GLOBAL TERRORISM TREND

- Between the Wolf & the Crocodile: The Pragmatic Currents of the ISIS
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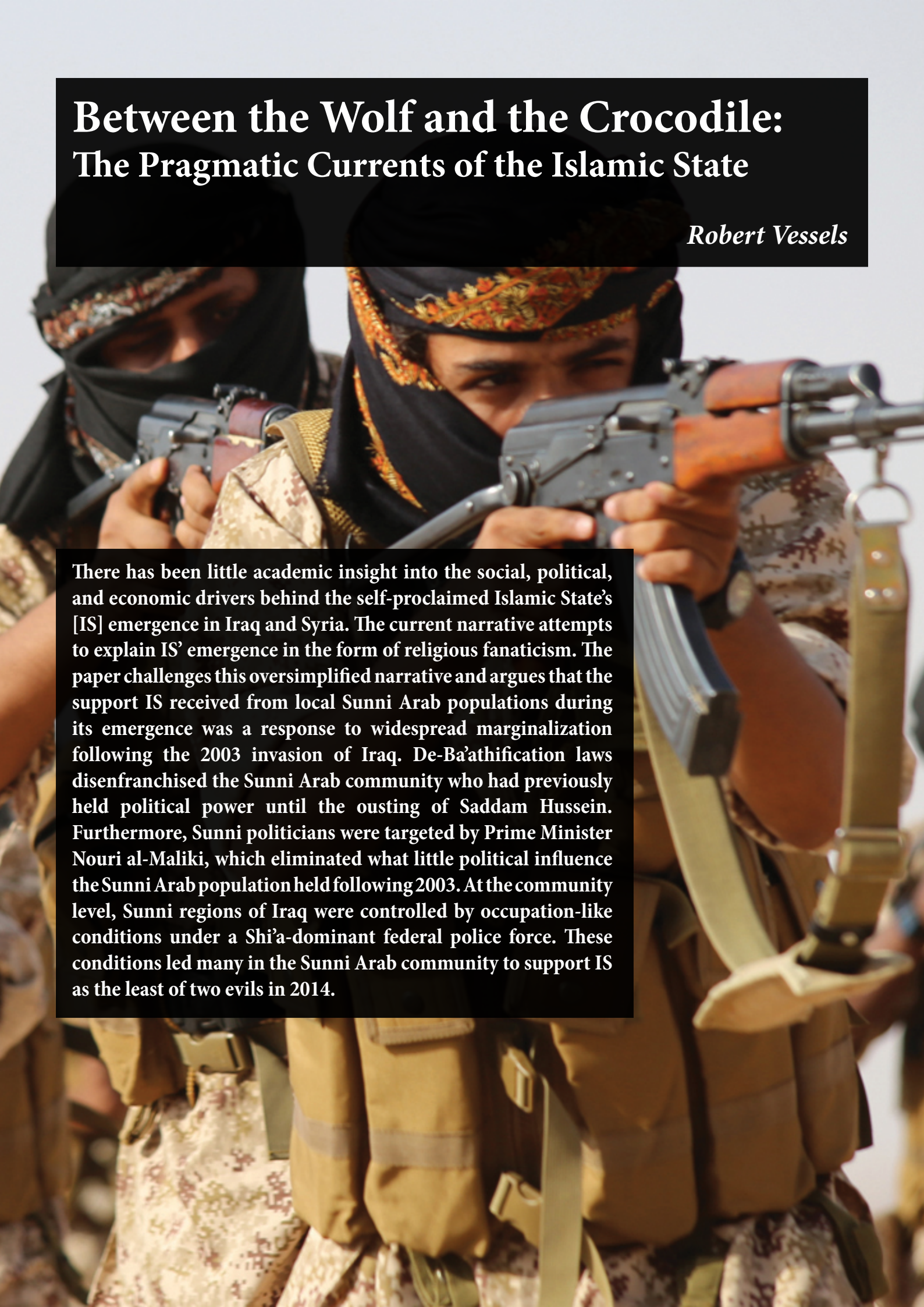
Between the Wolf and the Crocodile:
The Pragmatic Currents of the Islamic State

Robert Vessels



There has been little academic insight into the social, political, and economic drivers behind the self-proclaimed Islamic State's [IS] emergence in Iraq and Syria. The current narrative attempts to explain IS' emergence in the form of religious fanaticism. The paper challenges this oversimplified narrative and argues that the support IS received from local Sunni Arab populations during its emergence was a response to widespread marginalization following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. De-Ba'athification laws disenfranchised the Sunni Arab community who had previously held political power until the ousting of Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, Sunni politicians were targeted by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, which eliminated what little political influence the Sunni Arab population held following 2003. At the community level, Sunni regions of Iraq were controlled by occupation-like conditions under a Shi'a-dominant federal police force. These conditions led many in the Sunni Arab community to support IS as the least of two evils in 2014.

Preface:

In March of 2003, the Baghdad night sky resembled a Fourth of July celebration gone horribly wrong. President George W. Bush had just ordered the first phase in the United States' invasion of Iraq: a continuous bombardment of key Iraqi positions meant to instill "shock and awe" among Iraq's military. Although the tactic was initially effective in that it resulted in minimal resistance from the formal Iraqi military, a soon-to-be infamous insurgency group quickly formed in the chaos of the invasion. Led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaeda in Iraq [AQI] was the predecessor to the Islamic State [IS]. Initially, the organization was almost entirely comprised of foreign fighters from the Arab world. In addition to its anti-American insurgency, AQI was known for its large scale and indiscriminate attacks on civilians.[1] It targeted both Sunnis and Shi'a in an attempt to spark a sectarian civil war. Five years after the invasion, I found myself on the ground patrolling Baghdad's muhallahs* as an infantryman in the US Army. Sectarian violence had peaked the year prior, but was still readily apparent in massive car bombs during Friday calls to prayer and attacks on Shi'i pilgrims en route to Karbala.

This piece analyzes portions of events that I was actively engaged in during my 15-month deployment to Baghdad. After leaving the army, I became staunchly opposed to the US occupation of Iraq and struggled to find meaning behind my time there. During the process of writing this paper, I was acutely aware of my experiences in Iraq and although I instinctively wanted to study the US' responsibility for Iraq's instability, that topic has largely been exhausted.[2] Instead, this paper examines why, in the post-invasion rehabilitation period, large portions of Iraqis and Syrians welcomed and supported the emergence of IS, an organization that, according to Human Rights Watch, massacred at least one thousand Iraqis upon capturing Mosul and Tikrit in 2014[3] and has been widely demonized elsewhere.

The invasion of Iraq, the collapse of the Ba'athist government and the disbanding of the Iraqi military created a power vacuum that the US was unable to fill, the repercussions of which are felt today. The most visible result was the rapid emergence and spread of IS* that is currently fueling headlines around the world. Attesting to the organization's theatrical brutality, the beheadings of kidnapped Westerners Peter Kassig, Steven Sotloff, and James Foley were posted on YouTube for the world to see. The sheer terror of witnessing these hostages' last seconds has undoubtedly been etched in the minds of many. Aside from oversimplified partisan jabs at the Obama administration for pulling out of Iraq too soon and an occasional reference to AQI, there is scant information about the structural underpinnings of this group's origins.

In fact, the current narrative suggests that IS' emergence was motivated by religious zealotry and mental illness. Authors like Jay Sekulow, in his popular bestseller, Rise of ISIS, simplify IS as "immense evil" and "composed of religiously motivated psychopaths."[4] This narrative of "psychopathic terrorists" has extended to popular blogs like the Daily Kos as well as to the reports of Fox News television persona Megyn Kelly. They fail to account, however, for the social, political, and economic motivations behind IS' widespread support and pragmatic partnerships, which is the focus of this paper.

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1. Aaron Y. Zelin, "Al-Qaeda in Syria: A Closer Look at Isis (Part I)," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 10, 2013, accessed September 6, 2014, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/al-qaeda-in-syria-a-closer-look-at-isis-part-i.

* In order to control enemy movements, entire neighborhoods (muhallahs) were sealed off by 12-foot high concrete walls similar to Israel's separation barrier.

2. Ted Galen Carpenter, "Middle East Vortex: An Unstable Iraq and Its Implications for the Region," Mediterranean Quarterly 20, no. 4 (2009).

3. "Iraq: ISIS Executed Hundreds of Prison Inmates," Human Rights Watch, October 30, 2014, accessed November 1, 2014, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/30/iraq-isis-executed-hundreds-prison-inmates.

* AQI renamed itself Islamic State in Iraq [ISI] in 2006 following the death of Zarqawi. In a change of direction, ISI shifted its focus toward gaining and governing territory in Sunni-dominated Anbar Province in western Iraq. In April 2013, ISI changed its name to Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham [ISIS]. The organization changed its name again in June 2014 to IS after its leader proclaimed himself caliph of a new worldwide caliphate. There has been much confusion over what to call the organization and all three of these acronyms seem to be used interchangeably. To simplify matters, this paper will use IS for the post-AQI era.

4. Jay Sekulow, Jordan Sekulow, Robert W. Ash and David French, Rise of ISIS: A Threat We Can't Ignore," (New York: Howard Books), Kindle Edition, 244, 382.

Introduction:

This study traces the emergence of IS to the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and challenges the current understanding of IS supporters, which fails to differentiate those in a pragmatic partnership with the insurgency organization from its ideological subscribers. This understanding is rooted in years of over-simplification and misperceptions of the Muslim world by many Western academics and pundits, leading to the belief that Islam is its own civilization and the causality of all significant events in the region.

Islamic scholarship, often veiled behind a shroud of Orientalism, has a problematic history due to the fact that its scholars were regularly isolated from their peers in different fields. "As a result," says historian Roger Owen in his review of the Cambridge History of Islam, "criticism of the way in which Islamic studies are conducted has been reduced to a minimum and a great deal of work of low quality has been allowed to pass unchallenged."[5] According to Owen, few studies of the Muslim world make original contributions to their topic, while most are simply "competent surveys of existing sources."[6] Such material dates back to the nineteenth century and examines Islam as a singular civilization and its population a homogenous society that is inferior to the West.

A widespread shift in the Western perception of Muslims took place in the nineteenth century. European fascination for the Orient developed into a notion that the West was inherently different from and culturally superior to the Muslim world. Islam was perceived to be morally corrupt, stagnant, and "a once-great civilization now in decay."[7] Prominent European figures such as Ernest Renan, a distinguished scholar of religion, and Evelyn Baring, Britain's leading authority on Egypt at the time, supported this attitude toward Islam. Zachary Lockman elaborates:

> *Renan claimed to understand Islam's true nature: it must be everywhere and always be a hindrance to progress and an enemy to reason. […] he [Renon] was in his day a very influential scholar and intellectual and his opinions were widely shared across Europe and beyond, helping to foster a derogatory attitude toward Islam and a sense of Western superiority which in turn legitimized European colonialism.*[8]

In the same light, Baring viewed Muslims as "fundamentally irrational" and in an "abject state." Scholars as well as colonial authorities saw both Renan and Baring's perceptions of Islam as common sense.[9] Such reinforcement of a perspective isolating Islam neglects the diverse and complex social structures that surround major events in the Muslim world. Owen notes that, "Opportunities for a useful exchange of ideas are further reduced by a tendency to see Islamic society as sui generis and not, in important ways, like all other non-European societies in Asia and Africa."[10] As this paper will demonstrate, the Muslim world is not homogenous. Rather than focus on Islam and the religious mobilization behind IS' widespread support, I pinpoint pragmatism and political calculation to demonstrate that IS is not solely driven by fundamentalist Islamic interpretations.

Furthermore, Owen recognizes a problem with Islamic studies that is all too similar to present-day accounts of significant events in the region. Throughout much of the Cambridge History, "the reader is offered little more than another breathless account of battles, murders, and the rapid rise and fall of different dynasties, with little suggestion that history is more than a chronicle of random events."[11]Such stereotyping has increased with advancements in technology and global interconnectedness. Edward Said explains:

> *One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of 'the mysterious Orient.'*[12]

5. Roger Owen, "Studying Islamic History," The Journal of Interdisciplinary History 4, no. 2 (August 1973): 287.
6. Ibid, 288.
7. Zachary Lockman, Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 75.
8. Ibid, 81.
9. Ibid, 93-4.
10. Owen, "Studying Islamic History," 295.
11. Ibid, 289.
12. Edward W. Said, Orientalism, Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 26.

As a result, an emphasis remains on political history rather than the study of social and economic elements.[13] In the same fashion, a plethora of journalistic articles (and the few academic studies on IS that do exist) fail to address the socioeconomic currents behind IS' emergence and instead focus on religious militant group such as al-Qaeda. Taking into account these historical shortcomings in studies of the Muslim world, this paper introduces structural reasoning into the discussion of how and why IS emerged so successfully in Iraq and Syria in 2014.

