Anti-American). These articles also criticize the

Islamist movement for failing to recognize diverse opinions within the West, though they generally place more blame on the West (al-Katatny 2007). For example, al-Katatny (2007) criticizes the West at length for its "support for authoritarian regimes," which creates "growing skepticism of the West's genuine commitment to promoting democracy." In the "Islamophobia" section, the MB re-produces several articles by others, all similarly criticizing westerners who lump all Muslims together. Significantly, however, the MB chooses to quote articles by westerners criticizing the West, including one by a student at the U.S. Army War College (Ikhwanweb 2008, Islamophobia). This section, too, depicts the MB reaching out for dialogue with the West, across a gulf created primarily by the West's own prejudice.

Perhaps the cornerstone of the MB's charm campaign for the West is its very public criticism of Al Qaeda. In its websites section entitled "MB VS. Qaeda," the group publishes several articles by its own staff as well as others, stressing the Brotherhood's non-violent approach. As Mohamed Morsy, member of the MB's Executive Bureau, put it "the Muslim Brotherhood group has never exercised violence and has always condemned it since it was first founded" (Morsy 2007, MB Never Exercised Violence). Describing acts of violence committed by Brothers as "accidents" and "individual incidents," which he claims only occurred before 1950 as part of wider Egyptian resistance to British occupation (Morsy 2007). Based primarily on this non-violence, Morsy (2007) "denied that there is any intellectual or ideological relation between the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Qaeda," arguing that any who believe otherwise have been taken in by inaccurate "Zionism claims." As in earlier sections, the Brothers portray themselves as peaceful moderates victimized by a prejudiced West. Moreover, their

differences with Al Qaeda appear elsewhere in MB (and Al Qaeda) rhetoric, suggesting that they run deeper than the face the group shows to the West. In a December 30, 2007 message, Mahmud Ghozlan of the Executive Committee argued that Al Qaeda's bombings "only helped occupation to expand in the world and took the lives of thousands of innocent civilians," suggesting that the MB's gradual, reformist approach was more effective (Ikhwanweb 2007, MB Executive Bureau Criticizes). Ghozlan's message responded directly to an attack levied against the MB by Osama Bin Laden (Ikhwanweb 2007, MB Executive Bureau Criticizes).

But the subject of *jihad* brings to the fore certain internal contradictions for the Brotherhood between its "domestic" and "international" stances on violence. The MB reiterates its own commitment to peaceful methods while praising those using violence in other contexts. Muravchick and Szrom (2007) quote the MB's General Guided, Muhammad Mahdi Akef as saying:

> The Muslim Brotherhood movement condemns all bombings in the independent Arab and Muslim countries. But the bombings in Palestine and Iraq are a [religious] obligation. This is because these two countries are occupied countries, and the occupier must be expelled in every way possible. Thus, the movement supports martyrdom operations in Palestine and Iraq in order to expel the Zionists and the Americans

Later, in an interview, Akef reiterated the Brotherhood's support for "forces of resistance in the Arab and Islamic world," specifying that these constitute resistance to foreign forces, not to Arab governments (Akef 2007).

The Muslim Brotherhood, without doubt, portrays itself as a committed Islamist movement. Its platform calls for a committee to ensure that no government action contradicts the *shari'ah*. Its world view includes a clear clash of civilizations, suspicion of western motives, and willingness to sanction violent resistance to foreign intervention. Domestically, however, the MB claims to oppose violence and to work for reform via

peaceful channels only. In the words of General Guide, Akef, "How can I kill a Muslim when this is forbidden?" (Akef 2007). As such, the MB fails to fit either Hafez's (2004) or Kepel's (2002) theories. The group remained non-violent throughout the 1990's, the period during which Kepel (2002) saw Islamists turning to violence to preserve their own relevance. However, unlike Hafez's (2004) Islamists, the MB claims to forgo violence for religious, rather than pragmatic reasons. Like the UIC and AQI, the group's leaders appear truly committed to their ideology, albeit a more peaceful version.

The Copts

The MB's opposition to non-Muslim's holding high-level offices has some communal overtones. However, the Brotherhood justifies this stance by arguing that only Muslims are fit to rule Muslims, rather than by denigrating non-Muslims. It uses Islamic law, rather than communal polemic to garner support for this position.

The MB's English language website also contains a section on the Copts. In this context, the MB stresses the common interests of its followers and Copts, downplaying any potential disagreements between the two communities. For example, Dr. Essam El-Erian, an MB political leader, argued that Copts were guaranteed rights by Islam and, as such, were "the happiest minority in the world" (quoted in Ikhwanweb 2007, Egypt's Copts). If they are persecuted, El-Eriam argues, they are persecuted by the regime and to no greater extent than any other group: "There is a real injustice which is exercised by the government on all citizens- Muslims and Christians" (quoted in Ikhwanweb 2007, Egypt's Copts). In its English website, then, the MB downplays its own potential anti-Copt prejudice in favor of claiming that the Christians are victims solely of the same regime abuses that afflict Muslims.

The MB's communal strategy seems to be to minimize the importance of communal division in order to maintain a focus on its Islamist ideology. Rather than capitalizing on anti-Coptic resentment, the MB plays down religious divisions. In short, it takes anti-Coptic positions but phrases them as pro-Muslim policies necessary to comply with the *shari'ah*.

Interest-Based Politics

The draft platform spends most of its pages discussing relatively mundane political and economic policies. Hamzawy (in Singerman et al 2007: 5-6) and Brown and Hamzawy (2008: 5-6) point out that these sections contradict each other, sometimes calling for an interventionist state and sometimes stressing the need to limit state powers. However, since the *Majlis* and the bans on Copts and women's participation in politics dominate scholarly analyses, these policy positions receive very little attention. In any case, the MB's rhetoric does not seem to promise much in the way of financial rewards for members and supporters, aside from promises of better governance in general.

On its English language website, the MB does not address economic issues with any specificity. Rather, its section on "Development" brushes off economic issues and returns to criticizing Egypt's lack of political freedom. The page's top stories, both which focus on political rather than economic development, criticize the regime for curtailing civil liberties and failing to live up to its Islamic duties (Khouri 2007; Mansour 2007, Ikhwanweb 2007). None of the articles on this page directly promises wealth to MB followers or expresses any other direct economic motivation for the group's efforts. Economics appear subverted to political and religious goals.

Conclusion

Elmanshawy (2007) concludes that the draft platform proves, once and for all, that the MB is not using religion as a means to other ends, rather "the Muslim Brotherhood is a religions movement using politics to spread its values and beliefs." The platform's explicit demand that religious authority take precedence over popular authority and its insistence that Egypt be ruled by Muslims certainly suggest that religious duty drives much of MB politics. Expert authors suggest two caveats, however. The first is that, though these ideas drew all the media and public attention after the draft's release, they amount to only a handful of pages in a long document. It is possible that these ideas are not that important to the Brotherhood and its stance on them is subject to change (Brown in Singerman et al 2007: 10-11). Indeed, when challenged, Abd al-Futuh, a senior Brotherhood leader, back pedaled on the issue of women holding high office, claiming that this restriction was a mistake in the original draft (Elad-Altman 2007). Moreover, Hamzawy (in Singerman et al 2007: 7) reports that Abd al-Futuh claimed that the MB did not consider its position on Copts and women in office to be binding on Egyptian society in general; rather, it is merely their opinion. Finally, several authors point out the internal disagreement that preceded and followed the draft's release as a reminder that the group is not monolithic. While its old guard may be quite conservative, young reformers have pushed back in private and in public and may seek to drive the movement toward more moderate positions in hopes of gaining political power (Singerman et al 2007; Brown and Hamzaway 2008).

Still, the fact remains that most of the MB's actual messages are conservative. They express its somewhat paranoid view of clashing civilizations and its hope to Islamicize Egyptian society and politics. And they support violence abroad, while

opposing it at home. The draft platform dedicates over 100 pages to describing the MB's plans for the state, making its political intentions clearer than they ever had been before. But it also includes two extremely controversial Islamist positions, showing that politics may not yet have tamed the Brothers. The next section will examine the MB's actions to assess their balance of committed Islamism and pragmatic politics.

Practice: Social Services and Pragmatic Legislation

In a stable state, like Egypt, Islamists need not be violent in order to be influential. Whereas Islamists in collapsed states have to compete for power with other armed groups, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood can choose to compete in multiple realms, some violent, others non-violent. This complicates the task of analyzing their actions. Whereas armed groups demonstrate many of their intentions by choosing targets, the MB does not engage in open violence. Rather, it traditionally waged its struggle through preaching and social services and has more recently turned to parliamentary competition. Still an opposition movement, the MB has also had only very little opportunity to demonstrate its true political intent. Accordingly, this section focuses on the Brotherhood's social service programs, internal structures, and its limited legislative record, recognizing that these provide only a limited snap-shot of the group's long-term political intent.

Communal Divisions

Aside from its position on non-Muslims' participation in politics, the Muslim Brotherhood's communal policies should affect its membership and its willingness to provide social services. A purely sectarian orientation would cause the MB to focus its services on Muslims.

Clark (1995, Required Islamic Duties) reported that MB clinics treated many Coptic patients and were open to employing non-Muslim doctors and nurses (though none actually did). More-recently, Dalrymple (2007: 40-41) reports that Coptic leaders and young Muslim Brothers have held regular meetings in an attempt to cool tension left over from religious riots and other Muslim-Christian hostility.

However, Munson (2001: 501) finds that the MB historically used its social service networks as "selective incentives," making service provision conditional on individuals' active membership in the MB. Moreover, on several occasions, Brothers and Coptic leaders have not been so cordial. When the accidental release of a controversial Coptic videotape sparked religious rioting in 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Coptic Church were quick to blame each other (Halawi, November 2, 2005). Combined with the party platform, these observations cast doubt on the MB's tolerance of the minority Copt's and on the two communities' ability to cooperate.

Nevertheless, outright sectarian violence is rare in recent Egyptian history and there is little evidence that the MB has systematically exploited sectarianism as did the IG. There is even less evidence that these avowed Islamists are actually motivated by sectarianism, first and foremost. Their grievances and activism, when antagonistic, target the regime, not Christians. Hostility between the Copts and the Muslim Brothers may discredit either's claims of tolerance, but it does not prove that the MB's agenda is primarily communal.

Economic Interests

The Muslim Brotherhood's social services and leadership in unions and professional associations show its willingness to use political-economic tools. Indeed,

throughout its history, the MB has used public works and community development projects to pave the way for ideological in-roads in new communities. As Munson (2001: 501) describes, "the organization would establish a branch headquarters and then immediately begin a public service project-the construction of a mosque, school, or clinic, the support of a local handicraft industry, or the organization of a sports program." These initiatives use interest-based strategies to win political support, suggesting that peripheral MB members and allies may be motivated as much by material benefits as ideological commitment.

Similarly, Walsh (2003, civil successes) argues that "The Brotherhood's evolving social network is probably more responsible than anything else for the enormous power the organization could now wield in an open election." The MB's ability to provide services to the poor and relief to disaster victims explains the "enormous power base the Brotherhood has achieved among the lower and working classes" (Walsh 2003, civil successes). The MB has outcompeted the state in many areas of basic welfare provision, winning over individuals by attending to their basic interests.

The MB's pervasiveness in many neighborhoods throughout the 1990's laid the groundwork for its political success in the 2000's (Clark 1999, Islamic Clinics in Cairo; Bayat 1998: 156-157). However, this grassroots growth was in line with long-standing MB strategy, which focused on Islamicizing society first, before taking political action (Bayat 1998: 160-161). Rather than a class-based movement or a campaign for economic justice, the MB's appeals to individual interests are fundamentally religious. Compassion for fellow Muslims and a desire to connect piety with prosperity in Egyptian minds have always been central to the MB's mission. Though today's MB members debate the

relative importance of electoral competition and aloof preaching, all agree on the value of providing social services.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Ideological Core: Islamist or Democratic or Both?

Despite the obvious material benefits of MB support and membership, these are only half of the story. Brothers risk arrest, beatings, and other forms of persecution entailing significant costs in exchange for interest-based benefits. As Wickham (2002: 119) puts it:

> interest-based appeals are insufficient to explain the participation of thousands of graduates in Egypt's Islamic movement. When the risks of opposition activism are high and the prospects of positive change are, at best, remote, the most "rational" response of the individual is a retreat into self-preserving silence. Under these circumstances, participation in an opposition movement is likely to be motivated less by self-interest than by deeply held values and beliefs

This conclusion situates the Muslim Brotherhood firmly in the ideologically motivated category. According to Wickham (2002), its members actually accept a net loss in terms of their own material interests, joining the movement because their commitment to its principles outweighs this cost. Importantly, Wickham (2002: 124) focuses on college graduates belonging to various Islamic organizations, rather than all members of one organization. His argument explains why these well-educated and truly-committed Islamists focused their outreach in certain parts of Cairo and not others. It is, therefore, still compatible with the previous section's conclusion that many on the MB's periphery support the group for reasons of material interest. While committed activists face serious risks, those living in MB-dominated neighborhoods can enjoy its services without becoming visible leaders and perhaps without even joining the group officially.

Interest-based activities may constitute an outreach strategy for MB activists, we have yet to discern what these activist want in the end. Their underlying objectives will

determine how they hope to use their growing neighborhood-level support and new-found parliamentary power. Accordingly, few topics in Egyptian politics have demanded more international attention than the question of whether the Muslim Brothers are democrats. Though the group rarely passes up an opportunity to assure westerners of its democratic principles, Leiken and Brooke (2007, Big Brothers) remind readers that it is relatively easy for an opposition movement to call for democracy. While out of power and popular, the MB would gain a great deal from free elections. But is democracy merely a means? Would an MB government be willing to relinquish power to a more-popular opponent, or would its commitment to Islamist principles forbid it from allowing a "less-pious" alternative to take over?

Before the party platform emerged, Leiken and Brooke (2007, Big Brothers) admitted that "there is slim evidence that the Brotherhood has pondered what it would do with power." They concluded that the MB was certainly moderate but that its democratic credentials were largely unknown.

The party platform, in turn, constituted another step in a long process of politicization of the MB. In the 1990's, the MB underwent what El-Ghobashy (2005: 382) termed "ideological revisions." The group began to take specific positions on political issues and increased its efforts to gain official representation, winning 17 parliamentary seats in 2000 (El-Ghobashy 2005: 382-383). The Brothers also declared their support for granting women and non-Muslims full citizenship rights (El-Ghobashy 2005: 382-382; 387-388). For El-Ghobashy (2005: 382-383), these declarations were designed to gain votes and avoid official persecution. As such, the MB specified its positions primarily in order to distance itself from Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the

Egyptian Islamic Group, whose violent campaigns were then in full swing (Ghobashy 2005: 382-383).

By the 2005 elections, the MB's electoral strategies had matured. Though banned from establishing its own party, the MB fielded several candidates as independents (Meital 2006). The group broke with traditional opposition parties by using mass street protests, blogs, and websites to publicly solicit support (Meital 2006, Kifaya). These efforts earned the Brotherhood abuse by security personnel, but also made it (and a smaller parallel movement called "Kifaya") the most obvious and public face of resistance in Egypt (Meital 2006, Kifaya). Gaining both pro-Islamist and anti-regime votes, the MB overcame rigging and arrests to take a fifth of available parliamentary seats, dwarfing other opposition movements (Meital 2006, Elections for Parliament).

This success no doubt encouraged the MB to support democracy, if only out of self interest. It is not clear, however, that the Brotherhood took its new power as a mandate to push Islamist goals. Brothers in parliament have pursued a largely practical, non-religious agenda. As Leiken and Brooke (2007, Internal Debates) report, their legislative actions have focused on issues like affordable housing and transportation safety, rather than fundamental religious concerns. Indeed, many believe that the parliamentarians represent a more moderate, pragmatic bloc within the MB (Brown and Hamzawy 2008: 2).