..majority of IS' initial indigenous supporters do not subscribe to the group's ideology; rather, they are marginalized communities living under non-inclusive corrupt regimes and as a result supported IS as the lesser of two evils.

Additionally, this paper argues that IS successfully emerged in Iraq and Syria for three reasons. First, beginning in 2003, the meddling of external powers in Iraq and Syria set the stage for the current civil and regional conflicts. Second, internal power struggles led to political corruption and a sectarian rift between Iraq's newly disenfranchised Sunni Arab population and its Shi'i Arabs, who dominate political power in Baghdad. Third, IS' establishment in eastern Syria did not pose an immediate threat to the survival of the Assad regime, which was primarily concerned with key areas surrounding Aleppo and Damascus.

This paper further argues that a majority of IS' initial indigenous supporters do not subscribe to the group's ideology; rather, they are marginalized communities living under non-inclusive corrupt regimes and as a result supported IS as the lesser of two evils. The difference between IS' ideological followers and those disenfranchised populations will become abundantly clear in this study.

For this study, structural dimensions include political, social, and economic motivations for supporting the organization. While religion has played a significant role in forming IS' identity and notoriety, a focus only on IS' interpretation of Islam is problematic because it fails to recognize the complex social issues also at work. An example of this tunnel vision is Graeme Wood's cover story for The Atlantic's March 2015 print issue. In the article, Wood argues that "to deny the Islamic State's medieval religious nature" misleads us from the organization's true nature.[14] Not only is simplifying IS into a category of archaic religious zealots a modern example of Orientalism, it also hinders a deep understanding of the reasons behind the initial widespread support for IS. Additionally, IS' emergence is defined as the organization's evolution within Iraq and Syria from March 2003 to August 2014. This era spans the US invasion of Iraq and IS' 2014 summer offensive in which the militant organization captured vast swaths of territory spanning one-third of Iraq and Syria combined. It is during this timeframe that corruption and oppression from the central governments of Iraq and Syria toward their Sunni Arab populations came to a head and sowed the seeds for AQI's rebranding and resurgence.

Chapter One explores the key factors that lead to the disenfranchisement of Iraq's Sunni Arab community following the 2003 US invasion. Shortly after the fall of Baghdad, the Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA], an interim government led by Ambassador Paul Bremer, dissolved the mostly-Sunni authority in Iraq. With haste, the new de facto leader of Iraq enacted CPA Orders 1 and 2, which dissolved the military and began a process called de-Ba'athification, putting roughly 200,000 Sunni Arabs out of work and without reparations—including seasoned veterans of the Iraqi army.[15] A reward system was established for information leading to the arrest of individuals responsible for crimes committed by the Saddam regime—almost exclusively Sunni Arabs.[16] AQI sensed this as an opportunity to exploit the disenfranchisement of Iraq's Sunni Arab population by attacking Shi'i holy sites, thereby creating a sectarian war. Although AQI was successful in rousing sectarian violence throughout the country and indeed, a vicious civil war in 2006-2007, over time Iraq's Sunni Arab tribes partnered with the US military in combatting the mostly foreign-fighters that comprised AQI.

The de-Ba'athification of Iraqi society is key to the pragmatic relationships between IS and Sunni Arab groups who may share a sectarian identity but do not agree ideologically. I was able to interview several

13. Owen, "Studying Islamic History," 296.
14. Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," The Atlantic, March 2015, 80.
15. Robert Collins, "Inside the Rise of Isis: Losing Iraq," in FRONTLINE (Public Broadcasting Service, 2014).
16. L. Paul Bremer, "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society," (2003).

former-members of Iraq's Ba'ath Party in Amman. This gave me a first-hand account from the demographic group that was most marginalized by post-Saddam policies in Iraq. This destabilization of the Iraqi status quo was exacerbated by the new Iraqi constitution, which further marginalized the Sunni Arab community when it was left out of the drafting process following a boycott of the 2005 parliamentary elections.

..in January 2005 [elections], only two of fifty-five members of the constitution's negotiating committee were Sunni Arab, which resulted in virtually no Sunni influence in the drafting process.

For many Sunnis, the 2005 constitution codified their exclusion from Iraq's politics and has been a lingering case of resentment. An emblem of democracy, the document was meant to be a major symbolic victory for the Bush administration; however, the constitution's drafting process was far from democratic. After a boycott of parliamentary elections in January 2005, only two of fifty-five members of the constitution's negotiating committee were Sunni Arab, which resulted in virtually no Sunni influence in the drafting process.[17] In turn, Kurdish and Shi'i leadership took the lead on negotiating the terms of the constitution and Iraq became a decentralized federal state.[18] The Sunni Arab community, nationalist in outlook and inclined to a centralized state, immediately opposed the constitution. It was widely believed that autonomy was a Kurdish code word for secession, and their pride in the country made that unacceptable.[19]

However, in "Iraq's Federalism Quandary," authors Sean Kane, Joost R. Hiltermann, and Raad Alkadiri contend that the Sunni Arab dominant provinces in western Iraq are beginning to lean toward regional autonomy.[20] To challenge this claim, I approached several prominent Sunni Iraqi leaders about their attitudes towards the constitution, specifically regarding autonomy. I discovered that, in an attempt to use the constitution in their favor, leaders of Iraq's largest Sunni Arab tribe recently began lobbying Washington for support in establishing a semi-autonomous Sunni region similar to Iraqi Kurdistan. Additionally, lobbyists are pushing for the White House to consult with the Dulaim tribe, instead of Baghdad, on issues regarding IS.[21]

In response to Iraqi security force abuses — that corroborate Dr. Misconi and Dr. Nujaifi's accounts — and marginalization from Baghdad, Sunni Arab leaders have begun to realize that the constitution's decentralization authority can be used as a means for control of natural resources and improved governance. With very little written on Sunni Arab lobbying efforts, further investigation will provide insight into thought processes behind the actions of Iraq's Sunni Arab leaders.

Chapter Two examines Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's policies, which eventually drove Iraq's Sunni Arabs into the arms of IS. In 2006, Sunni resentment towards the central government increased after Prime Minister Maliki, a Shi'i, took office. Pushing an increasingly sectarian agenda, especially during his second term, Maliki consolidated power as Washington withdrew, physically and intellectually, from the country.[22] Ambassador Christopher Hill is an authority on the State Department's hands-off approach to dealing with Baghdad. Hill is currently the dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. Hill has written extensively about his time as Ambassador to Iraq, specifically President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's unwillingness to work with Prime Minister Maliki.

Through conversations with Dr. Humam Misconi, the senior advisor for the Economic Recovery and Poverty Alleviation Cluster of the United Nations Development Program in Iraq and a thirty-year veteran of the Iraqi government, I corroborated the incompetence of the US State Department policies and its personnel's unhappiness upon being assigned to Baghdad, as previously discussed by Ambassador Hill.[23]

17. Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks," (Congressional Research Service, 2009).
18. Jonathan Morrow, "Deconstituting Mesopotamia: Cutting a Deal on the Regionalization of Iraq," in Framing the State in Times of Transition, ed. Laurel E. Miller and Louis Aucoin (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2010): 574.
19. Ibid, 577.
20. Sean and Joost R. Hiltermann and Raad Alkadiri Kane, "Iraq's Federalism Quandary," The National Interest 118, no. Mar/Apr 2012 (2012).
21. Sean Nevins, "Meet the Man Lobbying America to Divide Iraq," Mint Press News, October 3, 2014, accessed December 3, 2014, http://www.mintpressnews.com/meet-the-man-lobbying-america-to-divide-iraq/197092/
22. Dr. Najih al-Maizan, interview by the author, trans. Mohammed Ayesh, Erbil, January 12, 2015.
23. Dr. Humam Misconi, interview by the author, Berkeley, November 6, 2014.

Furthermore, Misconi gave detailed accounts of the Iraq security force's abuse of power in Mosul, which were supported by a personal interview with the governor of Mosul, Dr. Atheel Nujaifi.[24] According to them, the overbearing presence of a Shi'a-dominant police force, which acted similarly to a mafia, led the greater public to welcome IS with open arms. Misconi's interview was invaluable in that it provided insight and accounts of family and colleagues living in the IS controlled city of Mosul. Additionally, fieldwork conducted in Jordan with former Iraqi government officials triangulate previous interviews in determining whether or not Washington could have prevented Maliki's sectarian agenda.

It is important to note that around the same time, AQI shifted from an organization dominated by foreigners to one comprised of Iraqis and led by an Iraqi — Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.[25] This shift in identity could explain why Iraq's Sunni Arab tribes formed pragmatic relationships with IS rather than combatting them as the Sons of Iraq did in 2007 during the Sahwa movement, commonly referred to as the Sunni Awakening. With only their Sunni religion in common, I argue that IS relied on these militia groups for tribal legitimacy and the militias joined the bandwagon in order to benefit from IS' ability to spearhead military operations against the Shi'a-run government in Baghdad.

Chapter Three examines IS' relationship with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Until recently, IS and the Syrian government have mutually benefitted from each other's presence. The Assad regime and IS have close ties that date back to the AQI insurgency, when Syria acted as an entry point into Iraq for foreign fighters.[26] Dr. Waleed al-Rawi, an expert on Iraqi militant groups and IS, as well as Congressional testimonies and logistical documents, known as the Sinjar Records, provide evidence of AQI's history with the Syrian central government. An understanding of this relationship between AQI and the Assad regime provides context for an apparent modus vivendi that formed following IS' establishment in Syria.

The year 2011 was important for the future of militant Islamist groups in Syria. When the uprising against the Assad regime began, it triggered the return of local Salafists who had been involved in external struggles. Syrian Salafists were not the only ones to take notice of the situation in Syria. "In 2011 when the crackdown on Sunni protestors in Syria became violent and protestors called for armed opposition, the ISI saw an opportunity not only to help future allies in Syria, but also to rally its base in Iraq."[27] The majority of sources accusing the Assad regime of supporting IS originate from opposition members with an obvious bias due to their position against the Syrian government. Nevertheless, The Carter Center's "Syria Countrywide Conflict Report #4" offers in-depth analysis of the relationships between all belligerents taking part in hostilities.[28]

Prior to IS' 2014 summer offensive, as the organization was engaged in hostilities against a coalition of opposition forces, the Assad regime only confronted IS in self-defense. During this time, the regime almost exclusively attacked opposition forces, leaving IS relatively free to grab large swaths of land in eastern Syria.[29] In light of these facts, the Carter Center's report suggests a modus vivendi between the Syrian government and IS. The relative calm that resulted from a lack of aerial bombardments allowed IS to successfully hold the territory it captured inside Syria and focus on state building and the organization of social services among its public. Although both belligerents benefitted from each other's existence, I challenge the idea of an active partnership between Assad's regime and IS. The two forces infrequently clashed because IS established itself near the Iraq border and the Syrian military could only afford to engage the most imminent threats to its survival, on the opposite side of the country from IS.

24. Dr. Atheel al-Nujaifi, interview by the author, Erbil, January 13, 2015.
25. Bobby Ghosh, "Isis: A Short History," The Atlantic, August 14, 2014, accessed August 15, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/08/isis-a-short-history/376030/.
26. Waleed al-Rawi and Sterling Jensen, "Syria's Salafi Networks," PRISM 4 (2014): 44.
27. Ibid, 52.
28. "Syria Countrywide Conflict Report #4," (The Carter Center, 2014).
29. Ibid, 25.

I. The disenfranchisement of Iraq's Sunni Arabs:

The Islamic State [IS] captured swaths of land as large as the area of Britain in a seemingly effortless sweep across northwest Iraq and eastern Syria in the summer of 2014.[30] It is necessary to understand that IS comprises four broad constituencies, each with differing motivations and in contrast with the various portrayals of IS followers as 'religiously motivated psychopaths.' According to Dr. Yahya Alkubaisi, a leading scholar on IS' organizational structure, IS incorporates four circles: its ideological core, ex-officers of the Iraqi army, the Islamic Shield Brigade of foreign volunteers, and former Ba'athists. He elaborated that, "the fourth circle contains ex-Ba'athists, ex-soldiers. We think they are not terrorists. They are not ideologists."[31] In a testament to the marginalization of Iraq's Sunni Arab community, a large number from that population saw IS' victories as liberation from Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's oppressive government, which they had actively protested against since 2011.

Early IS support was not comprised solely of individuals eager to adhere to the group's interpretation of Islam. It included Ba'athists, nationalists and Islamists,[32] many of whom did not subscribe to IS' ideology. Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, a forty-year veteran of the Iraqi government and former member of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq [UNAMI], explains:

> *[To the] Iraqi government pre-August 2014, anyone against them is [a] terrorist. By August, they changed the name to IS. If you watch the daily statements, they are not talking about anything but IS; and IS to them, no matter who they are—kids, women—anyone in the field is [the] enemy and anyone is IS. […] These are locals. They are defending themselves against the government forces—against the militia. Against killing them [...] So, by nature, they have to rely on someone supporting them, and [there was no one but] IS. So, we have to make the distinction between those real IS ideologically and those who are fighting or surviving.*[33]

Thus, for many Sunni Arabs, IS was the best alternative to Baghdad's sectarian agenda.

De-Ba'athification is the key to fully understanding the disenfranchisement of Iraq's Sunni Arabs. According to Dr. Sadoun al-Zibaydi, Saddam Hussein's personal translator and appointed member of the constitutional drafting committee, de-Ba'athification was "based on the original misconception that Ba'ath-ism means Sunni-ism and Sunni-ism means Ba'ath-ism, and was meant to be de-Sunni-ism."[34] A product of the US, this process was problematic for Iraq's future because it removed Sunni Arabs from the public sector and forced a large number of professionals into unemployment.

Meant to be a beacon of Iraqi democracy and a symbol of US success, the drafting of Iraq's 2005 constitution was monopolized by Kurdish and Shi'i leaders and, as a result, accentuated sectarian identity and lead to the Sunni Arab community desperate for an alternative. Sunni Arab leaders were unrepresented in Iraq's political system because they were excluded from the constitutional drafting process, which was dominated by Shi'i and Kurdish representatives.[35] As a result, Sunni leaders staged large-scale protests across Iraq.

This chapter analyzes the history of crucial events that led to Maliki's oppressive regime and ultimately to IS' rise in Iraq. Understanding de-Ba'athification and the constitution's effect on Iraq's Sunni Arab population is necessary to comprehend why major protests spread across western Iraq in 2011. The Maliki government subsequently crushed the sit-ins and, as a result, many unlikely groups subsequently partnered with IS and took up arms against the central government.

Alkubaisi elaborates, "Many of the Naqshabandi Movement—they are Sufis, not Salafists—they joined

30. Ian Johnston, "The Rise of Isis: Terror Group Now Controls an Area the Size of Britain, Experts Claim," The Independent, September 3, 2014, accessed April 26, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/the-rise-of-isis-terror-group-now-controls-an-area-the-size-of-britain-expert-claims-9710198.html.
31. Dr. Yahya Alkubaisi, Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, Dr. Haider Saeed, and Dr. Sadoun al-Zibaydi, roundtable discussion with the author, Iraqi Center for Strategic Studies, Amman, January 15, 2015.
32. Andrew Slater, "Under an Isis flag the sons of Mosul are rallying," The Daily Beast, June 16, 2014, accessed October 1, 2014, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/16/under-an-isis-flag-the-sons-of-mosul-are-rallying.html.
33. Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, interview by the author, Amman, January 10, 2015.
34. Dr. Yahya Alkubaisi, Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, Dr. Haider Saeed, and Dr. Sadoun al-Zibaydi, roundtable discussion with the author, Iraqi Center for Strategic Studies, Amman, January 15, 2015.
35. Ibid.

Daesh.* So when you talk about these new volunteers, we cannot talk about one category. I think many of them are not real ideologists. They can be away from Daesh if there are any political procedures done by the Iraqi government." Groups like the Naqshabandi Army [JRTN], a Ba'athist militant group, and the Dulaim tribe, Iraq's largest Arab tribe,[36] have since cut ties with IS. JRTN remains a major force among Iraq's opposition groups and offers a nationalist alternative to marginalized Sunni Arabs. Sunni tribal leaders have also distanced themselves from IS. As of March 2015, they have not sought to overthrow the IS reign in their territory. Tribes such as Albu Rahman in Samarra have begun to push for regional autonomy without partition, similar to that of the Kurdistan Regional Government [KRG], authorized by the 2005 constitution.[37] Such nationalist sentiments go against the narrative that labels IS as led by psychopaths and support the argument that many of IS' initial supporters did not subscribe to its ideology.

De-Ba'athification and the Sunni Arab Disenfranchisement

Shortly after Baghdad fell to the American military in the spring of 2003, President Bush appointed Ambassador Paul Bremer as Presidential Envoy to Iraq. Long since retired, Bremer's foreign service had been in the Netherlands under the Reagan administration; his only experience in the Middle East was a two-week crash course on pertinent, regional issues.[38] In June, Bremer established the Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA], which then appointed an Iraqi transitional government of which he was the chief executive authority.[39] Bremer also created and implemented the Transitional Administrative Law [TAL], which was Iraq's interim constitution until 2005. With haste, and citing a concern for the safety of Iraqi society, the de jure pro-Consul of Iraq enacted two orders that dissolved Iraq's military and began the de-Ba'athification process, which put roughly 200,000 Sunni Arabs out of work and without reparations – including seasoned veterans of the Iraqi army.[40] Dr. Hussain Hindawi, who was the first appointed head of the Independent High Electoral Commission and later a UN staff-member, elaborates that, "The Sunni population felt neglected because they lost power—military power especially. Maybe 80 percent of the Sunni population [was] in the army."
CPA Order 1 sought to remove Ba'ath party structures and members from any positions of authority in Iraq. All members of the political party were "removed from their positions and banned from future employment in the public sector."[41] This impacted the future political system, which is still Shi'a-dominant, by drastically cutting the number of Sunni Arabs eligible for work in the government. The first CPA order also established a reward system for information leading to the arrest of individuals responsible for crimes committed by the Saddam regime—essentially Sunni Arabs. An unintended consequence was the settling of personal scores where some Sunnis were targeted under the new system, without due process.

CPA Order 2 dissolved all military and intelligence ministries and organizations. With the end of conscription, the order stated "any military or other rank, title, or status granted to a former employee or functionary of a Dissolved Entity by the former Regime is hereby cancelled." Furthermore, "Any person holding the rank under the former regime of Colonel or above, or its equivalent" was labeled a "Senior Party Member." This group was not offered a "termination payment" or severance pay upon dissolution, and if they retired from a Dissolved Entity before April 6, 2003, their pension was cut off.[42] As a result of this order, a large number of the Iraqi military and intelligence communities were left unemployed and retained their weapons. Many

* Daesh is short for Dawlat al-Islamiyah f'al-Iraq wa al-Sham, similar to the English title of ISIS/ISIL. The word is banned by IS, however, because it is also the Arabic word for "one who is trampled underfoot" and is commonly used in a derogatory manner across the region.

36. Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, "Naqshbandi Army (Jrtn) Activist Front Groups," Aymenn Jawad, August 18, 2014, accessed October 8, 2014, http://www.aymennjawad.org/15202/naqshbandi-army-jrtn-activist-front-groups; Richard Spencer and Carol Malouf, "We will stand by Isis until Maliki steps down, says leader of Iraq's biggest tribe," The Telegraph, June 29, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/10934438/We-will-stand-by-Isis-until-Maliki-steps-down-says-leader-of-Iraqs-biggest-tribe.html.

37. Dr. Najih Al-Maizan, interview by the author, trans. Mohammed Ayesh, Erbil, January 12, 2015.

38. "Inside the Rise of Isis: Losing Iraq," Robert Collins, FRONTLINE, aired October 28, 2014, on PBS.

39. Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, "Designation as Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority," memorandum, May 13, 2003.

40. Collins, "Losing Iraq."

41. L. Paul Bremer, "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society," May 16, 2003.

42. L. Paul Bremer, "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2: Dissolution of Entities," May 23, 2003.

high-ranking officials, who held authority and influence among the Sunni Arab population, felt cheated and were left without compensation.

AQI saw this as an opportunity to gain acceptance from Iraq's newly disenfranchised population and quickly initiated attacks on Shi'i holy sites, successfully precipitating a sectarian civil war in Iraq. In this phase however, AQI was unable to fully co-opt Sunni ex-military officers, who embody IS' second circle. That this constituency later joined IS is a consequence of developments in Iraq and Syria after the US withdrawal in Iraq in December 2011 and after the Syrian revolution began to morph into a dramatic civil war. This constituency would spearhead the decisive military victories by IS in the summer of 2014.

A New Constitution

On January 30, 2005, in accordance with the TAL, Iraq's transitional law, Iraq held its first national elections in the post-Saddam era. A majority of Iraqis voted for a 275 seat transitional National Assembly, which was tasked with choosing a president, prime minister, and a cabinet. Additionally, the transitional Assembly was to draft Iraq's new constitution by a deadline of August 15, 2005.

In protest of the US occupation, Sunni Arab leaders boycotted the elections and hence forfeited their influence over the drafting process. As a result, Sunni Arabs won only 17 transitional Assembly seats, and Iraq's Shi'i and Kurdish leadership held the most senior government positions.[43]

A drafting committee was formed on May 10, and Sunni Arabs represented only two of the fifty-five seats. Two months after deliberations had already begun, fifteen additional Sunni Arabs were placed on the committee to fortify their community's interests. The Sunni Arab representatives were unable to successfully push a viable Sunni Arab agenda because their abrupt invitation left them unprepared for the committee, which had already agreed upon a large portion of the constitution.[44] On the other hand, Kurdish negotiators had previously developed firm stances and redlines that bolstered their position, and the Shi'i team also possessed resources that favored its position.[45] According to Zibaydi, a member of the drafting committee:

> *So the new Sunni representatives came to the drafting of the constitution after the constitution had actually been written by some 85 percent of its participants. I was there amongst those [appointed] to be in that group. When we came, all the bases of the constitution that we have today and all the factors that are creating all these problems were already drafted. We weren't actually meant to do anything about those. We were only meant to be a decoration on the committee so they could say, 'well this constitution was drafted by a committee made up of all elements of Iraqi society.'*

From the start, Sunni Arab negotiators held little influence on the committee. Furthermore, rather than use the committee setting, Shi'i and Kurdish political leaders soon relocated negotiations of the most entrenched issues to their homes or party offices, often with the active facilitation of the US Ambassador Zalmay Khalizad, and regularly failed to invite Sunni Arab members.[46]

Eager to use the new constitution as an example of its success in an increasingly unpopular conflict, the US applied continuous pressure on the drafting of the "democratic" document, which further de-legitimized the process among the Sunni Arab population.

The US removed the drafting responsibility from the committee's constitutional experts and put it in the hands of Iraq's Kurdish and Shi'i elite after it realized that the committee would not successfully meet its deadline. When the constitutional negotiations resumed, they were held privately between Shi'i and Kurdish political leadership in what the media dubbed the "Leadership Council." The US ambassador attended most meetings, while Sunni Arab leadership was denied attendance.[47]

43. U.S. Library of Congress, CRS, Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks, by Kenneth Katzmann, CRS Report RS21968 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, January 2, 2009): 1.
44. Dr. Yahya Alkubaisi, Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, Dr. Haider Saeed, and Dr. Sadoun al-Zibaydi, roundtable discussion with the author, Iraqi Center for Strategic Studies, Amman, January 15, 2015.
45. Jonathan Morrow, "Deconstituting Mesopotamia: Cutting a Deal on the Regionalization of Iraq," in Framing the State in Times of Transition, ed. Laurel E. Miller and Louis Aucoin (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2010): 577.
46. Joost R. Hiltermann, "Elections and Constitution Writing in Iraq, 2005," European Institute of the Mediterranean (2006): 39, accessed February 22, 2015, http://www.iemed.org/anuari/2006/aarticles/aHiltermann.pdf.
47. Morrow, "Deconstituting," 574.

Left out of the negotiations, many Sunnis saw the exercise as a US conspiracy designed to disenfranchise them. There were so few Arabs in attendance that a number of meetings were conducted in Farsi rather than Arabic.[48] Many of Iraq's Shi'i politicians at the time had lived in Iran, as either refugees or exiles during Saddam's reign and were seen as puppets of Tehran. The scenario added to a widespread belief that, according to Maizan, "the US occupied Iraq and gave it to Iran," which exacerbated a fear of Iranian influence on Iraqi politics and severely decreased the constitution's legitimacy among the Sunni Arab community.

The US' timeline undermined the efforts of the UN and its constitutional experts to help create a realistic Sunni Arab agenda for the committee. A UN federalist model was accepted by all parties but rejected by the US due to concerns about the wealth sharing provisions on natural resources, i.e. oil. The UN also spent time selling the value of a federalist system to the Sunnis—who, as nationalists, misunderstood federalism as synonymous to partition—but ran out of time.[49]

In a push to finalize the constitution, the US began to blatantly influence the drafting process. The US embassy even went so far as to release its own draft in English in order to push US views on key issues. An overt presence of US officials at National Assembly meetings further fueled Sunni Arab suspicions that the constitution was a product of outside forces.[50]

Sunni Arabs voted in great numbers against the constitution in the October referendum. In accordance with the TAL, the constitution would not be enacted if three governorates voted against it by a two-thirds margin. Iraq's three Sunni Arab-majority provinces voted against the referendum in large numbers; however, according to the UN's official count, only 62 percent voted against the referendum in Nineveh Province, and they failed to reach the margin by four percent. Following US meddling throughout the drafting process and a time table driven by Washington politics, those opposed to the results immediately questioned the legitimacy of the referendum and suspected that it was rigged to hasten a democratic victory for the US.[51] Hindawi, former chief of Iraq's election management body, explains the problems behind the constitutional drafting process further:

> *[Like] I said, three governorates voted against it. Even if you say 51 percent, that is the majority against it. But we know in Anbar it was 90 percent, [in] Saladin it was 83-85 percent. So they [the Sunnis] tried to make many contributions to the constitution, but they were never recognized. There was always a veto from the Kurds or from the Shi'a. The constitution is a source of the problems.*

A lack of faith in the referendum process delegitimized the central government among the Sunni Arab community. The appointment of Nouri al-Maliki as Prime Minister exacerbated feelings of resentment among the Sunni Arab community, especially in Nineveh Province, home to Mosul, the largest Sunni Arab majority city in Iraq, which, at least initially, seemed to accept IS upon its reemergence in 2014.