The Muslim Brotherhood, then, has demonstrated its willingness to adapt both words and deeds for democratic advantage. Indeed, the last fifteen years witnessed large-scale adaptation that transformed the group from a purely social movement to a combination of social movement and political party. Though the parliamentary wing has

not split off to form a separate party, as some observers thought it might (Leiken and Brooke 2007), political ambition is now an unavoidable element of MB decision making.

However, there are reasons to doubt the MB's longer-term commitment to democracy. Muravchik and Szrom (2008: 29) point out that the group's internal governance is undemocratic. Its leader, the General Guide, is elected for life by the General Guidance Council, which appoints its own members with no input from the lower levels of the organization (Muravchik and Szrom 2008: 29). Moreover, Muravchik and Szrom (2008: 28) remind us that "at least in the near term they may be the ones with the most to gain from free elections," making democracy a cause of convenience, rather than principle.

Others stress the divisions within the Brotherhood, suggesting that a young, more-democratic vanguard is competing with senior members whose outlook is religiously conservative. One indication that the conservatives still dominate came when many of the most progressive Brothers left to form the Al-Wasat (the Center) Party in 1996 (Stacher 2002). Stacher (2002) describes the Al-Wasat's overtly liberal-democratic ideology: "the Wasat argues in favor of democratic reforms, human rights, women's rights, and the inclusion of Christians in its party project." Whereas the MB is either overtly opposed or inconsistently supportive of these goals, Al-Wasat has made them its ideological corner stones. Moreover, Al-Wasat members claim to have left the MB, in part, because of its undemocratic internal structures. One member told Stacher (2002, Discontented Exclusion) "The Brotherhood taught us the government was corrupt and needed to be brought down, but we found through our experience that decisions were taken by a small group of people." Of course, Al-Wasat may be equally hypocritical, but

it is likely not coincidental that several Brothers left complaining of the same MB inconsistencies that worry western researchers. Though primarily out of the sample period, Al-Wasat's split suggests that recent trends within the MB have not satisfied its moderate wing.

Ultimately, few analysts question whether the MB's ultimate objectives are Islamist. Most agree with Elmanshawy's (2007) verdict that the MB's politics serve its theology, not the other way around. Walsh (2003) confirms that "this group and Egypt's radicals share the long-term goal of implementing shari'a (Qu'ranic law) as the basis of national law." Similarly, Otterman (2005: Will the Brotherhood try to strengthen the Islamic character of Egypt?) argues that "Strengthening the role of Islamic law, or sharia, is at the center of the Muslim Brotherhood's identity." If *shari'ah* lies at the very core of MB leaders' goals, then the group's avowed committed to a democratic alternative is, fundamentally, instrumental. As widely popular opposition to a brutal regime, the Muslim Brothers every reason to support democracy, even as a mere means to ultimate Islamist ends.

Extremist Off-Shoots

Leiken and Brooke (2007, Internal Debates) remind us that the "the path from the Brotherhood to jihad is not buried in sand." Though Egypt's largest Islamist organization is consistently non-violent, many former members and sympathizers have committed violence or joined *jihadi* organizations. Most-importantly, Ayman Al-Zawahiri and his closest followers from Egyptian Islamic Jihad have allied with Al Qaeda. The circumstances of that alliance, though outside the sample period, provide insights into role of *jihad* and *jihadis* in wider Egyptian Islamism.

In 1997, an attack most-likely organized by Al-Zawahiri, completed his alienation from the Egyptian population and most other Egyptian Islamists. The strike targeted tourists in Upper Egypt, killing 62 (Wright 2006: 258). Though extremist members of the Islamic Group claimed credit, the strike, in which the attackers killed themselves, bore hallmarks of Al-Zawahiri's tactics and Swiss police later concluded that Bin Laden financed it (Wright 2006: 258). Al-Zawahiri hoped that the attack would drive away foreign tourists, provoking brutal counter-measures by the regime, which would then rally the people to *jihad.* The opposite occurred. The populace turned decisively against the insurgents, the culmination of a trend of smaller backlashes against the Islamic Group's terror campaigns throughout the 1990's (Wright 2006: 257-258; Kepel 2002: 289). The IG has not claimed an act of political violence since 1997 (Kepel 2002: 297).

After the tourist massacre failed to galvanize resistance to the regime, Al-Zawahiri published a change in doctrine, formally turning his focus from the Egyptian regime to the U.S. in line with Bin Laden's focus on the "far enemy" (Wright 2006: 259). EIJ's membership shrank and many of its members gave up the *jihad,* objecting to this "change of priority" (Sageman 2004: 47). They had signed up to fight the Egyptian regime, which had imprisoned and tortured many of them and which was the principal obstacle to building an Islamic state in their native land. The Islamic Group (IG), Egypt's other *jihadi* organization, abandoned its alliance with Bin Laden and EIJ, its followers similarly distressed by what they saw as mission drift (Sageman 2004: 47). Shortly, thereafter, imprisoned IG leaders declared a cease fire (Wright 2006: 255-256). Leaders still in Egypt followed the truce, having recognized the futility of their violent

struggle after 15 years of blood had failed to weaken the regime (Wright 2006: 256, Kepel 2002: 297).

Al-Zawahiri succeeded, however, in securing new opportunities to wage *jihad*. The move weeded out all but those committed to waging *jihad* under all conceivable circumstances. And it solidified EIJ's position within Al Qaeda, ensuring the Bin Laden's wealth and reputation would give them battles to fight somewhere in the *umma*. Accordingly, Egypt's Islamists show us the stark tradeoff faced by *jihadis* in a state that can defeat them militarily. Though Egyptians play a powerful role in Al Qaeda, they have achieved it in exile and at the expense of wider influence in Egypt's Islamist movement. The majority of Egyptian Islamists, including the MB, favor more-strategic positions that allow them to exploit the regime's failings without alienating the public at large. Having discovered the futility of violence, these moderates have given it up; a choice EIJ's *jihadis* are unwilling to make.

Conclusion: Islamist Divisions

Egyptian Islamism is complex. The last two decades have seen the Muslim Brotherhood morph from a social movement to a combined social and political organization. Many of its followers continue to preach and to provide basic social services, but some now also contest elections. These changes may be as much products of internal divisions as careful calculus. Whatever the causes, however, the Brotherhood has adapted itself for political competition and has remained non-violent.

By contrast, Egyptian Islamic Jihad has maintained a steadfast commitment to religious violence since its inception. Its members shun the MB for its passivity and preference for non-violent, gradual, domestic reform. If EIJ's name and campaign of

terror within Egypt were not enough, its leaders' alliance with Al Qaeda demonstrates their *jihadi* credentials, once and for all. These individuals were radicalized in Egypt's prisons and on Afghanistan's battlefields, coming to believe that violence in the name of Islam was the only appropriate activity for true Muslims. Those who did not go through this ideological transformation left the group before it meshed with Al Qaeda. The remaining members traveled the Islamic world in search of new sanctuaries, new targets, and new allies to help them sustain the *jihad.* Their commitment to violence transcended their commitments to Egypt or to any ideal that would have required non-violent means. Egypt, by itself, shows that a single political and social context can produce very different Islamist movements. Moreover, both movements drew from similar populations of educated, middle class Egyptians. Other researchers (Kepel 2002; Sageman 2004) have attempted to explain why individuals become constantly violent *jihadis* rather than more-moderate Islamists. This project's analysis affirms that both types of Islamists exist in Egypt, and that disagreements over the role of violence in Islamist ideology make them deeply hostile to one another.

IV. Somalia

Background and Independent Variable Levels

Background

In 1991, Siyad Barre's military regime fled Mogadishu, Somalia chased by an alliance of several militia groups. Barre's final defeat came after several-years of state-weakening involving rebels, secessionists, and official oppression (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008). Some credit the Ogaden War, over a decade earlier, with triggering Somalia's spiral towards collapse (Ahmed and Green 1999: 118). In 1977, Somali forces invaded the Ogaden territory, a Somali-inhabited region of Ethiopia, and were driven back across the border (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008). The defeat discredited Somali nationalism and emboldened separatist elements. A coup attempt in 1978 failed to unseat Siyad Barre but created two revolutionary groups, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Front (SNF), that would harass and pressure the regime throughout the 1980's (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008). In early 1991, another faction, the United Somali Congress (USC) drove the weakened and stretched national government from Mogadishu (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008).

The ensuing power vacuum degenerated into a chaotic civil war during which nearly a third of a million Somalis starved or were killed. Their plight briefly reached world headlines from 1993-1995 when a UN/US intervention force briefly restored aid shipments, mitigating the famine that was then ravishing much of Somalia. However, a series of violent clashes with militia ultimately drove the intervention forces out, and Somalia's civil war raged on in most of the country (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008).

Two northern regions, however, Somaliland and Puntland, have achieved relative stability and a great deal of independence since 1991. Somaliland has officially declared independence from Somalia, while Puntland continues to operate as an autonomous territory (Hohne 2006: 400-401). Both have functioning police forces and provide fairly reliable social services to their residents (Hohne 2006: 409-411). Accordingly, this study will focus on southern Somalia, whose lawlessness and violence make Somalia a collapsed state.

Rape, robbery, murder, and militia violence remained common in these areas throughout the 1990's (Menkhaus 2005: 29). However, by the end of the decade, residents of many areas had established local governance initiatives in an effort to mitigate state collapse (Menkhaus 2005: 29). Among these was a network of *shari'ah* courts working to enforce law and order at the neighborhood level. In the early 2000's, these courts began to cohere into a centralized political and military organization. Despite its increasing influence in Somali life, this organization went largely un-noticed until 2006. In February of that year, the Union of Islamic Courts, as it came to be called, began to engage militia from a U.S.-backed warlord alliance termed the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT) (ICG 2006: 1). UIC members saw the ARPCT leaders as self-interested strong-men who threatened the Courts' territory and influence (ICG 2006: 12-14). Ultimately, the UIC would gain control of much of southern Somalia, attracting world-wide attention as an Islamist (and possibly threatening) force that had managed to stabilize Somalia after so many others had failed.

Ethnic Division

In popular media and among some scholars, Somalia's political culture is inextricably linked to a lineage clan system. This divides Somalis into five groups ostensibly based on bloodlines and common ancestry: *Dir, Hawiye, Daarood, Isaaq, Digil,* and *Rahanwiin* (I.M. Lewis 1998: 6). All of these groups can find common ancestors within the last 1600 years but divide, internally, into more-closely-related sub-categories (I.M. Lewis 1998: 6).[8]

I.M. Lewis views clan structures as Somalia's principle social force through to the present (I.M. Lewis 1998: 102-103). He argues that, though they are largely constructed and regularly exploited for political advantage, most Somalis treat clan distinctions as "real" (defined by blood lineage) and act accordingly when forced to choose sides in political and military conflicts (I.M. Lewis 1998: 105). In this perspective, as in ethnic conflict theory, clan divisions tell Somalis how to define friend and foe, making chauvinism and fear-mongering powerful political tools. As violence increases, individuals have no choice but to appeal to their identity group for protection, empowering those leaders most willing to prosecute brutal factional wars. For I.M. Lewis, therefore, state collapse and the ensuing violence resulted directly from ancient clan rivalries. These rivalries had endured Siyad Barre's efforts to eradicate them, solidifying in defiance of his calls for pan-Somali nationalism (I.M. Lewis 1998: 105). In fact, notwithstanding his rhetoric, Barre himself exploited the clan concept, staffing his regime with other Daarood clansmen. His foes, too, used clan loyalty to fill their ranks and strengthen their support. His regime ultimately fell to the dual pressures of the

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[8] Some authors combine *Digil* and *Rahanwiin* into a single clan family *"Digil-Rahanwiin"*. The difference, though significant, is of no central importance for this study.

Isaaq-based SNF in the North and the *Hawiye*-based USC in Mogadishu (I.M. Lewis 1998: 102). In this perspective, traditionally hostile clan rivalries continue to generate mutual fear and violence in Somalia, making other forms of political and military organization extremely difficult.

Economics of Violence: Colonial Legacy and Inequality

By contrast, theorists like Samatar (1992) and Besteman (1998) argue that a collective Somali identity, and a stable state based on it, proceed naturally from Somali history. Islam, traditional codes of conduct, and communal property, they argue, . However, colonial administration dismantled these institutions, creating a political-economic situation that prevents peaceful Somali unity. Most importantly, colonial policy empowered some clans and individuals over others and replaced communal with bureaucratic and capitalistic structures (Besteman 1996: 123-124, Samatar 1992: 630, 634-636). As Besteman puts it "we might come to a fuller understanding of Somalia's breakdown and the pattern of southern violence by investigating the tensions generated within Somalia's 20th century political economy and by recognizing" other recent phenomena that have increased Somalia's stratification (Besteman 1998: 109). Samatar (1992: 630) adds that the British deconstructed traditional Somali codes of conduct (*xeer*), and created material inequality, allowing groups to dominate, or attempt to dominate, each other. Samatar refers to this theory as "transformationist," but its underlying assumptions fit well with individual-interest perspectives of sub-state violence (Samatar 1992: 629).

This perspective blames greed and unequal economic endowments, rather than antagonistic identities, for Somalia's collapse and subsequent violence. The British

administration created private property and endowed certain groups with the ability to obtain and defend it, while depriving others. As the state weakened, those with these resources used them to gain even more wealth, while those without them fought for survival and a bigger share. Competition for pieces of a shrinking economic pie, not inherent clan hostility, caused the persistent violence of the 1990's and early 2000's.

Ahmed and Green (1999: 118-119) draw on elements of both explanations. They recognize the powerfully divisive role played by clan antagonisms, emphasizing their pervasive role within the regime and its opposition during the Daarood regime. These authors, however, do not accept the notion that clanship functioned in the 1990's exactly as it had functioned throughout history (Ahmed and Green 1999: 114-115). New factors such as "underdevelopment and socioeconomic stratification" as well as "latent corruption," both leftover from colonial administration, enhanced the tensions that led to and prolonged the stateless violence that characterized the decade (Ahmed and Green 1999: 115). Simply-put, clans chose the sides and drew the lines of battle, but the reasons for fighting and the spoils of war were largely economic and largely a product of colonialism.

By contrast, Webersik (2006: 1469-1470) emphasizes economic incentives, rather than grievances, in his analysis of Somalia's war economy. Parts of his analysis parallel Ahmen and Green's (1999) by linking economics to the clan structure. He details the relationships between prominent Mogadishu businessmen and their clan leaders, often exchanging money for security from clan militia or using clan identity to build consumer bases (Webersik 2006: 1476-1477). However, most of Webersik's (2006) study focuses on individual, rather than group-level, economic incentives. In his view, clan ties serve

the individual merchant, rather than the other way around, making profit the primary consideration. He notes that some of Somalia's most powerful businessmen operate largely independent of their clans, selling to the highest bidder and paying for their own security militia (Webersik 2006: 1475-1476). These entrepreneurs have found ways to overcome and exploit state collapse by engaging in "trade and arbitrage" unencumbered by either state regulation or state corruption (Webersik 2006: 1463, 1469). They import sugar, oil products, cigarettes, and other goods, taking advantage of tariff-free Somalia to corner local markets or smuggle into neighboring countries to undercut legal importers (Webersik 2006: 1469).

For many businessmen, however, avoiding taxes and bribes comes at the price of high security costs. They must hire and equip militia to defend their property and inventory and escort their products to market (Webersik 2006: 1471). Webersik (2006: 1471) finds that most Somali merchants would be willing to pay taxes to a government that they trusted to provide security and relieve them of private defense costs. However, a handful of the most-powerful Somali businessmen seem to benefit more from conflict than they would from security, fitting perfectly the predictions of individual-interest theories of sub-state conflict (Webersik 2006: 1476). Webersik (2006: 1478) concludes that Somali businessmen are beginning to realize the potential benefits of stabilization but that spoilers remain powerful. He declines to predict which impulse will dominate, leaving open the possibility that economic interests will encourage violence and lead wealthy individuals to prevent peace in Somalia.