II. Maliki, Madness, and Mosul

Following the 2006 appointment of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the Iraqi people remained embroiled in a sectarian straitjacket from which they have been unable to escape. This chapter argues that, particularly in Maliki's second term, sectarian policies exacerbated tensions between the central government and the Sunni Arab community. Additionally, it analyzes the many layers of dissent, unrest, and violence that were present in Iraq leading up to the Islamic State's [IS] capture of Mosul on June 10, 2014.

Malevolent Maliki

Following the Sunni Arabs' 2005 constitutional debacle, matters worsened when Maliki, a Shi'i with close ties to Iran, took office the following year. Iraq is a country whose people have witnessed ten successful coup d'états and an unknown number of failed attempts since 1936.[52] According to Edward Luttwak, a historian and former special national security advisor to President Reagan, "A coup consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder."[53]

48. Ibid, 575.
49. Ibid, 579-80.
50. Ibid, 581.
51. Dr. Hussain Hindawi, interview by the author, Erbil, January 13, 2015.
52. U. Dann, "Review," Middle Eastern Studies 9, no. 2 (1973): 244.
53. Edward Luttwak, Coup D'etat: A Practical Handbook,

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in Tehran on Oct. 18, 2010.

Fearful of losing power to an increasingly restless Sunni Arab population, Maliki targeted Sunni politicians and used military force to break up the widespread protests that ensued. Furthermore, Maliki dissolved the predominately-Sunni Sahwa system that was so successful in combatting al-Qaeda in Iraq [AQI], and empowered Shi'i militias that have been suspected of war crimes against Sunni communities. The resentment that resulted from these actions pushed Iraq's Sunni Arab community to the brink.

During Maliki's second term, the Obama administration began preparations for a hasty withdrawal from Iraq. In doing so, the State Department focused less and less on its diplomatic role and handed the chore of state building off to the US military. According to then-US Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Hill, "Iraq, so the thinking went, was someone else's problem— especially the military's […] In the end it was increasingly clear that Iraq remained the military's problem, not the State Department's."[54] Prime Minister Maliki took advantage of this minimal political oversight and slowly consolidated power in order to mitigate the risk of a coup d'état. The Sunni Arab community interpreted Maliki's actions as an attempt to marginalize them further.

In the course of Maliki's tenure, Iraqi security forces transformed from being a 55 percent Shi'a and 45 percent Sunni force to 95 percent Shi'a.[55] In 2009, Maliki disbanded The Awakening Councils, commonly known as the Sons of Iraq, in order to deny it legitimacy as a military force.[56] Comprised of 100,000 fighters, almost entirely from Sunni tribes, the Sons of Iraq fought alongside US forces during the Sahwa and all but eliminated AQI in western Iraq. The tribes did so under an agreement that they would receive pay, reconstruction contracts, and political representation in Baghdad in return.[57] However, according to Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, "Unfortunately [the] Maliki government never took the American[s'] advice. Instead of running the Awakening system, they destroyed it and they killed some of their leaders - they executed them."[58] Not only did Maliki disregard this agreement, he also branded many within the anti-Qaeda movement as terrorists and targeted its leadership.[59] These actions undoubtedly stoked Sunni Arab resentment towards the central government that led to a call for change in Baghdad and eventually a pragmatic partnership with IS, whom the Sahwa had recently fought in the form of AQI. Although the tribes were at odds with IS ideologically, they found a mutual enemy in Maliki and his government.

December Madness[60]

As sectarian tensions rapidly neared the boiling point, the situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate. In what Dr. Humam Misconi describes as "December madness," Maliki targeted what little political representation the Sunni Arab community had left after the ratification of the 2005 constitution. Following the US withdrawal from Iraq in December 2011, Maliki ordered the arrest of Sunni majority leader and Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi on terrorism charges and sentenced him to death in absentia.[61] The following December, Iraqi Finance Minister Rafi al-Issawi, a Sunni, resigned after

paperback ed. (Harvard University Press, 1968), 27.
54. Christopher R. Hill, "How the Obama Administration Ignored Iraq," POLITICO Magazine, October 2, 2014, accessed October 7, 2014, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/10/how-the-obama-administration-disowned-iraq-111565.html#.VU1LydNViko.
55. Bill Powell, "Sunni Tribes Will Bet on the Strong Horse, and That's Isis," Newsweek, December 11, 2014, accessed December 15, 2014, http://www.newsweek.com/2014/12/19/sunni-tribes-will-bet-strong-horse-and-thats-isis-290633.html.
56. Martin Chulov, "Iraq Disbands Sunni Militia That Helped Defeat Insurgents," The Guardian, April 1, 2009, accessed January 10, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/02/iraq-sunni-militia-disbanded.
57. Robert Collins, "Inside the Rise of Isis: Losing Iraq," in FRONTLINE (Public Broadcasting Service, 2014).
58. Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, interview by the author, Amman, January 10, 2015.
59. Hawar Berwani, "Sahwa Official Arrested in Diala," Iraqi News, November 9, 2009, accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/sahwa-official-arrested-in-diala/.
60. Dr. Humam Misconi, interview by the author, Berkeley, November 6, 2014.
61. Rania El Gamal, "Tension Rise as Iraq Seeks Sunni Vp Arrest," Reuters, December 19, 2011, accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/19/us-iraq-politics-hashemi-idUSTRE7BI1E020111219.

security forces raided his office and his bodyguards were arrested on terrorism-linked charges. Misconi comments, "Maliki has some kind of December madness. He gets mad every December. Each December he creates a problem, you know. […] This is becoming a sequence; it's not a one or two time event. Each December there is a problem."[62]

Triggered by Issawi's resignation, anti-government demonstrations began in Fallujah, the heart of Anbar and Sunni resistance.[63] The protests were the culmination of nearly nine years of perceived discrimination of Sunni Arabs by the post-2003 governments. Saddam Hussein's personal translator and former Ba'athist, Dr. Sadoun Al-Zibaydi, elaborates:

> *So this sense of segregation on the Sunnis, year after year, and the injustices practiced through these years are being done through the constitution. So today we have the notion that if you don't apply the constitution you're an unlawful leader. This accumulation of a sense of injustice developing and simmering inside the Sunni community was actually such that when the former minister of finance Dr. Issawi was subjected to a very strange approach by Prime Minister Maliki when his offices were ransacked and he resigned. That moment was the trigger of a new development of peaceful protests, which continued for a whole year, demanding civil rights for the whole Sunni community, especially in the Anbar area.*

Initially peaceful, the sit-ins brought many different layers of Sunni opposition together under a common cause: reverse the status quo. In a YouTube video of a rally in Fallujah, several al-Qaeda flags were flown among the crowd.[64] Although protest organizers released statements distancing themselves from extreme sentiments, calls for a violent overthrow of the government were widespread. In a video released by the Naqshbandi Army, Saddam's former vice chairman and current Ba'ath Party leader, Izzat Ibrahim ad-Douri, purportedly proclaimed, "The people of Iraq and all its nationalist and Islamic forces support you until the realization of your just demands for the fall of the [Maliki-Iran] alliance."[65] Widespread resentment and a tense sectarian climate offered insurgency groups an opportunity to spread their influence among protestors. The appearance of both Islamist and nationalist sentiments together at demonstrations across Anbar was a precursor for the loose alliances between IS and Iraq's various Sunni militant groups in 2014.

Consequently, the central government also used the widespread protests to demonize its opponents. Although it was the result of engrained resentment toward a discriminatory system, Maliki interpreted the demonstrations as a spillover from the Syrian conflict. Calling the Sunni opposition "blood mongers who embrace sectarianism and terrorism,"[66] Maliki attempted to quell the now large-scale sit-ins with military force. Zibaydi elaborates:

> *The peaceful civil protests that were going on in the Anbar area were dealt with by Prime Minister Maliki by force and he refused to deal with that situation in a peaceful manner. [sic] So he came to disband those protests by force. He brought in forces and they began attacking those demonstrators— sit-ins, we weren't really demonstrating, we were sitting in to protest the mistreatment of the government in their communities. So he wanted to break up those sit-ins by bringing in the forces.*

In the town of Hawija alone, 50 protestors were killed and over 100 wounded by a military crackdown.[67] This was the tipping point for Iraq's Sunni Arab opposition. Tribal leaders that sought a peaceful solution with Maliki abandoned diplomacy after the 'Hawija massacre' as IS sounded a call to arms.

Maliki's policies thus led to a general feeling of discontent among Iraq's Sunni population, particularly

62. Dr. Humam Misconi, interview by the author, Berkeley, November 6, 2014.
63. Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "Behind the Iraq Protests," The American Spectator, April 18, 2013, accessed November 7, 2014, http://spectator.org/articles/55742/behind-iraq-protests.
64. "Fallujah 04/05/2013," YouTube video, 4:39, posted by "Ahmed Ali," April 5, 2013, https://youtu.be/MZ1NJtoB4cI.
65. "Statement military spokesman for the Army men Naqshbandi 04/21/2013," YouTube video, 7:25, posted by "IraqNewsTv," April 21, 2013, https://youtu.be/H6FUG7XcVlM.
66. Omar al-Jaffal, "Maliki Furious over Jordan-Hosted Sunni Opposition Conference," trans. Kamal Fayad, Al-Monitor, July 27, 2014, accessed January 12, 2015, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/07/opposition-coonference-maliki-jordan.html.
67. Mushreq Abbas, "Iraq: Who Is to Blame for the Hawija Violence?," trans. Kamal Fayad, Al Monitor, April 25, 2013, accessed December 10, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/

in Mosul. Once Maliki cracked down on sit-ins, IS saw this as their opportunity to take advantage of the situation and rally support from many within the Sunni Arab community.

Pro-Government Militias

Sanctioned by the central government, whether directly or indirectly, Shi'i militia attacks on and mass killings of Sunni civilians increased dramatically in 2014. When bodies of executed Sunni men were discovered, often en masse, they shared one similarity: a gunshot wound to the back of the head. On April 30, Maliki was reelected as prime minister of Iraq. Two weeks prior, at least 48 Sunni men were killed in the villages surrounding Baghdad known as the 'Baghdad Belt.' A doctor with the Iraqi Health Ministry reported to Human Rights Watch [HRW] that Asa'ib, a Shi'i militia, was attempting to cleanse the Belt of Sunni Arabs.[68] On June 11, one day after IS captured Mosul, witnesses told HRW that armed men dressed as civilians reportedly kidnapped around 120 people from a market near Hilla. "One said he witnessed them segregating Shi'is from Sunnis, and witnessed the kidnappers, who he called Asa'ib, torturing some of the detainees. We also tried talking to the division commander and police chief and some tribal leaders met those two to ask them to intervene and work on releasing them, but they refused to do anything."[69] Less than a month later, 53 bodies, all Sunni, were discovered in a ditch nearby.[70]

In Mosul, any movement around the city was restricted due to the central government's enforcement of numerous security checkpoints and restrictions. In contrast, Dora, a predominately Sunni neighborhood in Baghdad that saw particularly high levels of sectarian violence during the civil war, Asa'ib functioned relatively unimpeded. The fact that armed, masked men in unmarked vehicles operated in and out of areas controlled by similar checkpoints suggests government cooperation or sanction of militia activities. In an interview with HRW, a Dora resident and government employee explains, "Militias are taking people, but obviously they're doing it with the blessing of the security forces. There is only one exit and one entrance to this neighborhood and they are both manned by federal police checkpoints. How could trucks full of armed men with their faces covered come in and out without the police knowing?"[71] In addition to turning a blind eye to Shi'i militias, Iraqi security forces also bred resentment among the civilian population of Mosul with an overbearing presence that resembled life under the US occupation. IS acted on these events to take advantage of the sectarian nature of the tensions. In Mosul, a Sunni Arab majority city in Nineveh Province, a history of corruption and restrictions under the Maliki government led to general support of IS after it drove Iraqi security forces from the city.

Mosul

The city of Mosul played a crucial role in IS' emergence. Prior to June 2014, the 3rd Federal Police Division managed the city with a level of corruption that fostered resentment among the residents of Mosul. When faced with the option of continuing a life under occupation-like conditions or supporting the group that ran their oppressors out of town, many Sunni Arabs chose the latter. According to Alwindawi, there was a widespread notion among the Sunni Arab community that "this wolf is better than this crocodile."[72]

The Shi'a-dominant national police unit in charge of Mosul was lead by Lieutenant General Mahdi al-Gharawi. An accused war criminal, his reassignment was a controversial one. Prior to being named commander of Mosul, Iraq's largest city with a Sunni Arab majority, Gharawi was implicated in torture in Baghdad from 2005-2006.[73] The fact that Maliki appointed an accused war criminal in charge of Mosul undoubtedly reinforced arguments that the central government held little concern for the Sunni Arab community.

Accounts of abuse by the security forces in Mosul are longstanding. Dr. Humam Misconi received reports from family and colleagues residing in the city of mistreatment by the Iraqi security forces dating back to March 2009. He recalls:

68. "Iraq: Pro-Government Militias' Trail of Death," Human Rights Watch, July 31, 2014, accessed March 7, 2015, http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/31/iraq-pro-government-militias-trail-death.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, interview by the author, Amman, January 10, 2015.
73. "Iraq: Abusive Commander Linked to Mosul Killings," Human Rights Watch, June 11, 2013, accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/11/iraq-abusive-commander-linked-mosul-killings.


ISIS using children for propaganda and training

> *The last time I went to Mosul—unfortunately on a mission—everybody was complaining. Everybody I know from different sects and ethnic groups, they were all complaining from the mistreatment and humiliation and oppression by the Iraqi security forces […] and this goes [up] to the commander level. Gharawi, for example, was commander of the 3rd Federal Police Division. Everybody was complaining about him. You can't open up a business without paying him fees. You can't transport, for example, construction material. No truck can go through one way or the other, so people were fed up. So what happened when ISIS came there was some kind of public relief that happened [sic].*[74]

These abuses of power were an extension of Maliki's sectarian agenda under the guise of security and part of the response-by-force to Sunni protests. With every facet of life controlled by the national police, residents of Mosul became frustrated. Dr. Atheel Nujaifi, governor of Mosul, discusses his city under the authority of Gharawi:

> *For daily life there is a problem because the army and police are distributed everywhere in the city and they have checkpoints everywhere inside the city. […] This situation made the people of Mosul angry; they think they cannot do an ordinary life. The police interfered with every detail in life under the umbrella of security. […] And every check [point] there is corruption inside it. In the last month [June 2014], the police closed all of the businesses inside the city, and if people want to open their own place they have to pay the police. So for people inside Mosul, there is a life, but it's not much of a life and the people were angry about what they see there.*[75]

These feelings of resentment primed the city of Mosul's Sunni Arab population for IS' seizure of the city from Iraqi security forces in June 2014.

Life in Mosul quickly returned to normalcy under IS' authority following the retreat of the Iraqi security forces. This strengthened the support for IS among many of the city's Sunni Arab residents, and their relationship with IS entered into a brief honeymoon phase. Immediately following the capture of Mosul, during the last three weeks of June, IS refrained from enacting its rule of law and allowed life to carry on unimpeded. The most significant change enacted by IS was the dissolution of all checkpoints and other means of occupation. Dr. Hussain Hindawi recounts his friend's thoughts, "He was happy. […] When IS took Nineveh, the first thing they did was take down the t-walls and cancel all of the checkpoints. The people were very happy because there were no more checkpoints, no police."[76] IS' expansion and the consequential lack of travel restrictions also improved movement to and from the area. Alwindawi confirms that, "Before June, when IS took over Iraq, the travelling from Nineveh to Amman [took] 13 hours. When IS took over, it went down to seven hours. How? Because there is [sic] no more Iraqi military army checkpoints. We are free. Since you leave, you will reach. No one

74. Dr. Humam Misconi, interview by the author, Berkeley, November 6, 2014.

75. Dr. Atheel al-Nujaifi, interview by the author, Erbil, January 13, 2015.

76. Dr. Hussain Hindawi, interview by the author, Erbil, January 12, 2015.

will stop you. Also, you are not forced to pay bribes."[77]

Additionally, public services returned to Mosul almost immediately after IS gained control of the city on June 10, 2014. Scant resistance from security forces resulted in a relatively undamaged city and thus a quick restoration of services. A photograph posted to Twitter on June 12 shows cars lined up and a crowd gathered next to seven fuel trucks.[78] Fuel was an important resource because the central government still controlled the city's electricity supply and generators were needed to power homes. Street cleaning services also returned to the city, which further improved the situation. Another photograph posted on Twitter on June 12 shows garbage collectors cleaning the streets of Mosul.[79] IS demonstrated moderation during the early stages of its reemergence because it was initially dependent on local support from within the Sunni Arab community, many of whom were forced to choose between the lesser of two evils and did not subscribe to IS' ideology.

III. The Syrian Connection

The Syrian government and the Islamic State [IS] mutually benefitted from each other's presence following IS' 2013 emergence in Syria. Coupled with this accommodation, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's history with al-Qaeda in Iraq [AQI] suggests a partnership between the two; however, there is no evidence of an active modus vivendi between the Syrian government and IS. The Syrian regime has been on the US Department of State's list of "state sponsors of terror" since 1979, making it the longest-standing member in history.[80] President Assad, the head of the Syrian regime since 2000, had maintained a relationship with IS dating back to 2003. These ties originated with the Syrian government's aid to AQI and its insurgency during the American occupation of Iraq. From the earliest days of the US invasion of Iraq, Syria was a rallying point for foreign fighters, mostly from the Arab world and Chechnya, and a safe haven for fighters in need of respite from the conflict.[81] These earlier ties suggest that a modus vivendi formed between the Syrian government and IS after it moved into Syria in 2013;[82] however, the frequency and locations of Syrian military clashes shows that it lacked the means to effectively confront IS unless in self-defense.

Although a large number of IS' early advocates in Iraq were marginalized locals who chose the only alternative to an oppressive government, the same experience does not hold true in Syria. In Iraq, IS capitalized on the Sunni Arab protests and the sectarian atmosphere attributed to the actions of AQI and Maliki. On the other hand, in Syria, IS appeared two years after similar protests escalated into a sectarian civil war that already included effective resistance forces. Furthermore, IS began primarily as a local resistance movement in Iraq, contrary to it being established by foreign fighters in Syria. Unlike its experience in Iraq, IS was immediately at odds with local Syrian opposition groups—both secular and Islamist— following its emergence.

In contrast to Iraq, where IS swept through and firmly secured territory with little resistance, well-established opposition forces stiffly resisted IS operations in Syria because of its refusal to share power with other groups. In several instances, these opposition groups banded together and formed a unified resistance front against IS advances, further differentiating the acceptance of IS among Sunni Arab communities in Iraq and Syria. In one of its first major offenses in Syria, IS attempted to attain complete control of Dayr az-Zawr governorate because of its critical oil and gas resources, which generated an estimated $50 million per month on the black market. Controlled by JAN and Harakat Ahrar al-Sham, two prominent opposition groups, it took fierce fighting and several attempts before IS took control of the Conoco-Philips and al-Jafra oil fields in March 2014. The victory was not outright, however, as IS lost and regained territory across the governorate several

77. Dr. Mouayad Alwindawi, interview by the author, Erbil, January 10, 2015.
78. Aymenn Al-Tamimi, Twitter post, June 12, 2014, 5:23 p.m., http://twitter.com/ajaltamimi.
79. Aymenn Al-Tamimi, Twitter post, June 12, 2014, 3:02 a.m., http://twitter.com/ajaltamimi.
80. "State Sponsors of Terrorism," U.S. Department of State, accessed February 10, 2015, http://go.usa.gov/32VHW.
81. Waleed al-Rawi and Sterling Jensen, "Syria's Salafi Networks," PRISM 4 (2014): 46.
82. In 2011, Baghdadi sent several men into Syria to establish a new opposition group. The men established Jabhat al-Nusra [JAN], which quickly became a formidable force that was well respected by locals. In April 2013, Baghdadi announced that ISI had expanded into Syria as ISIS and acquired JAN. Zawahiri condemned the move and ordered IS' return to Iraq. Baghdadi refused to adhere to the Sykes Picot border (In a Twitter post on June 9, 2014, an IS account (@albaraka_news) posted a picture of IS militants symbolically bulldozing through the border of Iraq and Syria.) and split from Qaeda, remaining in Syria. This refutes claims that IS advanced from Syria into Iraq in the summer of 2014.

times over the following four months.[83] Additionally, as IS pushed west towards Aleppo, it was confronted by an alliance of at least six prominent opposition groups, including JAN and the Free Syrian Army [FSA].[84]

IS' emergence in Syria is further differentiated from Iraq due to its lack of tribal support. In eastern Syria, a number of tribes remained uninvolved with IS because it was led by Iraqis and therefore seen as a foreign force. In contrast to Syrian opposition forces, which were primarily defending their neighborhoods, IS encroached on Syria in order to benefit from the instability and attain territory. On July 30, 2014, members of the al-Shaetat tribe revolted against IS in Dayr az-Zawr and were brutally quelled by IS forces. Consequently, IS realized the threat of tribal resistance and responded with the massacre of roughly 800 men from the al-Shaetat tribe.[85] As a result, IS quickly became the enemy of a large number of Syrian opposition groups, which were also enemies of the Syrian government.

2003-2007: Syria's Support of AQI

Bashar al-Assad has both actively and passively supported terrorist organizations since 2003. Following the US invasion of Iraq, Syria became a strategic center for AQI insurgency operations in order to advance Syrian interests in Iraq. Although it is difficult to clearly differentiate between individual ventures and government assistance, the capacity of crossborder activity and logistical assistance to the anti-American insurrection indicates Syrian government complicity.

In October 2007, US troops confiscated a set of documents from a town on the border between Iraq and Syria. Known as the Sinjar records, these papers identified a Syrian network that enabled and financed AQI's insurgency operations.[86] According to these records, at least 700 foreign fighters used the Syrian border to enter Iraq from August 2006 to 2007. Furthermore, the US Department of Treasury identified the Abu Agadiyah network as the organizer of equipment and personnel flows across the Syrian border to AQI. Overseen by Badran Turki Hisham al-Mazidih, also known as Abu Ghadiyah, the system "obtained false passports for foreign terrorists, provided passports, weapons, guides, safe houses, and allowances to foreign terrorists in Syria and those preparing to cross the border into Iraq."[87]

It is hard to explain how such a large and extensive network could exist under the nose of an authoritarian regime such as Assad's, yet according to Dr. Hussain Hindawi, "When Assad was strong and established they [the Syrian government] opened up the entire border for the terrorists. Not only that, they also offered training, financing, everything."[88] With close ties to Iran, which vied for influence over Iraq following the ouster of Sunni power, the Syrian government had every reason to support the anti-American insurgency before a Shi'i government was established in Baghdad.

US troops confiscated numerous Syrian passports that were issued to foreign fighters and had entry stamps citing "volunteer for jihad."

In several instances, the Syrian government aided insurgent networks. For example, US troops confiscated numerous Syrian passports that were issued to foreign fighters and had entry stamps citing "volunteer for jihad."[89] According to US Ambassador to Syria Theodore Khattouf, a foreign jihadist recruiting station was established in Damascus directly across the street from the US embassy.[90] The establishment of safe houses and support given fighters in transit to and from Iraq undoubtedly had a positive effect on the local economy.

83. "Syria Countrywide Conflict Report #4," (The Carter Center, 2014): 6.
84. Ibid, 8.
85. Ibid, 7.
86. Joseph and Brian Fishman Felter, "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records," (West Point: Combating Terrorism Center, 2007).
87. "Treasury Designates Members of Abu Ghadiyah's Network Facilitates Flow of Terrorists, Weapons, and Money from Syria to Al Qaida in Iraq," U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 28 2008.
88. Dr. Hussain Hindawi, interview by the author, Erbil, January 13, 2015.
89. Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, "Prepared Statement for the Senate Armed Services Committee: Helping Win the War on Terror," ed. Department of Defense (Washington D.C.2003).
90. David Schenker, testimony in Francis Gates, et al. v. Syrian Arab Republic, et al., U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Civil Action No. 06-1500 (RMC), Sept. 2008.