Islamist Power, Jihadi Credentials, and Al Qaeda Connections

Though very different, both perspectives outlined above dismiss ideology's role in Somalia's violence, following the broader theoretical literature on sub-state conflict. On the other hand, however, Somalia has also played host to Islamist militants. Throughout the 1990's, the most powerful and salient of these was *al-Itihaad al-Islaami* (AIAI), some of whose members had "links to Al Qaeda" (ICG 2005: 3). Initially peaceful, AIAI gained members and influence during the final years of Barre's reign as its impassioned leaders criticized the regime when few others were willing to do so (ICG 2005: 4). As the state collapsed, the Islamists took up arms, largely to defend themselves against the secular militias they had refused to join (ICG 2005: 4-5). A preoccupied clan alliance tacitly allowed an AIAI training camp in its territory in northeastern Somalia until, in summer 1992, the Islamists began attacking foreign aid workers and clan police, declaring an Islamic state for northeastern Somalia (ICG 2005: 5-6). Clan militia promptly crushed the AIAI force, killing 600 of its fighters and driving survivors into the mountains nearby (ICG 2005: 6). AIAI later took a more moderate approach, obtaining control of the town of *Luuq* and providing a level of stability that was literally unmatched elsewhere in Somalia (Menkhaus 2002: 112). They enforced *shari'ah* and curried favor with local clan leaders, dampening the violence enough to allow temporary resumption of international aid shipments (Menkhaus 2002: 112). Later, however, the Islamists began hosting Sudanese *jihadis* in *Luuq*, a decision that would spell their downfall there (Menkhaus 2002: 114). Next-door Ethiopia decided that ties to foreign militants made AIAI a terrorist threat, and launched a raid that dispersed the group and divided its leadership once and for all (Menkhaus 2002: 114; ICG 2005: 10). AIAI's successes and failures both reveal important characteristics. First, its focus on territorial control and on providing stability and the rule of law show a sensitivity to the local context.

The Islamists negotiated clan politics and provided basic security, causing local residents to accept, if not support, them (Menkhaus 2002: 111-112). In the end, however, some or all of their members proved unwilling to relinquish *jihad*, attacking foreigners and secular Somalis in the northeast and meeting with foreign extremists in *Luuq*.

Two prominent architects of AIAI strategy and ideology remain active in Somalia today: Hassan Dahir Aweys and Aden Hashi Farah 'Ayro (ICG 2005: 11). Both are AIAI-affiliated (Aweys was its principle military commander in the 1990s) and are listed by the U.S. as supporters/affiliates of Al Qaeda (ICG 2005: 10-11, BBC 2006). Their actions in the 1990's suggest that they would attempt to pull any Somali Islamist movement towards a *jihadi* orientation. However, they are not necessarily the most influential of Somalia's Islamists. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed has been equally, if not more, powerful with the growth of the UIC and Somali Islamism in general in the last five to six years (BBC 2006, Hassan 2006). Sheikh Ahmed, unlike Aweys and Ayro, is a trained Islamic scholar and practices traditional Somali Sufism, not fundamentalist Salafism. The next section analyzes, among other things, the relative influence of these three figures on the UIC's rhetoric and actions.

Predictions

Based solely on the key independent variables described in this section, it is difficult to predict whether Somali Islamists will be thinly veiled ethnic or economic warriors or will genuinely pursue Islamist goals. Combining leading scholars' views predicts that the Somali conflict will be a hybrid of communal or identity-group versions and individual economic interest versions in which clans provide the sides and economic gain/grievances and political power provide the prizes. However, the

presence of influential Islamists with battle experience and a demonstrated commitment to violence suggests that Somalia might produce an Al Qaeda ally or at least a militant group with similar *jihadi* aims. The next section will analyze the UIC's rhetoric and practice in order to test this prediction and evaluate which independent variable(s) seem to have the most powerful effects on Somlia's violent Islamists.

Rhetoric: Mixing Jihad with Governance

This section examines 334 public UIC statements found using a Lexis Nexus search for versions of the group's name and the names of its key leaders. This section outlines the Courts' rhetorical strategy by analyzing their thematic emphases both between and within messages and statements. The quotations and statements fit into eight thematic categories, some of which the UIC emphasizes more often than others. Within statements, the UIC's choice of words and focus reveals more about the self-image it hopes to create. How do Courts' leaders want the public to see their ideology? What goals do they express explicitly and implicitly? To what extent do they use language strategically to gain public opinion rather than simply declare their ideology? And what do the answers to these questions tell us about the UIC's place in theories of sub-state conflict and Islamism?

Generally, UIC rhetoric combines Islamist messages with messages that, if not explicitly secular, are also not inherently religious. They strike a balance between arguing "anyone in our place would do what we are doing" and "we do this because we are good Muslims." As such, they seem to place one foot in sub-state conflict theories and one in theories that see Islamists as ideologically-driven. This dual messaging continues into messages that justify violence. Some describe it as a religious duty

incumbent upon all Somali Muslims. These latter ideas, alone, could fit Kepel's (2002) notion of self-justifying militants and Al Qaeda's unwavering commitment to violent *jihad* as an end in and of itself. However, the UIC tempers them with non-religious justifications. These argue that violence is necessary, under current conditions, to provide order and security. The combination of these two themes suggests that the UIC is split ideologically, or is attempting to appeal to different desires within the Somali public.

Islamist Arguments

Explicitly Islamist messages encompass 41.7% of UIC statements between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2006. Of these messages, the largest number express some notion of a clash of civilizations. Though some suggest a violent response, the vast majority imply an inherent rivalry between the West and the Islamic world without calling for violence. These range from statements opposing the deployment of peace keepers to Somalia to messages accusing the U.S. of anti-Muslim biases. The UIC mentioned holy war only three times before June 17th, 2005, when the Islamists first began accusing Ethiopian troops of entering Somali territory. Overall, most *jihad* messages focused on Ethiopian troops or a would-be peace keeping force. The UIC went to great lengths to portray itself as *jihadi* only in response to foreign incursions on Somali territory. In this way, the UIC's *jihad* messages often overlap with Somali nationalism, increasing their appeal among non-fundamentalists. Finally, the UIC generally shied away from religious rhetoric in explaining its domestic violence, opting instead to emphasize its desire to subdue warlords, end violence, and counter U.S.-backed militia, all in the name of securing Somalia's streets.

Moreover, on several occasions, UIC leaders link their opposition to foreign peacekeepers to their pragmatic objectives of restoring law and order and obtaining a monopoly on force. In a typical message, Sheikh Sharif warned that "foreign intervention has previously put Somalia into Chaos and that is what we always take care of" ("Islamists Halt Talks" 2006). Repeating a similar message, Sheikh Ahmed later said of peacekeepers, "They only brought destruction and killing when they were here...There is no reason for the request for foreign troops. The cruel warlords were totally eliminated by the uprising" ("Islamist Leader Seeks 'Understanding'" 2006). Here, Sheikh Ahmed reminds Somalis of the abortive U.S. humanitarian intervention of the early 1990's, while arguing that the UIC needs no assistance in providing security.

Some statements, however, are more religious and more bellicose. In February 2005, an official of the fledgling UIC, then only active in northern Mogadishu, declared: "Some neighbouring countries who are not of the same religion and culture are enemies of Somalia's existence" ("Mogadishu Residents Protest" 2005). A thinly veiled denunciation of Ethiopia, this statement revealed what would become a common UIC messaging strategy. In one statement, Aweys tells journalists "The Westerners are against our religion, but we don't know why" (Crilly 2006). In a more-extreme statement he declares: "United States government is determined to encumber the progress the Islamic Courts in Somalia are attaining, we will bring Islamist jihadists in Somalia if American troops try to come to Somalia" ("Islamic Courts Deny Al Qaeda" 2006). In December, Aweys again threatened to "launch a jihad war against any foreign forces deployed in Somalia regardless of which country they are from" ("Islamist Warns of Jihad" 2006). These statements together represent an important UIC argument. They

begin with the Islamist equivalent of "they started it." By accusing the West of harboring evil designs against Muslims, the UIC sets the stage for a declaration of defensive *jihad* against any foreign troops in Somalia. Nearly all Islamic scholars sanction *jihad* in response to attacks on Muslims and Islam in general. By claiming that the West is prone to just such attacks, the UIC laid the groundwork for a just declaration of Holy War. This tactic, of framing Islam as victim, mirrors Al Qaeda's lists of grievances based on U.S. policy in the Middle East. It creates a more-broadly-palatable justification for violence by framing it as defensive.

Ironically, the UIC's stance on *shari'ah* is unclear. Though a system of "*shari'ah* courts," the group often contradicts itself on the importance and appropriate methods of imposing Islamic Law. In an early message, Sheikh Ahmed assures listeners that his commitment to popular rule trumps his commitment to Islamic Law: "We will not impose anything on the people, if the people are against it, not even shariah law" (Goodspeed 2006). However, just days later Aweys announced that "any government we agree on would be based on the holy Koran and the teachings of our Prophet Muhammad" (Goodspeed 2006). In late June, after being elected to head the UIC's legislature, Aweys reaffirmed his commitment to *shari'ah* at all costs: "We must follow the rule of law as laid down by Allah...We will come together by following the commands of God and the teachings of the Koran" ("Somalia Heads for Shariah" 2006). It seems that both Sheikh Ahmed and Aweys would prefer a government based on *shari'ah,* but they differ on whether or not to support any other kind of administration.

In one statement, Aweys admits that he would use violence to spread *shari'ah* in only one statement. Asked if the group hopes to spread *shari'ah* across Africa, Aweys

responds "Not only across Africa, but the whole world!" (Hosenball et al 2006). Asked whether they would do this by force, he responds, "If it's possible to handle jihad by peaceful means, we'll do it. If not, then we'll do it the jihadi way" (Hosenball et al 2006). Though all other references to *jihad* are explicitly defensive, this one may be the slip that reveals Aweys' true intentions. Or it may be a simple error in translation. Rhetorical analysis alone cannot reveal the truth. Regardless of their underlying goals, however, the "party line" for Sheikh Ahmed, Aweys, and others in their movement claims that their *jihad* is a defensive response, rather than a goal in and of itself.

A UIC State?

In 46% of messages in this sample, UIC leaders portray their group as an alternative administration willing to take on all the essential functions of a state government and better-able to perform them than the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the UIC's most-visible leader, emphasizes the Islamists' stabilization of Mogadishu and the popular support they enjoyed in most of its territory due to improved security. Hassan Dahir Aweys emphasizes the group's refusal to share territorial control and demand for a monopoly on force in all the areas it occupied. Both express willingness to negotiate and Sheikh Ahmed claims he would include all segments of the Somali population in talks over the country's future. All of these themes create an image of a UIC that is cooperative, popular, legitimate, and in-control. In this theme, the Courts hope to establish their de-facto permanence in Somalia and to justify that permanence based on universal, non-ideological criteria. These messages do not emphasize religion but, rather, focus on the pursuit of security and

territorial control, arguing that a UIC state is a more-legitimate, more-effective alternative to the TFG.

In the para-state statements themselves, the UIC depicts itself as a popular uprising working for no less than Somalia's salvation. Sheikh Ahmed reminds Somalis that "this is a country that has been in chaos for 16 years, with a lot of weapons...we want to lead our people to justice and equality and for our people to make their own decisions and have their decisions respected" ("Interview with Sheikh Ahmed" 2006). Against a miserable past, the UIC looks good, and Aweys does not shy away from boasts: "The whole world failed to solve the Somalia problem, but we have solved it in five months" rather than opposing them, he continues, the international community should be "rewarding the Islamic leaders with a Noble Peace Prize" ("'Let's Talk'" 2006).

Once in power, the Islamists declared their intention to govern, enacting basic, non-ideological policies. They declared a ban on the charcoal and rare wildlife trade after being "briefed on the dangers posed by the indiscriminate cutting of our trees" (Islamist Courts Ban Trade" 2006). "Qaadisiya.com," a website the BBC attributes to the UIC, posted regular news reports interspersed with policy announcements and explanations. In a statement from August 1, 2006, the Courts' "Information Minister" calls on Mogadishu journalists to attend a meeting at the UIC headquarters to discuss the Islamists media policies ("To: All Somali Media Organizations" 2006). A November 2, 2006 posting explains that the Courts will strive to protect women from exploitation but that their rights will "not be similar to those being offered in West" ("Somali Islamists Promise" 2006). On December 4, 2006, another post announces that Somali merchants will be required to turn their weapons over to the Courts, even providing the address of

the collection point ("Islamists Give Traders One Week" 2006). Devoting time and space on Qaadisiya to women's rights issues, journalism regulations, and practical instructions for compliance with arms bans shows the UIC's desire to appear legitimate and competent. The Courts hoped that by showing their post-conquest focus on basic governance they would establish themselves as an acceptable authority in local Somali politics. Even if the Somali public failed to adopt conservative or *jihadi* Islamism, they might accept a UIC para-state if it was simply the best state available.

Sub-State Conflict Theory and Al Qaeda

Little in the Courts' public face fits with sub-state conflict theories. No UIC statements mention spoils of war or even economic grievances. Only a handful of statements address economics or material interests beyond basic security. These call for international aid to help Somalia's reconstruction or explain UIC trade policies. Somalia's poverty guarantees that economic grievances exist and the opportunity to loot, extort, and rape for personal benefit certainly motivated many of the brutal militia who fought in Mogadishu during the 1990's and early 2000's. The UIC, however, chose to emphasize basic security and religion, rather than economic greed or grievance, in justifying its own actions and calling for public support.

No UIC statements explicitly favor or oppose certain clans. However, the UIC calls for Somali unity, using both religious and nationalistic language, often equating non-Somali with non-Muslim. Beyond opposing foreign threats, however, the UIC also shows some tentative opposition to the clan system altogether. In August, 2006, Sheikh Ahmed told a group of supporters that "Unity must be the target of young Islamic men in the country and that is what we always devote life…The community of Somalia has

passed from Clan era to Islamic era" ("Sheikh Sharif Vows" 2006). To the extent that Somalis buy in to the notion of a national family or national clan, calls for unity could fit communal identity theories. The problem, of course, is that Somali nationalism is not a sub-state, but a nation-state level identity. Accordingly, any analysis of UIC ideology must understand that it amounted to a challenge to the clan divisions that usually form Somalis' identities. The power and durability of clan ties, however, may explain why UIC leaders do not mention their desire to transcend clans structure more often.

Moreover, their use of religious language suggests that the UIC's motives may be as much revivalist as they are nationalist. Like Al Qaeda, they blame Somalia's ills on foreign, non-Muslim interference and on Somalis who have sold out to Ethiopia or the U.S. In the face of potential intervention, they call on Somalis to wage holy war against foreign forces. Though they contradict themselves on whether or not they will impose *shari'ah* by force, it is clear that the leaders favor Islamic law as a mode of social organization.

Despite these clear Islamist and perhaps extremist credentials, the Islamic Courts' rhetoric displays an important pragmatic streak. While not profit-seeking or communal as in sub-state conflict theory, the UIC leaders portray themselves as a legitimate alternative government taking normal, unobjectionable action to solve the country's problems. Sheikh Ahmed emphasizes their desire to end street violence and negotiate with the broader Somali and international communities. He refers to the movement as "popular" and claims broad support from the public. Aweys repeatedly argues that the UIC will defend itself and its monopoly on force within territory under its control. The

group announced non-military policy goals, both fundamentalist and mundane, showing its desire to govern under normalcy as well as under war.

This is not the whole story, however. Al Qaeda often makes similar appeals to universal reason and to popular legitimacy. Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri use non-religious grievances to make their violence seem like a just, or at least predictable, rebellion. However, Al Qaeda rhetoric always links its non-religious grievances back to *jihad.* Moreover, Al Qaeda rarely claims credit for anything other than successful strikes at its enemies and rarely mentions any policy plans or even any desire to govern. By contrast, only 11 of the UIC's "para-state" messages call for or justify violence. Taken together, the *jihadi* and non-religious messages that call for or justify violence total 54, 16.6% of all UIC statements in the sample.

Moreover, the "para-state" rhetoric fits with a rational analysis of the political context. Somalis on the ground needed and desired basic security while international actors hoped that a responsible government would stabilize the country. In portraying itself as a legitimate, negotiable, stabilizing force, the UIC hoped to gain the goodwill that would allow it to remain in power and, perhaps, to pursue more extreme religious goals. The UIC's emphasis on pragmatic security and law and order was, therefore, rational and adept political maneuvering. One Somali businessman, quoted by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* sums up the local attitude towards the courts in much of Somalia: "Deep down, we're not sure 100 percent what's behind the Islamic Courts…But this is a new revolution for the people of Mogadishu, and for now they have full support" (Allam 2006). Wary of their extremist intentions, most Somalis nevertheless saw the UIC as an

improvement over secular warlordism. The Islamists' rhetoric, in turn, maintained its image and pragmatic, legitimate, and competent.

In pursuing dual Islamist and para-state messaging, the UIC often splits its leaders. Sheikh Ahmed delivers the moderate messages and Aweys the more belligerent ones. This specialization also matches the two individuals' pedigrees: Sheikh Ahmed practices traditional *Sufi* Islam and studied religion in Libya, while Aweys is a former army officer, a *Salafi*, and a likely Al Qaeda supporter (ICG 2006: 10; ICG 2005: 5, 11). That Sheikh Ahmed then became the moderate face of the UIC and Aweys its more militant icon, reflects both a group-level strategy and, perhaps, compromise or conflict within the group's leadership. It suggests that, rather than united and monolithic, the UIC included varying opinions on theology and political Islam, the most powerful of which had to be jointly expressed in the group's rhetoric, balancing populist, quasi-democratic Islamism with fundamentalist, *Salafi* interpretations.

This contrasts sharply with Al Qaeda rhetoric, which, even when seeking legitimacy, remains focused on justifying violence. The UIC does justify its own violence but also portrays itself as capable and willing to lead under peaceful conditions and, with some inconsistency, as willing to compromise in order to obtain peace. From its rhetoric alone, it appears that the UIC's desire for political influence mitigates its most extreme Islamist leanings. Moreover, differences of opinion between its two key leaders means that the UIC does not always present a united face to the public. Attempts to appear legitimate and rational are more prevalent than declarations of religious purpose, in part because Sheikh Ahmed speaks to the press more often than Aweys. These inconsistencies and apparent compromises cast doubt on the UIC's word. The following

section analyses UIC actions to determine whether its words represent or obscure its true intentions and determine what these actually are.

Practice: Winning "Hearts and Minds"… and Losing them Again

Most expert observers treat the UIC's avowed piety with skepticism. They argue that, beneath a religious façade, either clans or economic interests provide the Islamists' true power. Even if its leaders are ideologues, they argue, they can accomplish nothing without negotiating non-religious politics. Such arguments parallel broader sub-state conflict literature by emphasizing "rational" motivations like greed, defense, and survival over self-sacrificial ideology. As evidence, these authors point to the UIC's origins, arguing that its early rise depended on the backing of either important businessmen or Mogadishu's *Hawiye* clan elders.

The Businessmen Hypothesis

Webersik (2006: 1471), whose analysis of the Somali war economy stresses individual profit, sees the UIC as an attempt by businessmen to lower their security costs. As Le Sage (2002: 136) puts it, Somalia's insecurity "motivated Mogadishu businessmen to identify an alternative to the inefficient and costly protection racket established by the feuding warlords." Mohamed Deilaf, one of Somalia's wealthiest (and least clan-dependent) businessmen, organized other local entrepreneurs to fund the first *shari'ah* courts in Mogadishu (Le Sage 2002: 136; Webersik 2006: 1471-1472).

The International Crisis Group (ICG) (2006: 6) reports that business leaders had, in 2005, supported the Mogadishu Group (an alliance of the city's parliamentarians and local authorities) and its Mogadishu Security and Stabilization Plan (MSSP). The MSSP sought to demobilize 1,400 militia and coordinate all Somalia's major players, from

business to *shari'ah* courts to clan elders (ICG 2006: 5). Ultimately, the plan failed as its principal organizers each pulled it toward their own interests, ending in militia raids from "demobilization camps" and political stalemate over the formation of local administrations (ICG 2006: 6). The business community, then, may have seen the UIC as simply the next best chance at stabilizing Mogadishu. Many already had relationships with courts in their neighborhoods. The *shura,* or governing council, of the first courts included influential business leaders, giving them a say in all court actions, including those of its militia (ICG 2006: 9). However, Mohammed Dahir Aweys, the more militant of the UIC leaders, started two courts of his own that ICG (2006: 9) describes as "a different brand." These were more aggressive, working to expand their leaders' political influence, and one was "a platform for jihadi Islamism" (ICG 2006: 9). When the Supreme Council of Sharia Courts of Somalia (a predecessor to the UIC) began uniting local courts under Sheikh Ahmed's leadership, with Aweys as vice chairman, their connections to local business were less-clear (ICG 2006: 9-10).

Moreover, though the individual courts within the Union varied and were often connected to local interests, the overall leadership's actions did not suggest that business interests were a top priority. Many business leaders praised and supported the UIC for securing the streets and reducing the human and financial costs that come with violence and lawlessness (Mogadishu traders' association donates. 2006; Lacey 2006b). However, on several occasions the UIC banned or disrupted profitable industries despite outcry from entrepreneurs and the public at large (Wildlife; Islamic Courts Ban Trade 2006; Somali Islamists ban chewing 2006; Lacey 2006b). It seems that their policies, sometimes pro-business and sometimes not, were motivated primarily by other factors.

The business community, in turn, sometimes supported, sometimes opposed, and sometimes negotiated with or ignored the UIC militia (ICG 2006: 12-14).

The Clan-Power Hypothesis

Another potential explanation for the UIC's influence and motivation is its connection to Somalia's clan politics. Proponents of this theory generally treat key UIC leaders as committed ideologues whose power depended on their ability to negotiate clan alliances (Stevenson 2007: 11, 14; Menkhaus 2007a, Fragmentation). One strain of this theory focuses on *Hawiye* dominance in Mogadishu, arguing that the clan's leaders allowed the UIC to take over in hopes of improving security and solidifying their own power (Stevenson 2007: 11, 14; Menkhaus 2007a, Fragmentation). This theory fits the UIC into a pattern of *Hawiye* dominance in and around Mogadishu that starts with the coalition that drove Siad Barre from the capital in 1991. Since then, that clan's leaders have controlled and/or competed with each other for Mogadishu. Leading up to the UIC takeover, animosity grew between the TFG and *Hawiye* leadership, driven largely by TFG president Abdullahi Yusuf's *Darod* lineage (Menkhaus 2007a, The Courts in Charge). Yusuf's anti-Islamist stance, in turn, made the UIC and the *Hawiye* ideal strange bedfellows (Menkhaus 2007a, The Courts in Charge). Significant for this argument, the UIC seemed to disappear from Mogadishu without a fight as Ethiopian forces advanced in early 2007 (Stevenson 2007: 14; Menkhaus 2007a, The Courts' Collapse). Both Stevenson (2007: 14) and Menkhaus (2007a, The Courts' Collapse) attribute the Islamists' rapid dispersal to their loss of clan support; *Hawiye* leaders ordered them out rather than letting them wage a guerilla campaign in the city.

On the other hand, many of the same authors recognize clan divisions within the UIC. Though *Hawiye* may have had the greatest sway in overall UIC strategy, several other clans and sub-clans pursued their own interests within or against the Courts' superstructure. As ICG (2006: 1) puts it:

> the Courts have been challenged by clan authorities demanding that the Sharia militias withdraw from their neighbourhoods. Tensions and political competition between the Courts and clans are endemic, and clan fault lines will be very difficult for the new authorities to manage

Internally, the UIC nit together several independent *shari'ah* courts "the jurisdiction of which did not reach outside the limits of individual clans" (ICG 2007: 5). The ICG calls this fragmentation "a source of both strength and weakness" noting that "a few...declined to fight against their own clan militia...but others were specifically deployed against Alliance members from their own lineage" (ICG 2007: 14).

The complicated, conflicting, and dynamic relationship between the UIC and southern Somalia's clans belies any notion that the Courts are a simple clan-power tool. Sheikh Ahmed and Aweys worked constantly to use clan alliances to their own advantage, just as they managed their ties with the business community. They needed to gain a powerful clan ally, while avoiding active hostility with other clans, in order to achieve power. Accordingly, they developed *Hawiye* ties in their central administration while also maintaining the strong relationships between individual courts and local sub-clans. This multi-faceted and dynamic approach suggests that clan interests are not among the UIC's primary *goals*, but, rather, are external factors that dictate the *methods* that any group seeking power in Somalia must use. Whatever the Islamist leaders' goals, their strategies for attaining them necessarily took clan politics into account.

Islamist or state-building or...?

If secondary evidence confirms that profit and communal conflict did not serve as the primary motivation for the UIC's fighting, what did drive them? Their name and many of their statements suggest that they sought a more pious Somalia, perhaps governed by conservative *shari'ah* enforcement, perhaps hostile to the West and to neighboring countries. Courts policies mixed the fundamentalist with the pragmatic, prohibiting Somalis from watching the World Cup one week, and disarming warlords the next (Mogadishu Holds Its Breath 2006; Islamists Finally Disarm Remnant Warlord 2006). Sheikh Ahmed insisted that extreme *shari'ah* imposition like the World Cup ban or the jailing of men with long hair resulted from breaches of discipline by local militia, who were then brought in line by UIC leadership.

Even if these claims are true, however, it is clear that hard-line fundamentalists held positions of (at least local) authority within the Courts. Coupled with claims that Aweys and an influential UIC militia commander, Aden Hashi Ayro, maintained links with Al Qaeda, this evidence proves that the UIC was not uniformly moderate (Donnelly 2006; Lacey 2006b; Nordland 2006). Moreover, Aweys explicitly called for establishing and spreading *shari'ah* and, late in 2006, the UIC repeatedly threatened to bring in foreign *jihadis* should Ethiopian or American troops deploy to Somalia (Islamic Courts Deny Al-Qaeda Operatives In Country 2006; Fletcher 2006). Meanwhile, the rarely-heard-from Ayro is suspected of assassinating several foreigners and of leading a group of young, brutal militia without meaningful interference from the UIC's higher levels (Lacey 2006a; Radical Militant Youth Group Becoming Dominant 2006).

The UIC appears, then, to contain several committed ideologues, but these do not appear monolithic. To simply call the group, or even just its leadership, "Islamist" or

"jihadi" would be to gloss over this internal diversity and to under or over-emphasize the threat it presented to the international community. Instead, the UIC appeared to be a dynamic federation of diverse Islamists, some of whom harbored extreme goals and some of who saw Islam as a powerful tool for stabilizing Somalia.

Though its core ideologues were divided, the UIC's commitment seems to have given it important military advantages. The ICG (2007: 10) says of the UIC's core 400 multi-clan militia unit: "it was led by professional military officers; its training and discipline were good; and since its members did not chew *qaad*, they maintained a state of readiness unknown to other militias." These fighters had been donated to the UIC central command by individual Islamic courts. They may have been selected for piety and discipline, or they may have learned these qualities from their new commanders. Their sobriety, at the very least, was religiously-motivated and unique to the UIC, whose leaders believed *qaat*-chewing immoral. Military readiness, therefore, is the one area in which the UIC's Islamist credentials almost certainly gave it military advantages. However, the Islamists' diverse goals and their reliance on clan and business alliances suggest that it could not have maintained its influence if it insisted on being an ideologically-unified Islamist movement.

The balance of the UIC's rhetoric, moreover, depicts the group's goals as less religious and more material: establishing law and order, driving out warlords, and forming a more inclusive government. This is, in large part, a product of the UIC's choice to use the moderate Sheikh Ahmed as its primary spokesperson. His educated, agreeable demeanor and soft Islamism helped depict the group as a populist, moderate movement for the benefit of all Somalis.

Most analysts, however, are skeptical of the UIC's self-aggrandizing, state-building image. As the ICG (2007: 16) put it:

> the leadership has gone to great lengths to portray the movement as moderate and a "popular uprising" against warlordism but has been casually dismissive about credible allegations of jihadi violence and the presence of foreign al-Qaeda operatives in Mogadishu safe houses reportedly operated by some of its top figures

Similarly, Menkhaus (2007a, The Courts' Collapse) argues:

> The popular backing that the Courts enjoyed for having brought law and order to Mogadishu turned out to be broad but not deep. Lurking beneath the genuine support for the Courts was a bundle of anxieties, mistrust, latent rivalries, clan divisions and alliances of expediency, which quickly resurfaced the moment the Courts began to lose ground to the Ethiopians

Courts actions, moreover, often directly contradicted their para-state rhetoric and commitments to stability. On several occasions, they agreed to stop their territorial expansion as part of cease fire agreements with the TFG (Somalia warns of Ethiopian incursion 2006; Somali Islamist leader denies plan to attack government seat 2006; Alarm in Baidoa Over Militia Movements 2006; Rice 2006; Council's High Command Says It Has No Expansionist Plans 2006). In all these instances, they soon resumed military operations, taking new towns and advancing on the TFG's Baidoa strong-hold (We Will Fight Until Root Out Rivals in Capital 2006; Ethiopian troop deployment 2006; Islamists said planning to attack 2006; Three killed after attack 2006). Though they justified these moves as efforts to stabilize more territory and defeat more warlords, the UIC's breach of countless agreements belied their avowed commitment to peaceful state-formation (Islamists Declare Somalia Take-Over 2006; We Will Fight Until Root Out Rivals in Capital 2006). Combined with their ad hoc attempts at enforcing conservative *shari'ah* interpretations and the *jihadi* goals and actions of important Courts officials, these contradictions discredit the UIC's moderate, para-state messaging.

Conclusion: Tenuous Alliances

It appears that the UIC was not united by any one ideological vision, be it enforcing *Salafi* principles or building a popular, inclusive state. Both sets of ideological objectives received frequent lip service and occasional action from the Courts. But both were also constrained by each other and by the need to appease business and clan interests. The UIC is most-accurately viewed as a loose but broad alliance of true Islamist ideologues and self-serving interest groups. It was held together by a combination of the public's desire for security and powerful players' desire to gain by association with religion and with the UIC's effective military. Later, as Ethiopia threatened invasion, some Somalis rallied behind the UIC out of nationalism and opposition to foreign interference, just as they had supported the Islamists against the American-backed ARPCT warlords. After the Ethiopian attack, however, the Courts' military prowess was tarnished, breaking their alliances with clans and business leaders whose support came from the desire for stability. The true ideologues remained with the group, fighting an insurgency in southern Somalia without significant popular support.

Their continued violence suggests that these individuals may fit Al Qaeda's model of consistently-violent *jihadis*. Sheikh Ahmed's moderate rhetoric perhaps suggest that he, and a few like him, see violence as a temporary method and would be willing to accept peace under a legitimate government. Others, like Aweys and Ayro, likely would not lay down their weapons under any reasonable circumstances.