Communications between al-Qaeda leadership shows that the AQI branch received substantial financial support from outside al-Qaeda's global financial network in order to fund its insurgency. In July 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's then operational commander, wrote a letter to AQI leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi that asked for approximately US$100,000 in assistance.[91] Al-Qaeda is an organization whose funding is dependent on an international network of donors, so IS' present-day ability to self-fund sets it apart from its predecessor. The fact that al-Qaeda's central command needed financial assistance from one of its affiliates, long before AQI became IS and acquired the means to generate income, suggests that AQI was the beneficiary of large monetary donations, likely from its closest ally, the Syrian government. This history between Bashar al-Assad and AQI is a key to understanding why Assad supported Islamist opposition groups during the Syrian civil war.

The Arab Spring and an Attempt to De-Legitimize the Opposition

President Bashar al-Assad rekindled ties with and supported the radicalization of Salafi groups in Syria following the start of the Syrian Civil War in order to undermine the opposition forces and ultimately benefit from their fractured coalition and infighting. The conflicts that allowed IS' emergence in Iraq and Syria were similar in the fact that they were born of marginalization and political unrest; however, the circumstances surrounding IS' establishment in Syria are unique. While Maliki's political decisions inadvertently bolstered IS in Iraq, Assad accommodated Salafi groups within Syria in an attempt to undermine the opposition and support his narrative on the uprising as a foreign-backed terrorist plot against Syria.[92]

The emergence of IS in Syria and its subsequent rivalry with JAN provided relief to the Syrian government because it sparked infighting among the opposition forces and weakened the united front against the central government. According to various reports, Assad financed both IS and JAN through the support of smuggling networks that allowed the two organizations to sell resources from captured oil and gas fields in eastern Syria.[93]

"Prior to this IS offensive, the Syrian government had directed over 90% of all air raids against opposition positions... [Syrian government] left the IS relatively unchecked at its core, and have allowed IS forces to advance against opposition positions in the north of Aleppo."

Although Assad and IS mutually benefitted from each other's military operations, there was no specific modus vivendi between the two. Any perceived collaborations were strategic military decisions on the part of the regime to engage the most immediate threats. For a period of time between its divorce from al-Qaeda and its 2014 summer offensive, IS almost exclusively engaged in hostilities against a coalition of anti-government forces. During this time, the Assad regime primarily confronted IS in self-defense and focused operations against other resistance groups. As a result, IS was left relatively free to seize territory and establish a proto-state in eastern Syria. A report by The Carter Center explains, "Prior to this IS offensive, the Syrian government had directed over 90% of all air raids against opposition positions. As the IS advances, government forces have hit back when their forces were threatened, but have left the IS relatively unchecked at its core, and have allowed IS forces to advance against opposition positions in the north of Aleppo."[94] Although the Syrian military allowed IS to gain a foothold in eastern Syria, this does not prove the existence of a partnership between the two actors.

The limited engagements between the Syrian government and IS are often used as evidence of a modus vivendi. They can also be explained by the

91. Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, July 9, 2005, Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point.
92. Bashar al-Assad, Opera House in Damascus speech, January 6, 2013, quoted in Maya Shwayder, "Bashar Al-Assad's Speech On Syrian Crisis (FULL-TEXT), International Business Times, January 7, 2013, accessed March 1, 2015, http://www.ibtimes.com/bashar-al-assadsspeech-syrian-crisis-full-text-998536.
93. See United Nations Security Council, Monitoring Team's report on the threat posed by ISIL and AFN (2014), 20; Ruth Sherlock and Richard Spencer, "Syria's Assad accused of boosting al-Qaeda with secret oil deals," The Telegraph, January 20, 2014, accessed September 12, 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10585391/Syrias-Assad-accusedof-boosting-al-Qaeda-with-secret-oil-deals.html.
94. "Report #4," 25.

location of IS' command center. Located in eastern Syria, IS' core was far from Damascus, Aleppo, and other locations critical to Assad's survival. With government forces spread across a wide region, it is likely that IS benefitted from receiving few air strikes because the government forces consolidated their resources in areas that posed the most imminent threat, such as Aleppo. Aleppo and Minnakh Airbase to the north were of significant importance to the Assad regime because they secured resupply to troops in remote areas and also cut off routes into Raqqa, IS' de facto capital.[95] The Syrian army lacked the ground troops needed to retake IS territory, which was over 100 miles from the frontlines. Why focus limited assets on areas that were not immediately threatening to regime survival?

ISIS militants

In April 2014, several opposition forces launched operations on four different fronts in an attempt to capture Aleppo. That same month witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of barrel bomb attacks by Assad's forces, and opposition forces in Aleppo were targeted more than 100 times per month throughout the summer.[96] The Syrian military's resources were allotted for strategic objectives and defense. When opposition forces mobilized in areas deemed crucial to regime survival such as Aleppo, engagements with the Syrian military rose. This explains why the regime seldom engaged IS until it increased its attacks on IS positions after IS began its push west.

Conclusion:

The Islamic State [IS] did not appear in Iraq or Syria overnight. Rather, IS is the product of a destabilized region and its attendant politics that can be traced back to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. A series of subsequent hasty decisions and policies by the US, the Sunni Arab leadership, and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki caused the disenfranchisement of Iraq's Sunni Arab community and led to a breakdown in its relations with the central government. Meanwhile, in Syria, a brutal civil war set the conditions for IS to establish a base from which to invade Iraq with the help of local Iraqi tribes and insurgency groups, including the Ba'athist-led Naqshabandi Army.

This study contributes to the collective understanding of the pragmatic currents behind the emergence of IS and to the field of radical non-state actors that is often unaddressed by other approaches. Academic studies of IS are limited; instead of focusing on why local actors supported IS' emergence in Iraq, studies are dictated by policy agendas rather than scholarly inquiry. For example, Ahmed S. Hashim's "From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate"[97] connects IS' roots to al-Qaeda. Although this research is important, it fails to address the multi-dimensional currents of IS' local success. Not a single study to date examines the social, political, and economic drivers behind IS' meteoric rise. This is disconcerting and denotes a real problem in how the West confronts the region. Rather than recognize the Sunni Arab community's resentment towards a marginalizing central government, the focus tends to remain on IS' religious rhetoric and its ties to al-Qaeda. As Edward Said has noted, Western society tends to squarely lay the blame on "Islam" for problems in the Muslim world. Events of the recent past are undoubtedly weaved into this framework. Orientalism permeates scholarship and mainstream media alike and could not be more evident in reports and analysis of deadly attacks on Western targets – civilian and military – in the name of Islam.[98] While the ideological and theological underpinnings of IS are relevant, understanding the complex and pragmatic reasons why

95. Liam Durfee, Conor McCormick and Stella Peisch, "The Battle for Aleppo," Institute for the Study of War, June 13, 2013, accessed November 12, 2014, http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/battle-aleppo.
96. "Report #4," 29.
97. Ahmed S. Hashim, "The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate," Middle East Policy XXI, no. 4 (2014): 69-83, accessed April 20, 2015, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12096.
98. Edward W. Said, Covering Islam, Revised ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), xii.

so many have joined or supported IS in Iraq and Syria allows for a more relevant discussion of the movement.

This paper challenges current understandings of the nature of IS supporters by attempting to differentiate pragmatists from those motivated by religious ideology. Religion undoubtedly plays a central role in IS' recruitment and support. I would argue that IS' religious influence increased following the establishment of the de facto Islamic State on June 29, 2014, which shifted focus from revolution and anti-government insurgency to state building, albeit under Islamic law.

This study firmly locates the emergence of IS in Iraq and Syria between March 2003 and August 2014. The atmosphere during this period was explicitly revolutionary, as the Sunni Arab community in both Iraq and Syria struggled to alleviate their marginalization by the central governments in Baghdad and Damascus. Nevertheless, I am acutely aware that religious and structural motivations cannot be completely separated. While a recruit may have lost his livelihood under the de-Ba'athification laws, it is possible that the idea of fighting under an Islamist flag ultimately led to his decision to join IS. Likewise, it is impossible to say that so-called lone wolf attackers in Europe who claim to follow IS are motivated solely by religious zealotry; in fact, it is possible that structural factors are the driving force behind their actions.

Looking Forward:

Moving forward, one important question must be addressed: What would be required to split IS pragmatists from ideologists, and solve the structural problems that undergird their activism? Or, what will it take for Iraq's Sunni Arab community to oust IS from their territory?

It is unlikely that IS will completely lose local support without Baghdad's acceptance of a semi-autonomous Sunni Arab region—or regions—as permitted by the 2005 constitution.[99] Dr. Najih al-Maizan, a leader of the Abu Rahman tribe, confirms, "We are seeking—demanding that the international community interfere and demand the Iraqi government to execute [sic] the constitution. The first article of it [sic] says that Iraq is a federal state. Also, Article 117, 118, 119, 120—all of these articles declare that every province has the right to set up autonomy for themselves."[100] In fact, Sunni Arab leadership began lobbying Congress for support of a new Sunni region as well as the US military's direct involvement with tribal leaders, rather than Baghdad, regarding anti-IS operations and security.

Tribal leaders remain reluctant to fight for the removal of IS from their territories. Tribal leaders like Maizan fear that, if they confront IS, Iranian-led Shi'i militias would immediately replace IS and punish the remaining population. He explains, "The people of Sunni areas are afraid of the [Shi'i] militias. If we fight and defeat Daesh, Shi'a [sic] militias will come to our area and occupy it and torture people, take their homes, and punish the Sunni people in their areas."[101] Furthermore, tribal leaders have not forgotten Malik's betrayal of the Awakening veterans and will not set themselves up for such duplicity a second time. A region with its own security forces would mitigate the fear among Sunni Arabs trapped within IS territory of being labeled terrorists after the defeat of IS. Also, it could ensure that, in the possibility of a second Sahwa movement, tribal leaders would not be criminalized once they are no longer crucial to the central government. The sense of security among the Sunni Arab community that would likely accompany the establishment of their own semi-autonomous region might be the only way to secure and stabilize Iraq's future.

By Robert Vessels

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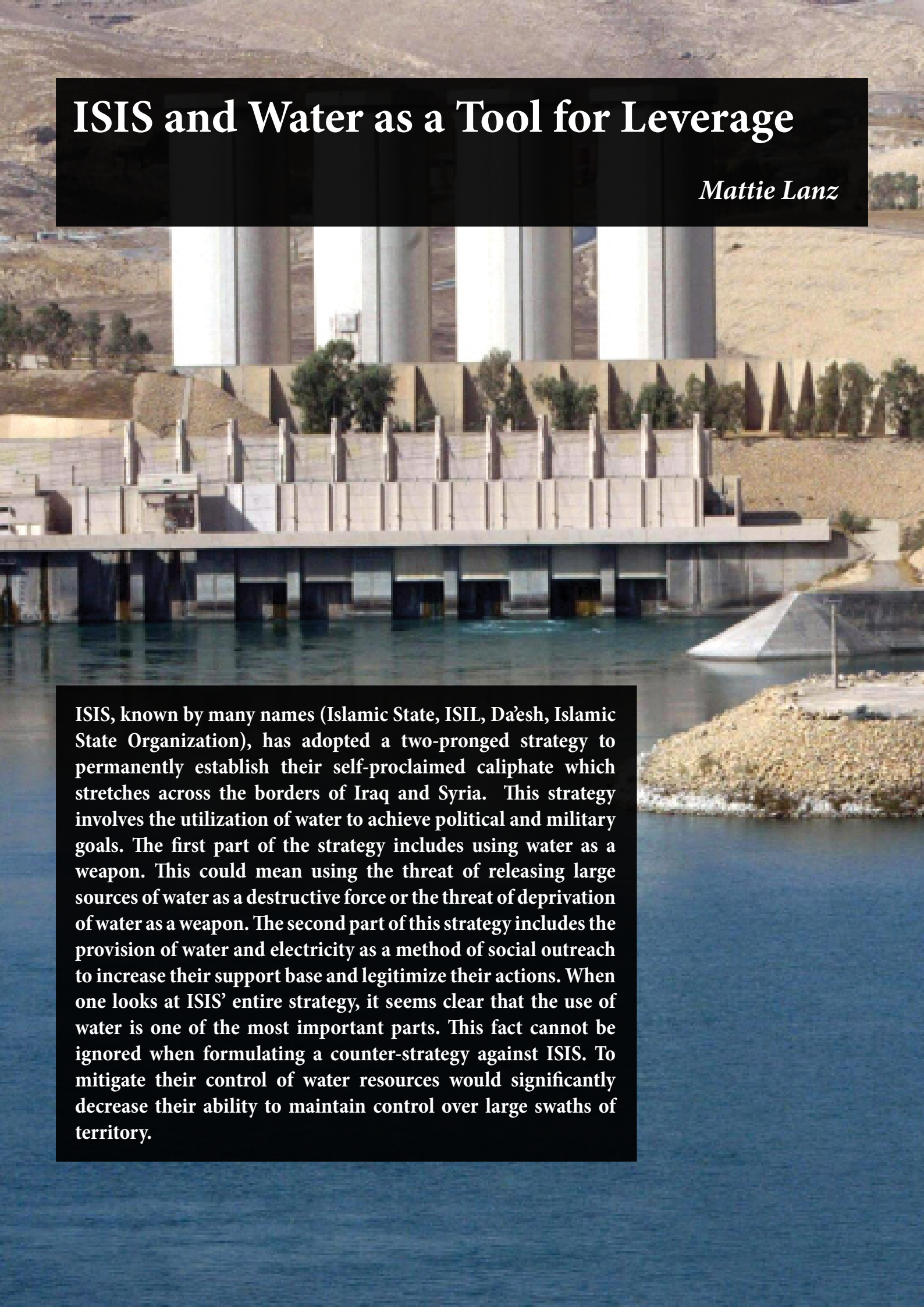
99. Iraq Constitution, sec. 5, art. 116-121.
100. Dr. Najih al-Maizan, interview by the author, trans. Mohammed Ayesh, Erbil, January 12, 2015.
101. Ibid.