That the UIC gained widespread popular support and military dominance for a time contradicts sub-state conflict theories. Whereas interest-based theories would expect the greedy warlords to dominate and identity-based theories would expect clan rivalries to drive the fighting, the UIC briefly co-opted both profit-seeking and communal fighters to

its side. Moreover, internal diversity among the true ideologues prevents the UIC from fitting perfectly into any Islamist model, including that of Al Qaeda. The Islamists compromised among themselves in order to accomplish an over-arching goal of spreading the *shari'ah* courts' (and their own) authority. In turn, they compromised with wider society based on a parallel over-arching imperative to secure the streets. Ultimately, when the UIC could no longer provide this security, its local allies abandoned it.

V. Iraq

Background and Independent Variable Levels

Background

As Patrick (2006) puts it, "if there is one failed state that is important to transnational terrorism today, that state is probably Iraq" (16). Osama Bin Laden has referred to Baghdad as "the house of the Caliphate and its environs," highlighting Iraq's ideological importance to global *jihadis* (Bin Laden, December 28, 2004). Furthermore, the presence of American and British troops provides ample western targets. Moreover, until the past one to two years, Iraq's Sunni-Muslim areas remained largely out of Iraqi and Coalition troops' reach (Ricks 2006). This section analyses the Islamist organization Al Qaeda in Iraq and its operations in those parts of Iraq where the state was essentially collapsed. This region maximized the *opportunity* for global violent jihadism; this study's analysis will test the area's Islamists for that ideology's key *motives*.

Ethnic Division

The 20th century brought a great deal of social turmoil to Iraq, from the end of Ottoman rule, to the arrival and departure of British colonization, to the Baathist revolution and three decades of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship (Chalabi 1991: 22-27). Through all these changes, Iraq's basic social organization remained largely constant. Traditional Iraqi society, both Sunni and Shiite, is organized around mutually reinforcing tribalism and Islam. Sheikh and tribal leader are frequently either the same person or mutually dependent for effective and legitimate rule (Baram 1997: 3). The British largely left this pattern un-touched, concerned more with the wealth and geopolitical power they could extract from Iraq than the internal workings of its politics. The post-colonial Iraqi

regimes, however, sought broad social revolution. In particular, the Baath Party, which ruled Iraq from 1958 to 2003, espoused nationalist, Arabist, and Socialist ideology, often with open hostility to traditional tribal institutions.

Saddam Hussein's Baath Baathists sought to modernize Iraq and to resist imperialism at the same time. Accordingly, they planned economic and military development at the state level while stressing a transnational Arabist ideology meant to transcend colonial borders (Chalabi 1991: 26-27). Internally, Arab nationalism meant ending what the Baathists called "racist" and "backward" tribal/sectarian institutions (Baram 1997: 1-2). Agrarian reform and public diplomacy aimed to separate rural Iraqis from their Sheikhs and tribal landlords so as to, simultaneously, reinforce Arabism and weaken a "competing social elite" (Baram 1997: 2-3).

Their efforts were not terribly successful. Throughout this period, while urban elites espoused nationalism and strove towards an Arab version of modernity, religion and tribe remained the most important popular forces for the majority of Iraq's population (Eppel 1998: 238-239). While the Baathist dictatorship had profound and lasting effects on Iraqi society, it did not break Iraqi politics' focus on the local and the tribal and did not remove the influence of Islam. Baram (1997: 4) tracks the path of tribal Sheikhs from the 1950s through the 1990s and finds that the majority of Sheikhal families maintained their social influence throughout the Baathist reign. As Baram puts it, "about 50 percent of the old Shaykhly families from the 1950's were still regarded by the regime as such in the 1990's" (Baram 1997: 4). "Jumping on the Bandwagon," he continues, "some of them even became senior government and party officials" (Baram 1997: 4).

In fact, despite his nationalist orientation, Hussein himself capitalized on tribe and clan ties to reinforce his rule and staff his government with those he felt he could trust. Sharing a strategy with Somalia's Siyad Barre, Hussein used an overtly Arabist ideology to appeal to Iraqi's en-masse while the nuts and bolts of his regime were highly tribal (Faleh 1998: 29-30). Baram (1997) notes that the Baathi elite were almost all from Tikrit, Hussein's birthplace (5). Hussein's body guards, elite military units, and intelligence personnel were primarily from three Tikriti clans: *Al-bu Nasir, Jubbur, and Ubayd* (Baram 1997: 5).

Not surprisingly, the contradictory policy of denying tribalism while using it to govern caused significant tension and conflict within the regime. In 1990-1991, Hussein discovered an attempted coup by *Jubburi* military officers, responded with executions and purges, and endured retaliation culminating in the bombing of his palaces by *Jubburi* pilots (5-6). Furthermore, Hussein's appropriation of Sunni tribal lands in central and western Iraq, designed to weaken the strongest tribes, also aroused significant resistance to the regime, especially since these were the same tribes the President favored in staffing his government (Baram 1997: 5-6). Generally, Baram (1997) argues that, while the Baathist regime did change and redirect certain of its functions, Hussein ultimately could not destroy the tribal-religious structure and, in fact, often chose to employ it to its own advantage. Even this co-optation, however, was not neat or easy, and contributed to some of the regime's principal weaknesses.

Further investigating the interaction of Baathist rule and tribal structures, Faleh (2000) argues that the inability of the regime to weaken or replace tribal structures was most apparent when it withdrew from basic service position. When the regime was

forced, by war or international economic sanctions, to withdraw from basic service provision, "full-fledged tribalism emerged to fill the gaps left by the totalitarian regime" (30-31). In this view, state weakness is directly correlated with the rise of tribal influence, as Iraqis look to traditional alternatives to government service provision. As the central state loses its meaning on the ground, sub-state structures and identities take on a larger role.

Iraq's infamous sectarian rivalry is, in part, a further result of the interconnectedness of tribe and religion in Iraqi society. Starting with the defeat and massacre of Ali and his followers in Karbala, Iraq's Shiite majority has been the object of discrimination and disenfranchisement for most of the country's history (Alkhafaji 2005: 601).[9] The Sunni-Shiite divide has traditionally manifested itself in local, tribal governance, as neighborhoods and clans separated themselves along sectarian lines (Alkhafaji 2006: 600-601).

The intense sectarian violence that has plagued post-invasion Iraq shows the continued power of tribe and sect. With the state gone, tribal and sectarian leaders became the lowest common denominator of social and political organization for many Iraqis. Sectarian politics, reprisal killings, and ethnic cleansing are all consequences of Iraqis looking back to the local and sectarian groupings that lay beneath the state before it fell.

Opportunities for Interest-Based Violence

Iraq's political economy has drawn a great deal of attention since the U.S. invasion, but little of this has addressed economies of sub-state violence. Discussions of

[9] This is perhaps the most salient event in Shiite history and the one which sealed the hostility of Islam's sectarian divide for future generations.

reconstruction contracts, private military companies, and, of course, the role of oil in the U.S. decision to invade are common themes in the media and academic literature (see Bhatia 2005). Few authors, however, have addressed the possibility that economic motives help drive the violence within Iraq. This relative inattention may be, in large part, a result of Iraq's lack of "loot-able" commodities lucrative enough to entice profit-seeking violence. However, Fearon (2005) would likely point out that Iraq's one major export, oil, is more-robustly associated with sub-state conflict than most smaller, simpler, more easily-stolen goods. He argues that the fight for control of oil fields and oil profits is at least as powerful a determinant of conflict as is the availability of diamonds, rubber, or other standard "conflict commodities." In Iraq, the fight for oil revenues breaks down along sectarian lines with Sunni, Shiite, and Kurd opposing any central government that does not give them what they see as a fair share. Seen in this light, oil as an economic motive simply adds another tangible reason for Iraqis to choose sides in the sectarian conflict and to see the other side as hostile, greedy, and unfair. Accordingly, though the goods are different and the groups are larger and fewer, Iraq displays a pattern similar to that of Somalia in which conflict motivated by distributional grievances reinforces ethnic hostility.

Islamists and Jihadi Credentials

Like Somalia's UIC Islamists, Al Qaeda in Iraq has roots in the Islamist opposition that was active before the state collapsed. Prior to the U.S. invasion, many of AQI's current leadership trained and fought with Ansar al-Islam, a largely-Kurdish group that hoped to establish an Islamic state in Iraq (Bakier 2006, CFR 2005). Following the invasion, however the infamous Jordanian, Abu Musaab Al-Zarqawi, left Ansar al-Islam

and formed his own group, which he allied with Al Qaeda in 2004 (CFR 2007). His history, however, was decidedly unlike that of Bin Laden, Al-Zawahiri, and their organization. Once a common criminal, Al-Zarqawi adopted the *jihad* while in prison. His working class and delinquent backgrounds place him at odds with the well-educated, middle and upper class leaders from Al Qaeda's central staff. Perhaps most importantly, Al-Zarqawi's militancy focused on toppling "apostate" Arab regimes; he rejected Bin Laden's "far enemy" doctrine, which saw the West as the *umma*'s primary enemies. A meeting between the two prior to the invasion failed to produce an alliance largely because of this divide (Napoleoni Loretta 2005). Their subsequent cooperation, then, is likely a result of the perceived confluence of near and far enemies in Iraq's American-backed government (Fishman 2006).

Since Al-Zarqawi's death in 2006, a debate has emerged in the media and among experts as to who now heads AQI and whether it has splintered into factions or remains a centralized organization (CFR 2007, Roggio 2007, Schippert and Grace 2007). Many believe another former Ansar al-Islam member, the Egyptian Abu Ayyub al-Masri, has assumed leadership of AQI (Roggio 2007, Shippert and Grace 2007). Al-Masri is a known associate of Ayman Al-Zawahiri who trained with Al Qaeda and Al-Zarqawi in Afghanistan (CFR 2007). However, others believe that al-Masri commands only part of the original AQI organization, which they argue has now split into several Islamist extremist organizations with varying membership profiles and goals (CFR 2007).

Accordingly, this study cannot definitively measure the extent to which Iraq's violent extremist community has links to and experience with the global violent *jihad*. It is possible, however, that those running this wing of the insurgency fit the profile of un-

compromising *jihadis*. In any case, Islamism in Iraq has emerged vigorously into public life following years of Saddam Hussein's repression. Moreover, Iraq's instability and the presence of western troops would seem to be significant pull factors for *jihadis* like those exiled from Egypt. In Iraq they can continue the Holy War with an abundance of targets and less risk of capture. The analysis sections will assess the extent and importance of *jihadi* migration to Iraq, as well as any changes in domestic Islamists' goals or activities brought on by the Anglo-American invasion and collapse of the Iraqi state.

Predictions

Iraq's communal divisions are at least as deep as Somalia's. Mistrust, mutual fear, and violent histories make the Sunni-Shiite fault line a powerful force in Iraqi politics. Within these communities, most Iraqis are loyal to a Sheikh or tribal leader, seeking security at the local level. These neighborhood-level structures, in turn, reinforce the broader sectarian divide. Economic factors such as oil revenue distribution are also important motivators of sectarian conflict. Parts of the insurgency, however, are legitimately *jihadi*. The presence of American and British troops makes Iraq an attractive battleground for those seeking *jihad* and fleeing stable states. Accordingly, like Somalia, Iraq has the necessary elements for identity-based and interest-based conflict, but also hosts *jihadis*.

Rhetoric: Learning to Adapt

Introduction

AQI and its sister organization, the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), have a less-complicated public ideology than the UIC. Nearly all of their messages call for or justify violence, usually in the name of religion. They never express any specific policy plans,

besides fighting their enemies. Their rhetoric aligns the Sunni-Shiite sectarian conflict with the *jihad* against the U.S. and the official government. However, it motivates the sectarian conflict with ideological arguments, declaring Shiites un-Islamic and condemning them for allying with "infidel crusaders." In fact, many messages threaten Sunnis for cooperating with the government or the U.S. or even for being members of the wrong *jihadi* group. That said, the displays some flexibility in its messaging, changing names and images and softening its language later in the period.

Still, the overwhelming majority of Al Qaeda in Iraq/the Islamic State of Iraq's messages focus on violence. Fully 39 of the 46 (84.8%) AQI/ISI messages in the sample explicitly justify, call for, take credit for, or threaten violence. The remaining 7 (15.2%) messages do not renounce or denounce violence; they merely fail to mention it. There is no doubt that AQI/ISI embraces a violent public image.

Islamist Goals

Almost always violent, AQI/ISI is usually *jihadi* as well. Most of its violent rhetoric is expressed in religious terms, with 33 (71.74%) messages describing a (usually violent) clash between Christian and Islamic civilization. This *jihad* is a combination of defensive and offensive. 10 (21.7%) messages explicitly justify violence as a response to violence done by the central government, Coalition forces, or the West in general. Others are ambiguous, describing the fighting or threatening future violence without giving explicit justification. These include claims of responsibility, boasts of the fighters' strength, or declarations of the Coalition's and government's weakness. An ISI spokesman provides a typical example in a video message from March 11, 2007:

> Our Islamic nation, you have seen the [achievements] of the jihad fighters and the defeat of the Crusaders and apostates, from the downing of their planes and the killing of their pilots, to the

> arrest and execution of dozens of interior ministry employees,... and the killing of many dozens of Crusaders (ISI March 11, 2007, Only by Rolling Skulls)

Still other messages are explicitly offensive, declaring war until extremist goals are accomplished. One typical example comes from a Al-Zarqawi audiotape released on January 8, 2006: "We will not stop the attacks until Islam triumphs and shari'a is established - or until we die for its sake" (qtd. in Hazan 2006a, We Will Not Stop the Attacks).

In all cases, however, AQI/ISI calls on Sunnis to join it in fighting an enemy alliance of Americans and Shiites. As a Shura Council official put it in his eulogy for Al-Zarqawi:

> The nation [is engaged] in a bitter war against its Crusader enemies, against the Safavids, and against the traitors, and its religious scholars, its preachers, and its believers must stand by it as one, because in this way all conspiracies [against the nation] will be thwarted (Rashid al-Baghdadi, June 28, 2006 Al-Zarqawi's Death Will Be Incentive)

The conspiracy theme is a staple of AQI/ISI messages, drawing a red line between good Sunnis, on the one hand, and a vast, united enemy front on the other. Only by fighting the *jihad* together can Sunnis withstand the forces arrayed against them. Beyond effective, however, a united Sunni *jihad* also fulfills a religious obligation. As Al-Zarqawi (January 8, 2006, qtd. in Hazan 2006a, Introduction) put it, "abandoning [the duty] of jihad is considered unbelief."

Though *jihad* is the most-often mentioned religious concept in this sample, AQI/ISI also publicizes its desire to establish *shari'ah* rule over an Islamic state, and, ultimately, a renewed Caliphate. For example, Al-Zarqawi denounces democracy because it does not derive all authority from God's words, saying "Allah said: 'Sovereignty is Allah's alone'...commanded his Prophet to act according to the law that

He sent down to him" (Al-Zarqawi, February 1, 2005, Democracy is the Very Essence of Heresy). Another AQI message drove the point home:

> We, the Al-Qaeda organization in Iraq, hereby announce that we will carry out the punishment that is decreed in the Koran regarding anyone who renounces the religion of Islam, and calls to draft a constitution and to appeal to a law that is not the law of Allah (Al Qaeda in Iraq, August 13, 2005, Al Qaeda Communiqué Threatens)

Soon after declaring itself, the ISI released a book making the case for an Islamic state to ensure that Iraqis live by *shari'ah* (MEMRI January 9, 2007, Islamic State of Iraq Attempts). The book goes on to argue that the Shura Council, with its record of *shari'ah* enforcement and *jihad*, would be best-suited to govern (MEMRI January 9, 2007, Islamic State of Iraq Attempts). According to a MEMRI summary, the book makes no mention of tangible accomplishments other than *jihad* and *shari'ah* enforcement (MEMRI January 9, 2007, Islamic State of Iraq Attempts). These messages' vary in purpose, some discrediting democracy and elections and others seeking to establish the ISI's legitimate authority. Still, they share the basic argument that all legitimate authority derives from Islamic law. This conviction, though not as prominent as *jihad*, clearly underlies AQI/ISI's vision of the ideal society.