ISIS and Water as a Tool for Leverage

Mattie Lanz

ISIS, known by many names (Islamic State, ISIL, Da'esh, Islamic State Organization), has adopted a two-pronged strategy to permanently establish their self-proclaimed caliphate which stretches across the borders of Iraq and Syria. This strategy involves the utilization of water to achieve political and military goals. The first part of the strategy includes using water as a weapon. This could mean using the threat of releasing large sources of water as a destructive force or the threat of deprivation of water as a weapon. The second part of this strategy includes the provision of water and electricity as a method of social outreach to increase their support base and legitimize their actions. When one looks at ISIS' entire strategy, it seems clear that the use of water is one of the most important parts. This fact cannot be ignored when formulating a counter-strategy against ISIS. To mitigate their control of water resources would significantly decrease their ability to maintain control over large swaths of territory.

Water as a Weapon

When one thinks of traditional weapons of war, water is typically not the first thing to come to mind. ISIS is completely changing this, becoming famous for their use of water and water infrastructure as a way to achieve submission or to force out opposition forces. They realized that whoever controls water resources controls both the cities and the countryside, especially in arid environments. Additionally, much of Iraq's infrastructure was not rebuilt following the 2003 U.S. invasion, making it a target capable of inflicting enormous damage.

ISIS began its offensive in Syria, working their way down the Euphrates River and into Iraq.[1] Their most important military move in this advance was taking the Nuaymiyah Dam[2] near Fallujah and diverting large amounts of water by closing the dam's floodgates, causing severe flooding upstream. This flushed out the armed forces upstream from their locations as well as around 60,000 civilians who were forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods. By diverting the water, ISIS also deprived the Shi'a population downstream of their water supply. Their use of the Fallujah Dam set a precedent that caused the Iraqi government and coalition forces to focus on securing dams and water supplies, fearing ISIS would continue to utilize similar tactics throughout Iraq.

ISIS militants have also heavily targeted the Mosul Dam, but were only able to control it for a short time before coalition air strikes pushed them out. Controlling this dam would be a huge victory for ISIS as its destruction has the potential to cause massive damage. Having the threat of the dam in their arsenal would give them enormous leverage in any negotiations.

Throughout their Anbar offensive, upwards of 56 bridges have been destroyed in the Diyala, Anbar, Salahddin, and Nineveh provinces, either intentionally destroyed by ISIS or indirectly as a result of conflict. Many bridges were destroyed to prevent the Iraqi Army from crossing rivers that would bring them closer to ISIS positions, specifically on the road to Mosul.

There have also been instances of destroying water infrastructure and poisoning the water supply. In Shingal province, in their assault on the Yezidi population, ISIS removed pipes that delivered water[3] to the population and cut wires that brought electricity. In the northern district of Balad, south of Tikrit in Iraq, ISIS reportedly poisoned the water supply with crude oil[4], rendering it undrinkable. They have also been known to cut off the water supply to cities who do not comply with their demands. The most recent example of this occurred in December 2014 when the ar-Roz river was prevented from reaching Bildoz in the Diyala province.

Social Outreach in the 'Islamic State'

ISIS has implemented a detailed plan for social outreach[5] in their self-proclaimed caliphate that includes a cabinet of ministers which is in charge of the treasury, transport, security, prisoners, and war. They are responsible for making sure citizens of the 'Islamic State' receive what is due to them, including water resources. This has included digging wells in villages using their own funds, maintaining existing water infrastructure, and rebuilding where needed.

In Syria, ISIS controls the Tishrin and Taqba dams,

1. Jermy Ashkenas, Archie Tse, Derek Watkins and Karen Yourish, "A Rogue State Along Two Rivers", New York Times, July 3, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/07/03/world/middleeast/syria-iraq-isis-rogue-state-along-two-rivers.html?_r=1
2. Paul Mutter, "Dam Warfare - Floods as weapons, from ancient times until Iraq today", Jul 9, 2014. https://medium.com/war-is-boring/dam-warfare-3da6ee24518a
3. Judit Neurink, "Kurdish official: ISIS Capture of Shingal was part of Arabization campaign", Rudaw, December 29, 2014. http://rudaw.net/english/interview/29122014
4. Abdelhak Mamoun, "ISIS poisons drinking water with crude oil in Balad district", Iraqi News, December 3, 2014. http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-poisons-drinking-water-crude-oil-balad-district/
5. Elliot Friedland, Special Report: The Islamic State, Clarion Project, May 10, 2015. http://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/islamic-state-isis-isil-factsheet-1.pdf

both upstream of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, initially using them to provide increased electricity and water supplies to the residents of Raqqa who had previously been living with just a few hours of water and electricity per day. When they established their capital in Raqqa, ISIS began running the dams at full power[6] in order to increase the water and electricity available in the city. Since then, however, ISIS's ability to provide has decreased significantly and the city of Raqqa has returned to the state it was in before ISIS arrived.

Originally, their ability to provide for the people earned them support and gave them some legitimacy. Now, however, their social projects are failing and they are quickly losing support. There are currently severe water shortages in Mosul and Raqqa.[7] In Raqqa, infrastructure has been severely damaged by government and coalition airstrikes. In Mosul, citizens have been forced to dig their own wells which is still no guarantee of fresh water. The number of patients admitted to hospitals as a result of water poisoning continues to increase and there seems to be no solution.

Conclusion

As ISIS continues to utilize the water infrastructure of Syria and Iraq as a weapon, they are knowingly sending the region into greater peril. As stated previously, this part of their strategy cannot be ignored. There are already severe ongoing humanitarian crises in both Syria and Iraq and the destruction of important infrastructure, as if it is nothing more than a grenade from their arsenal, will only exacerbate these crises.

ISIS' goal is to establish its legitimacy and consolidate its hold on the land it has while continuing to expand its territory. In order to maintain what legitimacy it has established, ISIS should be able to provide the services of a state, as it has promised to do. If ISIS is unable to provide water to those living within its territory, that would be the nail on the coffin in their efforts for a state. While their utilization of water has proven effective in their land grab, the current situation within the so-called "Islamic State" is unsustainable and if it does not improve, will end in its demise.

In the second issue of its publication, Dabiq[8], ISIS gives its readers a choice: "It's either the Islamic State

6. Abdelhak Mamoun, "ISIS poisons drinking water with crude oil in Balad district", Iraqi News, December 3, 2014. http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-poisons-drinking-water-crude-oil-balad-district/

7. Liz Sly, "The Islamic State is failing at being a state", The Washington Post, December 25, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/the-islamic-state-is-failing-at-being-a-state/2014/12/24/bfbf8962-8092-11e4-b936-f3afab0155a7_story.html

8. Clarion Project - Media File, "IS Magazine: Dabiq 2nd Issue, The Flood", September 10, 2014. http://media.clarionproject.org/files/09-2014/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-Issue-2-the-flood.pdf

or the flood". This threat is a reference to the story of Noah who was saved from the giant flood because he was a true believer, while the unbelievers, who refused to heed the warnings of a man, perished. Meant as a reference to the Qu'ran, the images used in the issue also offer a visual of what it might be like to find oneself on the receiving end of one of ISIS's artificial floods. In her new book, Loretta Napoleoni appropriately calls ISIS the "Islamist Phoenix". Taking into account the rise of ISIS, from the ashes of Iraq and Syria to become one of, if not the, most feared and successful terrorist organizations in the world, Ms. Napoleoni is quite right in her decision to equate ISIS with a bird that is repeatedly reborn from the ashes of its predecessor. Their recognition of the importance water plays in the region has provided them the military power that they needed in order to establish themselves as a contender in the region, rising from a previous unknown to a household name in a matter of days.

By Mattie Lanz

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Kurdish peshmerga forces stand guard near Mosul dam at the town of Chamibarakat outside Mosul, Iraq.

The Islamic State and its Implications on European Immigrants

Farinaz Aryanfar

Although scholars like Eriksen (2014) depict a colorful case about the globalization of mobility, which, in his opinion, has led to a more pleasant life for people through mass tourism and easy transportations, there is also a security issue rising for Europe when looking at the Islamic State's recruitment of Muslims in Europe. Declaring immigrants as threats (Grady 2014, Mansur 2010), on the other hand, is a form of generalization of all immigrants as 'security issues' that is not only simplistic, but also un-academic.

This article will therefore examine to what extent the Islamic State and its implications can be explained through globalization theories. In order to do that, first the Islamic State will be examined through theories. Thereafter, the issue of security will be looked into in the case of the European migrants' generations that join the Islamic State, while also looking at discourses of security theories. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn in order to answer this article's research question.

The Islamic State is not a local movement, but rather a movement that attracts members from around the world through electronic communication networks (BBC 2014). The message of the Salafist Islamic State was not spread traditionally, but through electronic communication networks such as the media and the internet. Here the significance of the information technologies becomes apparent, where there is not only an effect of the information age on a traditional movement, but also on the counterpropaganda by the western countries against IS membership, which is spread through the media as well. Furthermore, one can argue that IS is a Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) or a social movement, because of its globalism as well as the centrality of its ideals and values. However, IS is not advocating a cause for others, which Keck and Sikkink (1999) consider essential for TANs, and information is not the core of the relationship between the members with which they gain leverage over powerful governments or organization. Moreover, IS can be seen from a post-colonial perspective, where their movement depicts a post-colonial resistance trying to form an identity in contrast to everything that is considered part of the colonial powers that destroyed their golden age. However, it can also be seen from a different perspective, if we apply the dependency theory. In this case, IS' Salafist core can be seen as a materialist group that wants to go back to the science-producing and developed 'golden ages' of Islam, by means of a return to tradition.

The Islamic State's recruitment of European Muslims has raised a security issue, one which is concerned about the European Jihadists possibly pleading acts of terrorism in their host countries (BBC 2014, Erlanger 2014). Terrorism in this case means taking people's lives, or properties, thus physical threats and economic threats (Buzan 1983). It can be argued that joining Jihad is a form of transnational activism, that these migrant generations participate in because immigrants' civil rights are not always fully granted, to which they respond by strengthening themselves; forming networks based on their religion or ethnicity (Eriksen 2014).

However, according to John Esposito, it is not looking for a strong network that is the key attracting factor for these European Jihadists, it is rather a case of searching for a new identity and belonging for Muslims (CS Monitor 2014). CS Monitor also concludes that host countries do not equip the migrants with a strong identity, therefore the migrants choose for a troublesome, hazardous identity. This line of thinking could be problematic since it might generalize any other identity than what 'European' countries provide as 'the other' identity and thus as a threat. Thinking in a dichotomy of a coherent and acceptable 'European identity' vis-à-vis any identity that is unacceptable and 'non-European' is what Said (2010) calls Orientalism. Furthermore, threats in this sense are not about the physical or economic aspect, but about power and control of people's identities. While physical threats by European Jihadists are real issues because of IS' tendency towards violence, Orientalist discourses can lead to other problems that divide the nation into segments of 'us' (natives) and 'them' (migrants), and even generate security measures towards 'all' Muslims or 'all' migrants. This is exactly the kind of behavior that gives incentives to the migrants to search for other, possibly violent identities.

Another way to look at the transnational networking of Jihadists is applying Levitt and Schiller's theory (2004) and analyzing the issue from a transnational social field perspective. From that perspective one can deduce that being a Muslim is the transnational way of being, but the moment these individuals join the Jihad, they are showing a way of social belonging which signals a particular identity. Migrants might

or might not have had this identity before, since the social belonging and being may ebb and flow across time. Moreover, there are many other Muslims in Europe denouncing the acts of the Islamic State (Markoe 2014).