Though most of their messages focus on Iraq, a handful of AQI/ISI statements threaten *jihad* in other countries as well. For example, Al-Zarqawi issued a message in April, 2006 entitled "We Are Fighting in Iraq, but Our Eyes are Set on Jerusalem" (Al-Zarqawi, April 26, 2006, We Are Fighting in Iraq). Similarly, AQI/ISI also lends its rhetorical support and offers material assistance to *jihadis* in Palestine and elsewhere (Al-Baghdadi February 14, 2008, Al Qaeda in Iraq Offers Palestinians). These salutes to international *jihad* reinforce AQI/ISI's commitment to renewing the Caliphate and to its alliance with Al Qaeda.

AQI/ISI's Islamist goals are consistent, if somewhat general. The group never publishes its interpretation of *shari'ah,* or any detailed plan for running an Islamic state. Rather, the its leaders declare waging *jihad* and establishing a Caliphate to be their primary aims and ask the world to trust them on the details. This is an important parallel to Al Qaeda, which also emphasizes violence and politics by Islamic law, without elaborating on any detailed plan.

Communal Conflict: Enforcing Sunni Unity

AQI/ISI often combines its vision of inter-civilization conflict with one of local, sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shiites. The group condemns Shiites as rejectionists and apostates. 13 (28.3%) messages explicitly address this theme, accusing Shiites of crimes against Sunnis or of collaboration with the Coalition. Al-Zarqawi's rhetoric stresses the Shiites' greatest crime is their alliance with the Coalition: "The most important thing, however, is that they subordinate themselves to the Crusaders. In view of all this, can we turn away from fighting them?" (qtd. in Yehoshua, September 11, 2005, The Claim that Ordinary Shiites). This cooperation, moreover, makes the Shiites an even more important target and enemy than non-Muslims:

> we do not see [Arab] Christians and other civilians as targets...even though these are non-Muslim groups, they have not demonstrated to us that they have become partners of the Crusaders in their fighting against the Jihad fighters, and they do not play the base role played by the Shiites (qtd. in Yehoshua, September 11, 2005, We do not Consider [Arab] Christians)

Al-Zarqawi's successors have carried on this focus on Shiites. However, more recent messages have stressed the Shiites' own faults, beyond their alliance with the U.S. For example, on January 8, 2007, an ISI communiqué spoke of a "long Shi'ite campaign to wipe out the Sunnis in Baghdad and to destroy and burn their mosques" (ISI January 8, 2007, The Islamic State of Iraq Urges Sunnis to Resist). More fundamentally, one of the

ISI's core 19 principles states "Shi'ite Islam is a form of polytheism and apostasy" while another declares "all facilities used as bases by the apostate regime must be destroyed" (ISI March 15, 2007, The Islamic State in Iraq Announces). Importantly, a third principle clarifies that "Any person who assists the occupation in any way is an infidel who must be targeted," while a fourth reiterates that "evading jihad in the present circumstances is the gravest sin after the sin of apostasy" (ISI March 15, 2007, The Islamic State in Iraq Announces). The ISI, then, rehashes Al-Zarqawi's original anti-Shiite arguments. These stress two points: the inherent impiety of Shiite belief, and the grave sin of cooperating with the Coalition or even simply refusing to fight it.

Given the deep sectarian mistrust that has engulfed Iraq, any politically savvy *jihadi* is wise to adopt the sectarian conflict. For the *jihadis* in AQI/ISI, however, Shiites are not enemies because of sectarian mistrust or a security dilemma. They are enemies, first, because they have chosen the wrong faith, abandoning what the *jihadis* consider true Islam. Second, they have cooperated with or failed to oppose Coalition forces. On the surface, however, this sort of anti-Shiite rhetoric could fit identity-based conflict theories. These include a role for messages that declare one community to be morally-superior to another. Communal leaders may use such tactics to create moral, as well as security-based, identity hostility.

Beyond demonizing Shiites, however, AQI/ISI also demands loyalty from Iraqi Sunnis and condemns those who fail to follow its ideological directives. To the extent that AQI/ISI privileges ideological requirements over Sunni unity, it departs from identity group conflict. In total, AQI/ISI takes aim at moderate Sunnis in 11 (23.9%) messages accusing those who collaborate with the government or the Coalition of renouncing

Islam. Torn between desire for Sunni support and commitment to his extreme Islamist ideology, Al-Zarqawi applied what Hazan (2006a, Introduction) called a "contradictory, almost hysterical" messaging strategy, "alternating between threats and pleas."

Before and after the Iraqi elections in 2005, Al-Zarqawi attacked Sunnis cooperating with or serving in the central government. In January, 2006, he accused members of the moderate, Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party of "selling the religion and ending jihad in exchange for a parliamentary seat" (Al-Zarqawi qtd. in Hazan 2006a, Background). The Party, he claimed, had rescued U.S. forces from decisive military defeat:

> The Iraqi Islamic Party, whose history with jihad and with the Sunnis is well known, is the one that wanted to be the lifesaver for the U.S. in the first battle of Falluja - which would have destroyed the American presence in Iraq had it not been for the hudna [i.e. temporary ceasefire] that this party worked so hard to attain (Al-Zarqawi January 8, 2006, The Iraqi Islamic Party, qtd. in Hazan 2006a)

Al-Zarqawi admitted that "It will sadden us to arrest one of you, or even to harm him with half a word - but the path to salvation lies not in surrender to the infidels or in consent out of ignorance, but in jihad" (Al-Zarqawi qtd. in Hazan 2006a, We Will Not Stop the Attacks). Al-Zarqawi then issued a "Last Call to the Sunnis in General and to the Supporters of the Islamic Party in Particular," drawing a line in the sand between those actively assisting AQI's *jihad* and those who would be its targets (Al-Zarqawi qtd. in Hazan 2006a, This is the Last Call).

Most Sunnis did not see things that way, however. Many continued to vote and otherwise accept the Iraqi government and the vast majority refused to join AQI's *jihad*. As his hard-line strategy produced disappointing results, Zarqawi and associates decided to re-make their image. They established what they called the Mujaheddin Shura Council, intended to be an umbrella organization to direct and unite the Sunni *jihadis*

(AQI, qtd. in Hazan 2006, Al Qaeda in Iraq's Declaration). Staffed with Al-Zarqawi's ideological allies, it aimed to create the appearance of a more-inclusive, pan-Sunni resistance movement while maintaining the same leadership and goals. In their own words, the Council would "be the nucleus for the establishment of an Islamic state…Allah willing, this council will serve as an umbrella for every loyal *mujahid*" (Al-Zarqawi April 25, 2006, By Allah, These are the Final Moments). At this point, Al-Zarqawi still maintained his leadership of AQI, having pledged its allegiance to the Shura Council, which he dominated (Al-Zarqawi April 25, 2006, These are the Final Moments). Unable to frighten or incite the Sunni majority into action, Al-Zarqawi hoped at least to pull the *jihadis* into his circle of influence. Those already fighting the Iraqi government and British and U.S. forces should have been relatively easy to co-opt. Moreover, they were already complying with Al-Zarqawi's ideological requirement that all Sunnis wage violent *jihad*.

After a coalition airstrike killed Al-Zarqawi in June, 2006, Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir succeeded Al-Zarqawi as leader of the Shura Council. He did not oversee any major changes in the Council's mission or Al Qaeda in Iraq's public ideology. With Al-Zarqawi gone, AQI could have softened its position on moderate Sunnis. However, Al-Muhajir dispelled any hope of such a change in his first message after Al-Zarqawi's death, saying: "Our swords are pointed at the necks of the Sunnis who have sold their souls to the crusaders" (June 20, 2006, Our Swords are Pointed). These Sunni non-*jihadis* make up the third prong of what Al-Muhajir called the "Army of Falsehood" (Muhajir June 20, 2006, The Decisive Stage).

The Council continued to treat itself as the rightful leadership of Iraqi resistance, threatening those who refused to ally with it. Though the Shura Council was meant to unite those already engaged in violent resistance, its hard-line condemnation of more-moderate Sunnis alienated armed Islamists who hoped for sectarian unity. Many of these explicitly refused to ally with the Council. The commander of a Sunni armed group even asked Osama Bin Laden to renounce his support for the Shura Council. According to Hazan (2007, Sunni Jihad Commander), he "called upon bin Laden to renounce Al-Qaeda because it targets and kills Sunni civilians and Sunni jihad fighters belonging to other factions."

Though Bin Laden did not renounce the Shura Council, AQI/ISI leaders recognized their slide in popularity. In October, 2006, they declared that they had established an "Islamic State in Iraq," to which several important *jihadi* organizations had pledged loyalty (Hazan 2007, Al Qaeda Responds). Al-Muhajir later signed over control of all his fighters to Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, supposedly the ISI's commander, formally transferring leadership of the *jihad* (Hazan 2007, Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir Pledges Allegiance).

With another name change, AQI/ISI leaders again hoped to dissociate themselves from the now-sullied reputation of an older group. Wary that Iraqi nationalism might weaken support for a *jihadi* that appear foreign, the ISI's creators went out of their way to depict it as an attempt at local, Islamic governance. Its name emphasize that it was Iraqi, not foreign, and was a state, not a *jihadi* proving ground. More dramatically, AQI/ISI may even have invented a fictional leader, Omar Al-Baghdadi, to mask the group's non-Iraqi leadership. Schippert and Grace (2007) argue that an Egyptian, Abu Ayyub al-

Masri actually heads ISI/AQI, while an Iraqi actor plays al-Baghdadi in public (Schippert and Grace 2007, Pulp Fiction).

This makeover creates the superficial appearance that AQI/ISI has become a locally-supported Sunni movement. Again, the ISI supposedly united Sunni *jihadis*, this time under an actual Islamic state, rather than a mere council. The Council had depicted itself as the united leadership of Sunni resistance, while the ISI claimed to be the natural product of such unity. Declaring an Islamic state told Sunnis that their unity was working, they were making progress toward the ultimate goal of establishing a new Caliphate.

Moreover, there are some indications that the group's public stance on moderate Sunnis has softened. Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, purportedly the head of the ISI, addressed other Sunni *jihadis,* saying "the friendship between us is deep, and our ties of trust and love are too strong to be damaged... Rest assured that [the ties] between us are stronger than some assume" (Al-Baghdadi April 17, 2007, Al-Baghdadi Calls upon All Sunni Jihad Organizations). Al-Baghdadi goes on to urge his followers "to be moderate, to be kind to those who do good and to avoid wronging [even] to those who do wrong" (Al-Baghdadi April 17, 2007, Al-Baghdadi Calls upon All Sunni Jihad Organizations). Similarly, Al-Muhajir has moderated his own stance in the last year. For example, in a message from May, 2007, he condemned the Iraqi Islamic Party but assured "we distinguish between the party and its supporters, and even though we regard the party leaders as apostates... we do not think that we must kill them or be sidetracked into battles with them" (al-Muhajir May 5, 2007, Islamist Websites Post). Following a clash between ISI personnel and fighters belonging to another Sunni armed group, al-Baghdadi

claimed to feel "deep sorrow over the fighting that took place" declaring that "there is no distinction between the blood of ISI fighters and that of other jihad fighters" (Al-Baghdadi June 8, 2007, The Blood of All Jihad Fighters is Sacred).

However, other messages show that the ISI is still willing to attack Sunnis who oppose it. For example, in December, 2007, Al-Baghdadi declared that his forces would launch a two-month campaign against members of the so-called Sunni "awakening," former insurgents who allied with the government and coalition (Al-Baghdadi December 4, 2007 ISI Announces New Raid). Al-Baghdadi called "upon every *mujahid* in Iraq…to attack [the Awakening movement]" terming its members "apostates" and tasking his fighters with "killing every apostate and unbeliever" (Al-Baghdadi December 4, 2007, ISI Announces New Raid). Moreover, the ISI's core principles re-affirm that cooperation with the Iraqi "apostate regime" and refusing to wage *jihad* are tantamount to renouncing Islam (March 15, 2007, The Islamic State in Iraq Announces). Accordingly, the ISI's messages strike a balance between calling for Sunni brotherhood and demanding Sunni obedience. However, on balance, the group's rhetoric has softened. Where Al-Zarqawi and Al-Muhajir once threatened to kill all those not participating in their *jihad,* Al-Baghdadi and more-recent Al-Muhajir messages threaten only those actively fighting AQI/ISI. Whether this represents a fundamental shift in doctrine or mere propaganda remains to be seen. The change in rhetoric does prove that AQI/ISI is concerned with its broader Sunni popularity. It decided to tradeoff some of its hard line rhetoric in exchange for a more inclusive message.

AQI/ISI's hostility to Shiites could fit identity-group conflict theory. Although often couched in ideological terms, AQI/ISI makes a clear sectarian choice; favoring

Sunnis over Shiites in all cases and never suggesting any willingness to cooperate with Shiites. Within the Sunni community, however, AQI/ISI rhetoric is less communal. Its initial messaging is especially inflexible, essentially arguing that Sunnis must join AQI/ISI's *jihad* or renounce their Muslim faith. Such extremism does not appear to be a rational sectarian strategy as it alienated many Sunnis and even brought the wrath of other *jihadis*. A group motivated purely by sectarian fear and favoritism would use its messages primarily to disparage Shiites. Any criticism of moderate Sunnis would emphasize their naïveté in the face of Shiite threats, rather than accusing them of abandoning true Islam. Finally, by declaring moderate Sunnis, and even non-cooperative *jihadis*, to be apostates AQI/ISI equates them with Shiites. Both have renounced their faith, according to the *jihadis*. In other messages, more-recent messages, however, AQI/ISI is more flexible. They call for Sunni unity and claim only to target those Sunnis actively fighting them. True identity-group rhetoric would focus on condemning Shiites and protecting Sunnis, attempting to gain the latter's support based on sectarian fear and hatred. AQI/ISI, however, generally demands commitment to its *jihad* and support for an Islamic state, although this varies over time. Moreover, the group's condemnations of Shiites are ideological. AQI/ISI messages call Shiites un-Islamic and accuse them of allying with "crusaders."

Political Economies of Violence

Unlike the UIC and against sub-state conflict theory, AQI/ISI does not appear to pursue or accomodate any purely economic interests. AQI/ISI clearly has no desire to use economic interests to unite Iraqi sects. Its rhetoric makes no significant mention even of economic grievances within the sectarian conflict. Oil revenue distribution is a hot-

button issue for many Sunnis, but AQI/ISI does not use it to draw their support. From its rhetoric alone, there is no evidence that AQI/ISI is motivated by economic incentives or even that it seeks to co-opt those who are.

Conclusion

AQI/ISI displays only limited flexible in its messaging strategy. It's rhetoric consistently supports and justifies violence. It declares as legitimate targets broad swaths of Iraqi society from Shiites to Sunnis who refuse to fight the Coalition. AQI/ISI's only attempts at changing messages to gain support are its frequent name changes. Though analysts debate the ultimate relationship between AQI, the Shura Council, and the ISI, the three groups' rhetoric is very similar on all important issues. Whether three separate groups or three names for the same group, these organizations represent the same ideological positions. They are the most-extreme and inflexible of all Sunni *jihadis*, threatening violence against all those who do not take up arms against the Coalition, the Iraqi government, and the Shiites and declaring such inaction to be a renunciation of Islam.

Still, by changing names, these *jihadis* show their concern for local legitimacy. Especially with the Islamic State in Iraq, they hoped that new images would make them more-palatable to the broader Sunni community. The ISI's image is supposed to be more local and more-focused on the ultimate goal of an Islamic state and empire.

This communal outlook, however, is tempered by AQI/ISI's emphasis on *shari'ah*, the Caliphate, and *jihad*. When they condemn Sunni collaborators, AQI/ISI leaders use religious, as well as sectarian, language. *Jihad* is an Islamic duty, they argue, not merely necessary to preserve the Sunni community. Following military victory in

Iraq, AQI/ISI would establish an Islamic state, not merely a Sunni state, and would hope to spread its influence beyond Iraq.

AQI/ISI justifies, motivates, and threatens violence in almost all of its rhetoric. Though moderate Sunnis move in and out of the group's sights, those sights are always set on someone. This focus on fighting could place AQI/ISI in Kepel's (2002) model of self-justifying militants. Experienced and foreign *jihadis* in the group seem extremely unlikely to lay down their weapons. Their rhetoric promises *jihad* to expel foreigners and Shiites from Iraq and then to march through the Islamic world re-establishing a Caliphate. Al-Zarqawi and his successors promise to fight until they accomplish these objectives, or die.

AQI/ISI's initial name represented a clear, public alliance with Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri. The Al Qaeda leaders endorsed Al-Zarqawi and his organization as their representatives in Iraq. Beyond nominal alliances, however, AQI/ISI's consistent support for violence and occasional endorsements of international *jihad* line up with Al Qaeda's public image. While the UIC denied any connection to Al Qaeda or even any international agenda at all, AQI/ISI unapologetically joins the international *jihad,* albeit with a clear focus on Iraq.

So, based on rhetoric alone, AQI/ISI appears to be solidly ideological and extremist. Its messaging is somewhat flexible, reflecting a desire for popularity and legitimacy, but maintains an emphasis on *jihad.* Not quite as internationally-focused as Al Qaeda, AQI/ISI nevertheless reveal a clear desire to continue their holy war after Iraq. Their Sunni partisanship is as much a theological as a communal objective and does not prevent them from declaring certain Sunnis apostates. The Practice section, which

follows, will analyze AQI/ISI's actions, asking if they confirm the group's stated goals or reveal another agenda.

Practice: Refusing to Adapt

Islamism

In line with its stated focus on *jihad*, AQI/ISI targets primarily Iraqi government and coalition personnel and facilities. According to a profile in the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base (2008, founding philosophy), "The group issues claims of responsibility daily in Iraq for attacks on American and Iraqi security forces, often claiming several attacks in one day."

Besides *jihad*, AQI/ISI has also demonstrated its commitment to strict and conservative *shari'ah* by enforcing it in territory under its control (Beehner 2007, If Iraqi support; Kraner 2005: 52). Moreover, by designating itself an Islamic state, the ISI enacted that portion of its Islamist platform, at least nominally.

Current conditions, however, do not test the ISI's commitment to most of its claimed agenda, besides *jihad*. As long as U.S. troops, Shiite armed groups, moderate Sunnis, and the central government continue to oppose the ISI, it has a convenient excuse for not fully-establishing an Islamic state or spreading the Caliphate abroad.

Moreover, AQI/ISI's targeting and actions, alone, do not automatically prove that the group is committed to its stated theological goals. Violence against Shiites and moderate Sunnis for collaborating with the U.S. could actually be violence against the U.S. and moderate Sunnis for supporting the Shiites. *Shari'ah* enforcement could be a means to an end, providing a religious foundation for the draconian measures needed to stabilize and hold territory in a collapsed state.

Other evidence, however, may provide stronger support for the *jihadi* motive. AQI/ISI's leadership includes several high-profile foreigners. Al-Zarqawi, its first leader, and al-Masri, its second and perhaps current leader, both hail from abroad. Several analysts, including most from the U.S. military, argue that AQI/ISI is foreign led, though most of its rank and file is Iraqi (Roggio 2007, Islamic State of Iraq – an al Qaeda Front; Bruno 2007, Foreign Fighters). Others disagree, however, arguing that U.S. officials have exaggerated the foreign terrorist component of the Iraqi insurgency, perhaps for political reasons (Tilghman 2007; Bruno 2007, Foreign Fighters). In either case, a striking number of foreign *jihadis* have entered Iraq in recent years, many to become suicide bombers for AQI/ISI and other groups (De Young, January 1, 2008). These individuals are unlikely to be motivated by the sectarian conflict or the desire to control and stabilize Iraqi territory. Still, given the possible holes in the case for AQI/ISI's foreign character, alternative explanations for its violence may yet prove more convincing.

Interest-Based Violence: Ignoring the Oil Grievance

Like its rhetoric, AQI/ISI's actions do not suggest economic motives. Though funds AQI garners from extortion, protections, and theft would be harder to come by during peace time, analysts treat them as sources of finance for the group's operations; none suggest they are ends themselves (Bruno 2007, Funding; West and West 2007). Especially at the lower ends of the chain of command, AQI/ISI membership does not appear terribly profitable. Even foot soldiers not tapped for suicide missions could probably earn more working for the government, especially now that the U.S. is paying large numbers of "Concerned Local Citizens" who agree to turn their guns on the *jihadis*

(Biddle, November 15, 2007, Interviewed by Gwertzman, Do we arm them?). Those left in AQI/ISI's ranks are likely the hardestcore, most self-sacrificial *jihadis*, with soldiers of fortune likely pandering to the coalition and the central government.

Communal Conflict: Fighting "Apostates" Near and Far

The Council on Foreign Relations reports that a captured laptop lists Shiites as top on Al Qaeda in Iraq's target list (Beehner 2007, What is the Primary Aim). Fomenting and fighting sectarian conflict, AQI/ISI seeks to pull Sunnis to its side out of their fear or desire for revenge. Such a strategy exploits communal rivalries, hoping to convince Sunnis that their only hope for survival is with the unflinching, violent sectarianism of AQI/ISI. Such tactics fit neatly into standard communal conflict theories, which hold that opportunistic extremists can scare members of their community into supporting them.

In Iraq, however, this strategy seems to have failed AQI/ISI. In late 2005 and throughout 2006, passive non-cooperation turned into outright hostility between Al Qaeda and other Sunni armed groups (Hazan 2006, The Arab Press Reports). By most reports, these clashes began as a result of AQI's hard-line stance against cooperation with or participation in the government and its elections. When Al-Zarqawi's group killed local leaders and citizens who had voted, met with ministers, or otherwise shown political moderation, the tribes avenged their deaths (Hazan 2006a, The Arab Press Reports). In 2006 and 2007, international media and policy makers began reporting the so-called "Sunni awakening," in which tribes and local governments formed alliances and began to force AQI/ISI from their territory (Munro, October 28 2006; Burns and Rubin, June 12, 2007). Even among Islamists sympathetic to AQI/ISI's views on *shari'ah* and the need

for an Islamic state, the group's brutality and willingness to kill Sunni civilians rendered it a rogue faction. In late 2006, Sheikh Abu Osama Al-Iraqi called on Osama Bin Laden, whom he considered an ally, to denounce AQI/ISI for its violence against Sunnis and, in particular, its attacks on Islamist clerics (Al-Iraqi 2006, [Al Qaeda in Iraq] Began to Liquidate Religious Scholars).

In May, 2007, *jihadi* groups opposed to the ISI formed an alliance of their own, vowing to "focus on the battle against the primary enemy and...not be sidetracked into secondary battles" (May 2, 2007, Jihad Organizations in Iraq Establish New Front). Absent from their declaration, however, was any call for, or indication of, an alliance with the ISI, confirming that its relationship to other Sunni armed groups was as cold as ever.

In June, following messages of detent from both al-Muhajir and al-Baghdadi, the Islamic Army in Iraq declared that it had reached a "reconciliation" with AQI and would cease hostilities against it (Reconciliation Agreement, June 6, 2007). As of February, 2008, however, AQI/ISI was still killing scores of Sunni civilians, as well as Sunni allies of the central government (Fisher, February 11, 2008). If not in open conflict with other *jihadis*, AQI/ISI still sews violence within the Sunni community, sustaining its own isolation.

So, if AQI/ISI's objectives are truly sectarian, the strategy it has devised to meet them as been poor. More importantly, the group has been unwilling to change that strategy. Though not definitive proof, this inflexibility suggests that winning over and uniting Sunnis is not AQI/ISI's chief aim. More likely, the group stokes the sectarian conflict as a means of pursuing other ends.

Conclusion: The Cost of Indiscriminant Targeting

Unlike Al Qaeda, AQI/ISI has held territory and governed. On several instances, AQI took towns, leaving its mark by imposing strict dress and other codes based on *shari'ah,* beating and killing those it declared non-cooperative (Beehner 2007, If Iraqi support; Kraner 2005: 52). Though certainly not as attuned to local politics as the UIC's stabilization of Somali neighborhoods, these actions at least show a greater emphasis on local issues than Al Qaeda displays. Paired with AQI/ISI leaders' apparent distress at their failure to win over Sunnis, this trend reveals that the group is much more concerned with local popularity than Bin Laden's organization. Moreover, the ISI has recently softened its rhetoric in an attempt to reconcile with Sunnis, both *jihadi* and moderate.

Theoretically, the desire for public support might moderate AQI/ISI's actions as well as its rhetoric. If the population does not desire all-out sectarian war or a state run by *jihadis*, a group concerned with its standing among them might compromise on those goals. In practice, however, AQI/ISI has moderated its rhetoric and image only. While "forgiving" moderates and creating new organizations designed to unite all Sunnis, AQI/ISI continued to kill ordinary Sunnis in streets and market places. When it has controlled territory, it has secured itself while killing and beating local residents and enforcing strict interpretations of *shari'ah* regardless of local preferences. Accordingly, though AQI/ISI shares the UIC's desire to hold territory, this does not translate into the same caution that the Somali Islamists once practiced.

Instead, AQI/ISI's territorial ambitions fit better with its extreme goals using constant *jihad* to re-establish the Caliphate. Its leaders have decided that a collapsed state, housing the seat of an ancient Caliphate, is a good place to begin the new empire. Accordingly, AQI/ISI para-state activity fits neatly into a *jihadi* and Caliphal ideology

that the group will not easily trade off for local support. Like the UIC's core leadership, AQI/ISI sees communal and political economic violence as, first and foremost, means to promote their extreme Islamist agenda. However, the Iraqi group is almost completely unwilling to compromise Islamism in the short-run in order to gain power or legitimacy. This moves it away from the UIC and much closer to Al Qaeda. This extremism may be due, in part, to the lack of moderates within AQI/ISI. Whereas the UIC had Sheikh Ahmed as a moderate voice in its top leadership, no similar figure exists in AQI/ISI. Whether led by foreign or Iraqi *jihadis*, AQI/ISI is certain of the legitimacy of killing civilians and government employees; there is no apparent internal debate on this issue. Unlike the UIC, then, AQI/ISI's leadership is purely *jihadi*, rather than a coalition of more diverse Islamists.

It also hastened AQI/ISI's loss of public support. In Somalia, it took a crisis for the UIC's clan and business alliances to abandon it. Until an Ethiopian force exposed the Islamists' military weakness, local leaders seemed content to allow the Islamists to go on enforcing law and order. In Iraq, AQI/ISI's own tactics ultimately ended its safe haven in Al-Anbar province. For a time, opposition to the Coalition and the Shiite-led central government aligned the interests of *jihadis*, Sunni resistance fighters, and the broader Sunni community. This allowed Al-Zarqawi and his successors to operate freely in Sunni areas, even holding territory in some places. However, by targeting Sunni civilians and exacerbating the sectarian conflict, the extremists betrayed their hosts' basic desire for security. This desire ultimately came to dominate anti-Coalition sentiment. When AQI/ISI refused to alter its tactics, continuing to provoke Shiites and attack Sunni civilians, Sunnis began to perceive them as a greater threat than the Coalition.

Accordingly, though Iraq's many conflicts, at first, provided AQI/ISI, more-moderate militants, and average Sunnis with a common cause, AQI/ISI proved unwilling to adapt its actions to maintain those common interests. The Iraqi case shows that *jihadis* can squander their own influence just as easily as outside attack can undermine it.

VI. Conclusion: The Paradox of Power

Power is paradoxical. The Islamist ideologues studied here are committed to their goals of imposing *shari'ah* and strengthening the Islamic character of their societies. Their commitment extends beyond preaching to a real desire for power, influence, and the ability to enforce and advance their goals. This, however, creates a bind in which pursuing political power and influence requires Islamists to make ideological compromises. Often, the general public and local leaders either disagree with Islamists' goals or simply have other priorities. When in power, Islamists will be faced with situations in which pursuing their ideological goals means failing to address the public's most important concerns.

Collapsed states create such paradoxical political opportunities by making violence a normal and dominant method of political competition. Armed groups vie for territorial control and those who dominate a given area militarily can decide which goods and services reach the population. In some cases, like Somalia, superior dedication and discipline give Islamists an inherent battlefield advantage over non-ideological rivals. More importantly, ubiquitous violence encourages moderates to ally with *jihadis* and makes the latter's violence consistent with many local material interests. Accordingly, state collapse correlates to an apparent increase in Islamists' appeal and influence.

Examined more-closely, however, Islamist alliances and their public support turn out to be motivated by convenience, rather than ideology. The majority and the most politically-influential of a collapsed states' people stand to gain from stability and preservation of the status quo. They will support Islamist coalitions that appear willing and able to provide security, but will withdraw that support quickly if this perception changes.

Stabilization requires ideological compromise, especially from *jihadis*. Objectives like fighting the West, fighting apostates, imposing strict interpretations of *shari'ah,* and re-constructing an Islamic Caliphate all require violence or other dramatic disruption of the status quo. Pursuing these objectives means imposing costs on local people, whose primary interest is stability. This creates a tradeoff in which the UIC could fight destructive local warlords with public support but lost it when it provoked an Ethiopian invasion and threatened a guerilla war. Similarly, AQI began with some support from Sunnis who thought it the best available protection against Shiite attack. However, by targeting moderate civilians and deliberately escalating sectarian tension, AQI imposed too great a cost for the average Sunni and the average Sunni leader to bear.

The stable-state comparison case, Egypt, provides more similarities than differences. Rather than fundamentally altering the political-ideological tradeoffs facing an Islamist group, state collapse appears merely to simplify them. The MB, like the UIC or AQI, is led by committed Islamists with ideological goals and a willingness to sacrifice in their pursuit. The MB is also surrounded by a society that may support Islamist principles but appears more concerned, in general, with bread and butter issues and basic political reform. As a result, the Brothers must balance pursuit of Islamist ideals with the good politics of providing for general welfare. Historically, they have done so by remaining overtly a-political, focusing on simple social programs and preaching while avoiding direct political competition. More-recently, however, the MB has become a contender in mainstream Egyptian politics, forcing it to make difficult decisions that tradeoff ideology against political strategy. These have produced a Parliamentary record focused on affordable housing and transportation safety, as well as

a divisive internal debate over the group's Draft Party Platform. Though not quite as stark as the choices facing armed Islamists in collapsed states, the trials of parliamentary politics have stressed the MB in similar ways, with ideology and political expedience often pulling in different directions.

This dichotomy, between ideology and political strategy is not terribly shocking. Politics everywhere shows similar tensions. This is, in many ways, a natural result of self-selection among political activists and officials. Those with grand, far-sighted, idealistic, or extreme visions are grand, far-sighted, idealistic, or extreme people. We would not label them or their ideas as such if they were conventional. Inherently, then, most people do not agree with those ideals or, at least, do not value them as highly as the ideologues do. Most people do, however, attach a high value to their own well-being, especially when it is faced with existential threat. As a result, ideologues, no matter how committed, can usually gain more influence by protecting and feeding people than they can by convincing them to support a radical vision. If they are so committed to the vision that they neglect people's more-immediate needs, their influence will not last long.

Variables and Outcomes

	Independent Variables					Outcomes	
	State Collapse	**Identity Conflict**	**Interest-Based Violence**	**Islamism and *jihadi* Potential**		**Actual *jihadi* Activity**	***Jihadis* in the Broader Islamist Movement**
Somalia	*Yes*	*High*	*High*	*Med/High*		*Low/Med* The UIC's *jihadis*: • made anti-foreign threats • desired guerilla struggle following Ethiopian invasion	The UIC: • brought together jihadis and moderates • exploited sub-state conflicts, promising security and gaining wide, passive support • lost support and split after Ethiopian attack
Iraq	*Yes*	*High*	*Med/High*	*High*		*Med/High* AQI/ISI: • targets Sunni moderates • targets other insurgents	AQI/ISI: • once enjoyed passive support from moderate Islamists, sectarian insurgents, and local Sunnis • lost these groups by targeting civilians and moderates
Egypt	*No*	*Low*	*Low*	*Med/High*		*Med/High* EIJ: • alienated the public by targeting civilians and tourists • refused to renounce violence	EIJ: • condemns the MB's non-violent strategy • has fled Egypt in order to continue *jihad*

The table above summarizes this study's results, organized by variables. Not surprisingly, for sub-state conflict variables, the collapsed states have more in common with each other than with Egypt. Both have high probabilities of identity-group conflict and high or medium probabilities of interest-based violence. In Iraq, oil is the largest economic prize. So far, most competition for this resource has been along sectarian lines, so that profit incentives reinforce identity-based conflict. This could change in the future,

but the medium ranking reflects the fact that, for now, profit appears subordinate to identity. In Egypt, by contrast, the stable, powerful state prevents identity hostilities or economic interests from creating violent conflict. There are less costly and more effective ways to gain/maintain power, wealth, and security in Egypt today.

The last independent variable is the potential for an influential *jihadi* movement, measured by the influence of Islamists more generally. In Egypt and Somalia, Islamists make up the largest and most powerful opposition to secular authorities. In Iraq, militant Islamists were active before the Anglo-American invasion and have taken up arms against Coalition forces in its wake. Accordingly, all three countries contain influential Islamist movements from which *jihadi* ideology may draw support. Iraq stands above the rest in *jihadi* potential, however, because Coalition forces provide obvious targets for foreign *jihadis*.

The last two columns represent the outcome or results that this study found in each country. The first outcome column reports the level and type of *jihadi* activity observed in each country during the sample period. In all three countries, a small but significant portion of Islamists has proven its *jihadi* credentials by refusing to give up violence under any circumstances. Iraq has, in fact, attracted foreign *jihadis* hoping to kill American and British troops. Conversely, Egypt's stability, its oppressive security apparatus, and the failure of Islamist rebellions in the 1990's have forced those unwilling to give up violence to move abroad. Egypt leads the three cases in producing *jihadis* while Iraq leads the three cases in attracting and "employing" them. Somalia hosts domestic *jihadis* eager to fight Ethiopian troops and attack moderate Somalis. It does

not, however, attract large numbers of foreign *jihadis*. This may be due to the stronger pull of Iraq; *jihadis* would rather kill western than Ethiopian troops.

The final column describes the role of *jihadis* within the Islamist movement as a whole. In Somalia and Iraq, *jihadis* had the opportunity to influence the broader movement by joining forces with moderates. State collapse and the sub-state violence that accompanied it made moderate Islamists violent and, therefore, acceptable partners for *jihadis*. In turn, the *jihadis* were able to gain some public support from residents hoping they would improve security. Though certainly difficult to form and maintain, *jihadi*-moderate coalitions can develop and can gain public support in collapsed states. In Egypt, on the other hand, moderate Islamists have chosen non-violent methods in the face of a strong state and a population that opposes violence. *Jihadis* have condemned this choice, electing instead to leave Egypt and Egyptian politics in order to continue *jihad*.

However short-lived and limited, the potential for *jihadi*-moderate cooperation puts the collapsed states in stark contrast to the stable state. Moreover, the collapsed states have similar security contexts: weak central governments, foreign intervention, extensive identity-based conflict, and some interest-based violence. In other words, politics in Somalia and Iraq is violent. The correlation violent politics and greater *jihadi* influence suggests that state collapse does affect Islamist movements and does, to an extent, empower *jihadis*. As the cases show, however, these Islamist coalitions and their public support are fragile.

Theoretical Implications: Sub-State Conflict and Islamism

In Somalia and Iraq, the general public and the local political environment it encompasses conform to sub-state conflict theories. In both, communal identities draw

the most important lines of battle, be they lineage clans or the Sunni-Shiite divide. Economic incentives also motivate violence in these states, either by creating opportunities for individuals to get rich by fighting or by reinforcing communal grievances. Disputes over Iraqi oil revenue help fuel the Sunni-Shiite divide while the UIC exchanged stability and property protection for weapons and militiamen from Somali business leaders. Residents of both collapsed states respond to the uncertainty and violence around them by privileging material needs and goals. They find a trustworthy group to protect them from threatening neighbors or, to a lesser extent, they find ways to benefit personally from waging violence. In this context, gaining long-term political influence requires Islamists to recognize and accommodate the non-ideological goals of the people around them. Often, this means providing security, the most basic public service and one that is lacking in all collapsed states.

In Egypt, a functioning state complicates the political environment by enforcing order and reducing the political efficacy of violence. However, the general tension between political strategy and ideological commitment remains crucial. The difference between stable and collapsed states, then, is one of degree, not one of type. In collapsed states, most material interests and identity groups can be served by security and violence designed to provide it. In stable states, material interests and identity groups make more complex and diverse demands that are less-well served by force of arms. In short, Islamists in states of all strengths share similar goals and face similar tradeoffs, but sub-state conflict theories help explain why collapsed-state Islamists face these tradeoffs with violence.

Ismail (2006) correctly enjoins authors not to treat Islam as an agent. The diverse Islamists and Muslims that makeup the UIC, AQI, the MB, EIJ, Al Qaeda, and the societies around them all share the same Islamic texts and traditions, but interpret and use them in radically different ways. Islam does not do anything. Muslims do things, sometimes in the name of Islam and sometimes for other reasons. This study suggests that the other reasons dominate among the general population. Still, the leaders of the Islamist groups studied here are committed ideologues, not veiled sectarian warriors or profit-seekers. Accordingly, theories of Islamism help us understand the motivations and thought processes of group leaders, even if broader societies have more immediate material motivations.

Within theories of Islamism, Kepel (2002) argues that some Islamist extremists treat violence as an end which is to be justified through evolving ideology. The UIC and AQI both possess members of Kepel's (2002) type. Their hardest-line leaders have long histories of waging violent *jihad*. They have fought the West, its allies, and moderate Muslims under several banners. All of these causes shared a commitment to violence. In Egypt, extremists of this type join radical organizations like Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which are willing to justify and support violence even at the expense of domestic political influence. Hafez (2004), on the other hand, exemplifies the view that violence is a means of achieving Islamist ends. All three case countries contain individuals of this sort as well. Moderate UIC leaders, moderate Iraqi insurgents, and the Muslim Brotherhood appear to see violence as one among many available methods of gaining influence. They will use it when it seems better than their alternatives. So, the Kepel (2002) and Hafez

(2004) camps exist simultaneously and their relationship depends, in part, on the state's strength.

The Effect of State Collapse

State collapse, then, does not seem to generate more-violent ideologies. Egyptian radicals from EIJ are just as committed to violence as the members of AQI and more-committed to violence than most UIC members. Rather, state collapse allows for greater cooperation between those who see violence as an end in and of itself and those who treat it as a means whose use is justified in certain contexts.

In a collapsed state, most politics is violent. Absent a dominant state government, the most effective way to deliver political goods and garner public support is by forcefully controlling territory. Moreover, self-interested and destructive violence by secular groups may convince moderate Islamists that they should use violence as a necessary and justifiable response. Accordingly, state collapse temporarily aligns the interests of diverse Islamists. It allows those always committed to violence to work with those using violence as a tool for political competition and achieving other Islamist goals. This can cause outsiders to believe that collapsed states are breeding Islamist ideology or that most Muslims are violent *jihadis* waiting for their government to get out of the way so they can wage Holy War. In reality, committed, violent, international *jihadis* are a minority in all societies but find in state collapse an opportunity to ally with larger factions.

This alliance is, however, feeble. Changes in the political environment can raise the costs of the compromises that hold it together. If the population comes to see the Islamists as destabilizing rather than securing, they may turn on them. This forces the

moderate Islamists to either break with the extremists, or follow them to the political margins. Similarly, extremists may grow weary of moderate actions, demanding that the group increase its violence and, again, forcing moderates to choose between the extremists' vision and broad political support. AQI/ISI seems to have chosen hard-line ideology over political strategy. Their evolving rhetoric shows that they understand and are troubled by their loss of political support, but their continued targeting of civilians and moderates reveals that extreme ideology takes precedent.

Finally, with imperfect foresight, moderates may not predict the political repercussions of their actions. UIC leaders, both moderate and extremist, may not have anticipated that Moghadishu's clan elders would abandon them in a fight against Ethiopia. They may have thought that their Islamist and nationalist rhetoric would rally Somalis to their side. When it did not, however, the results were similar to those that befell AQI. The UIC is now a politically-marginal insurgency striking Ethiopian, government, and civilian targets without a broad support base.

Though not active during the analysis period, the Islamic Group of Egypt provides a useful comparison. Originally an Islamist insurrection, IG ultimately renounced violence as part of a rapprochement with the regime and in response to popular ire over its indiscriminate tactics. As Kepel (2002) recounts, the fundamental difference between the IG and EIJ was that the former began with a broad popular support base in Upper Egypt. Its leaders, moreover, were hoped to hold territory and to demonstrate their vision of an Islamic state, one Egyptian region at a time. By contrast, EIJ hoped for one, nationwide rebellion followed by the rapid implementation of *Shari'ah* rule in all of the country. They did not seek broad support from the population,

which they considered unenlightened anyway. Instead, they hoped to be a violent vanguard that would demonstrate the power and righteousness of Islam, shocking greater society out of its slumber to awaken in a more pious future.

Society slept on. EIJ and IG revealed their true colors most-clearly in their reaction to rebellion's failure and the population's refusal to support their violence. The IG, which had hoped to win Egyptian territory and Egyptians' hearts, renounced violence. EIJ, which was committed to violent pursuit of its extremist ideology, went abroad to continue the fight free of security officials' interference. The IG shared the Muslim Brotherhood's commitment to pursuing a more-Islamic society by the best available means, with no particular preference for violence. Thus, having moved its operations to Cairo, lost popular support, and attracted repressive government attention, the IG's leaders re-evaluated and became non-violent.

Policy Implications

State collapse does not simply predict the rise or the expansion of violent extremist ideology. Rather it predicts that Islamists with different views of violence may form coalitions. These coalitions will then have to choose whether to prioritize their extreme wing's ideology or political strategy. Accordingly, a key policy imperative is to gain intelligence about the balance of power between moderates and *jihadis* within each group. Knowing who is making decisions and how many people are loyal to him will help officials predict a group's actions and longevity. Will most of its members accept negotiations? If the extremist wing splits, how many fighters will go with it? If local political actors turn against violence, will the group opt to appease or punish them and how many of its members will respect that choice? Will strikes by western forces

empower or weaken the extremist wing in internal politics? Understanding local political conditions and their interaction with the group's internal politics allows policy makers to assess the likely effects of their choices.

The population of a collapsed state, rather than an extremists hotbed, is a potentially-powerful anti-extremist force. If foreign and government security forces can guarantee security and other political goods, they can pull the rug out from under extremists. Without pervasive violence, moderates may find that other forms of political competition suit their goals better. Officials can speed this process by offering them influence in local politics in exchange for abandoning violence and breaking with extremists.

Security forces must still kill and capture the hardest-line *jihadis*. However, even this strategy requires careful separation of *jihadis* from other Islamists to avoid antagonizing moderates. Providing security and other immediate local needs will make moderate Islamists more likely to lay down their arms or even switch sides, allowing security operations to target the fringe elements that remain threatening.

Foreign Intervention

Nothing in these policy implications necessarily requires international intervention. Where local security forces can isolate and eliminate *jihadis,* foreign, especially western, involvement may be counter-productive. In both Somalia and Iraq, the presence of foreign, non-Muslim troops is a force pushing moderate and *jihadi* Islamists together. While state collapse allows the two wings to cooperate in waging violence, foreign intervention gives them an easy common target. Any supporter of a *shari'ah* state must be inherently hostile to non-Muslim occupiers. While any group,

foreign or domestic, can serve a material interest or defend an identity group, only an Islamic force can establish an Islamic state. Accordingly, foreign, non-Muslim involvement will always antagonize Islamists, no matter how moderate. That said, the cases examined here suggest that, for most Somalis and Iraqis, material needs, ultimately, trump ideological considerations. Even if they sympathize with anti-foreign rhetoric or Islamist principles, Somali leaders chose not to allow guerilla warfare in Mogadishu and Iraqi leaders chose to end their sanction of AQI in Al-Anbar. In both cases, the Islamists lost their credibility as providers of local stability or group defense. Without these, their ideological appeals and threats fell on deaf ears.

Al Qaeda is Weird

Unlike the UIC, AQI, or the MB, Al Qaeda has never attempted to control territory or gain local political power. Its territorial and political ambitions are "all-or-nothing." It hopes to be a vanguard of the *umma*, paving the way for a Caliphate that, presumably, will govern according to Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri's interpretation of *shari'ah*. Along the way, Al Qaeda argues that violent *jihad* is essentially the only pure and pious things for Muslims to do. For this, Al Qaeda does not need popular support, only a small cadre of extremists willing to die in order to strike at the West. This exempts it from trading off ideology and political strategy. As a result, Al Qaeda forgoes the social programs, stabilization, and even *shari'ah*-enforcement that the other groups attempt. Though certain members of local Islamist groups may be as extreme or more extreme ideologically than Al Qaeda, as long as they seek and hold territory, officials have more tools to use against them. Al Qaeda remains a threat in large part because it

has chosen isolation and, therefore, does not have a constituency that can pressure it to reform and turn on it if it refuses.

Collapsed states with Muslim populations likely contain individuals willing to ally with Al Qaeda. *Jihadis* in Somalia and Iraq have or seek ties to Bin Laden while simultaneously working with more-moderate elements. State collapse gives them battles to fight and enlarges the common ground between them and moderates, creating the appearance of a growing Al Qaeda-allied movement. However, Al Qaeda's focus on international enemies and utopian, international goals stands at odds with all moderates and even many extremists. The most radical of Somalia's *jihadis,* for example, are still domestically focused.

The population of potential Al Qaeda recruits appears to depend on the psychological, biographical, and broad ideological factors that Sageman (2004) outlines. It does not increase significantly with state collapse. The inherent violence of collapsed states allows Al Qaeda to find temporary common cause with local moderate Islamists, in the same way that this violent context draws moderates closer to local extremists. This is not, however, evidence of growing popularity of Al Qaeda's ideology or *jihadi* motives in general. Rather, state collapse makes the violence that these ideas motivate less-remarkable.

The Bottom Line

Islamists exist. Contrary to the material rationality of sub-state conflict theory, ideologues committed to Islamifying their societies can be influential in collapsed states. They may even be able to overcome secular armed groups on the battlefield. However, most people in collapsed states are more concerned with basic security than with Islamist

ideology. Communal conflict and economic incentives drive violence, but also create a widespread demand for peace enforcement. Islamists can gain and maintain influence only if they are willing and able to provide security.

Their willingness depends, in large part, on internal balance of power between violent extremists and more moderate Islamists. The former group treats violence as an end, justified under all circumstances. The latter treats violence as a means to achieving a better and more pious society. The pervasiveness of violence in collapsed states allows these two camps to work together, to a point. However, if the extremists insist on violence that destabilizes and angers the local population, they may come into conflict with moderates' desire for political power. Understanding which camp is most powerful will help policy makers predict when a group will negotiate, when it will remain violent, when it will split, and how powerful extremists will be once separated from moderate allies.

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