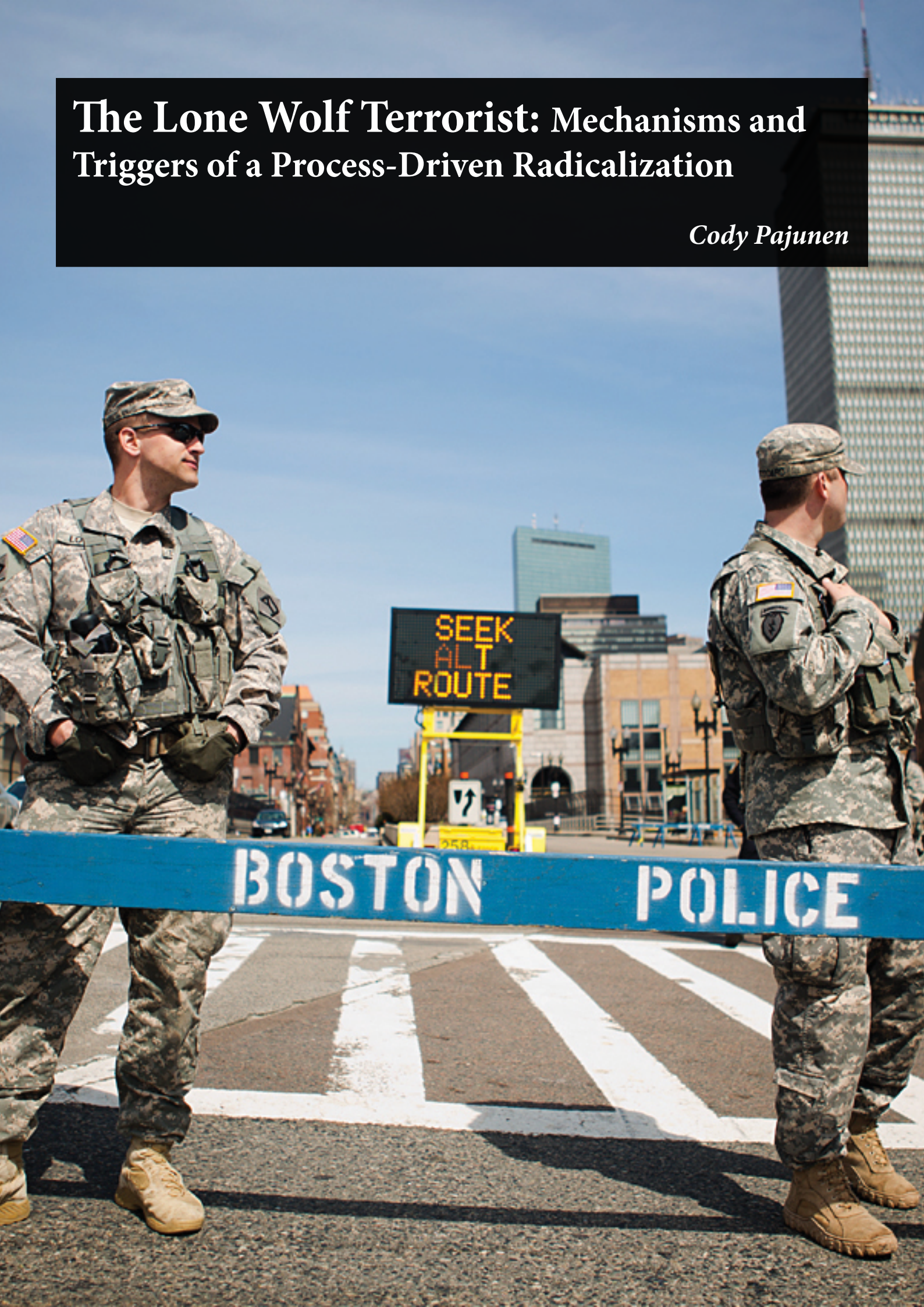
Building on these theories, it can be concluded that the Islamic State is extremely inconsistent. It uses modern digital technology for its propaganda, but ironically wants to go back to traditional Islam. It seems to be a post-colonial movement, but is dependent on capitalist definitions such as 'development' to define its glorious identity. Furthermore, the rise of European recruitments of IS has led to articles with a dichotomist 'us' and 'them' mindset that goes back to the colonial style of thought, and assumes that migrants' generations having any non-western identity can lead to a security hazard. Here security transforms from a physical threat, which is legitimate, to a power controlling discourse of security that limits individuals' (that is Muslims' or migrants') freedom. This style of thought can lead to the problematic outlook that 'all' migrants or 'all' Muslims are hazardous to the national security. Instead, this essay suggests that the reasons that lead to the emergence of migrants' social belonging to violence be examined.

By Farinaz Aryanfar

Farinaz Aryanfar is a Dutch-Iranian researcher focusing on conflict analysis in the Middle East. She has a Bachelor's degree in Middle Eastern studies from Leiden University, and a Master's degree in Global Affairs from Gothenburg University. As an active analyst in media, she received the 'Most in the News Women' prize in the Netherlands in 2009. Ms. Farinaz has presented her papers at several conferences including World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (2014). Currently, she is studying the polarization threat of European societies as an effect of Islamic extremism (2015-2016).

The Lone Wolf Terrorist: Mechanisms and Triggers of a Process-Driven Radicalization

Cody Pajunen



Introduction

The Boston Marathon bombers and US Army Psychiatrist Dr. Hasan were examples of individuals who shined a light on the dangerous implications of what many call "lone wolf" terrorism. Individuals taking up a cause in homicidal (as well as suicidal) manners is a very terrifying and often illusive concept. These lone acts of terror seem to be random and unexplainable, as it is difficult to account for the various differences of each respective attack by lone wolves. However, a deeper look into the anatomy of a lone wolf terrorist and the factors surrounding the phenomenon can illustrate common patterns to help clarify its mysticism.

The first logical questions is, what exactly constitutes a lone wolf terrorist? To answer this, it is imperative to establish what a terrorist is and terrorist actions are. Terrorism is a politically-motivated entity. Politics, as it should be known, refers to the distribution of power. Terrorist actions are carried out in the hopes of some sort of power re-distribution in society.[1] Whether that resource be in the form of moral, cultural, human, or material capital, terrorism always strives to induce fear into a population to redistribute some variation of a resource in the favor of a specific group or individual. Next, it is necessary to distinguish lone wolf terrorism from other forms of terrorism. Ramon Spaaij differentiates lone wolf terrorists from other types of terrorists by looking at three key factors: operating individually, not belonging to a formal terrorist group or organization, and having a modus operandi (MO) that is not subject to external influence.[2] Thus, a lone wolf terrorist operates autonomously from a formal terrorist entity and is self-sustaining in his or her endeavors. This does not mean that lone wolf terrorists (LWTs) are not under the ideological influence of a specific movement or organization but rather that their actions are self-initiated, self-directed, and self-sustaining. At this point, it is hopefully clear as to what a lone wolf terrorist is. However, what drives an individual to autonomously carry out an act of terror is still unclear. To attempt and assert what drives lone wolves to operate in a terrorist capacity, Meloy and Yakeley believe it necessary to look at one issue in specific: how the lone wolf terrorist morally sanctions his or her actions.[3] This process of an individual morally sanctioning terrorist actions is known as radicalization. It must be noted that radicalization is not a static concept. Rather, it is a dynamic, fluid path that prompts individuals to commit violence on behalf of a certain political goal. Radicalization entails a certain "growth" within individuals that builds up over time and is eventually manifested in the form of political violence.

It is helpful to compare the radicalization of terrorists to the construction of a house. Underlying all lone wolf terrorist actions is isolation. The basis of the lone wolf terrorist is isolation from other terrorist entities and people in general. It can thus be seen as the foundation on which house is eventually built. The house itself is ultimately made out of a variety of intertwined materials that build off of that foundation. Built on this base of isolation are the forces of identification and externalization. Identification can be seen as the structure of the house that is built on top of the land. LWTs encounter social and political forces that form new (and in this case, radicalized) identifications just as materials such as concrete, sheet rock, wood, and shingles may form the actual structure of the house; further defining it and giving it an identity. Externalization forces refer to the process by which LWTs physically manifest and carry out an attack. Externalization is ultimately formed by structural elements and their entailing effects on individual psychologies such as forming strong reciprocity and a subsequent moral obligation. These agents function as the contractors that build the house. They (externalization forces) take the materials (identification forces) and actually construct the house on the land (individual isolation). In this way, each force is able to alter the land by dictating construction upon it and permanently altering its natural physical state. Thus, the land is led down a path of construction on which a house is built and develops a new purpose. In the same way, an individual's isolation forms the basis of lone wolf radicalization and is altered

1. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frame on Pathways to Violent Radicalization: Understanding the Ideas and Behaviors, How They Interact and How They Describe Pathways to Violence in Marginalized Diaspora," Artis Research (August 2009): 15. Accessed November 2, 2014.
2. Ramon Spaaij, "The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment," Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 33 (2010): 856. Accessed November 2, 2014.
3. Meloy, Reid J. and Jessica Yakeley, "The Violent True Believer as a "Lone Wolf"- Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Terrorism," Behavioral Sciences and the Law 32 (2014): 358. Accessed November 4, 2014.

by identification forces which are molded and constructed by externalizing agents of influence that are able to resonate their cause with the individual's accumulated pre-conditions.

Isolation

Psychological Precursors - The Road to Isolation

There is not a common psychological profile for all lone wolf terrorists (LWTs) as they operate (and have operated) across time, area, and culture. According to a United States Naval Post-Graduate assessment of LWTs in American from 1968-2011, a statistically insignificant amount had been diagnosed psychological disturbances.[4] Thus, psychological profiles can vary greatly as it is incorrect to psychologically categorize all LWTs as mentally disturbed for analysis. However, psychological factors undoubtedly play a role in helping an autonomous actor morally sanction politically-motivated violence. As Mark Sageman, CIA Operations Officer and counter-terrorism consultant, points out; terrorism "does not take place in a vacuum."[5] Here, Sageman is referring to the broader social contexts that explain how terrorism develops. However, in the case of LWTs, empirical research on autonomous terrorist actors highlights the fact that certain psychological contexts are common across time, area, and cultures. Existing psychological mechanisms and the development of certain mental processes provide an underlying basis of understanding the lone wolf.

Generally, in the context of psychological development, LWTs (although not all) suffer from the limited development of the prefrontal cortex region of the brain. As a result, they may display traits of impulsivity, grandiosity, and vulnerability.[6] Neglecting the consequences of actions, needing to make actions "spectacular" to compensate for a lack of self-identification, and being psychologically prone to coming under the influence of dedicated influences result in a potentially hazardous psychological base. The need to identify with an overarching cause or movement has a large influence on a malleable moral compass. Avoiding rejection also comes high on the psychological priority list with this type of mindset because coping mechanisms are not fully developed. Rejection serves as a primary trigger of isolationist behavior and often results in such individuals impulsively turning to anger instead of rational thought processing. Thoughts and feelings are constructed only in the context of how the rejection affects self-image. Anger is indicative of narcissism and the inability to see beyond one's own thoughts and feelings. The reliance on one's own rational thought processes further solidifies an isolationist attitude.

Psychological vulnerability via mental illness or the lack of prefrontal cortex maturation may result in the radicalization of LWTs but it is by no means the only variable that produces them. For example, a United States Naval Postgraduate statistical analysis of fifty-three American LWTs reveals that there is no significant correlation between psychological disorders and the formation of a LWT.[7] Thus, psychological underpinnings can be seen as a necessary explanation for the formation of an LWT but not always a sufficient one. A driving force usually exists that exploits individual psychologies; those both sound and vulnerable. For example, Vera Zazulich, a Russian student activist in the late 1800s, shot the then General-Governor Trepov in the stomach and patiently waited to be arrested. Zazulich lacked any notable psychological problems. In fact, she held a degree in teaching and was even steadily employed as a secretary and bookbinder in St. Petersburg at the time of the incident. Her anger towards Trepov took root in his public flogging of an imprisoned student, Bogolubov, whom had forgotten to take off his hat in the presence of Trepov when he visited Bogolubov's prison. Zazulich had no direct connection to the incident and "was in no danger of being subjected to corporal punishment."[8] Even with no direct connection to Trepov's arbitrary policies, Zazulich still took it upon herself to shoot him in the name of opposing autocratic and unfair governance. Without a known personal association to the flogging incident or any documented mental illness, Zazulich exemplifies the fact that mental illness is not always a pre-cursor of lone-wolf terrorism. Psychological factors are not

4. Charles A. Eby," The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States since 9/11" (Masters diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2008): 61. Accessed November 11, 2014.
5. Atran, Scott and March Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 16.
6. Meloy, Reid J. and Jessica Yakeley, "The Violent True Believer," 351.
7. Charles Eby, "The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf," 61.
8. McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko, "The Psychology of Lone Wolf Terrorism," Counseling Psychology Quarterly 24, no. 2 (2011): 117. Accessed November 13, 2014.

always a sufficient means of radicalization because their ultimate cause, isolation, isn't sufficient in producing radicalization either.

The narcissistic reliance on anger to avoid the actual rationalization of rejection can produce self-isolation in an attempt to avoid future exposure to said rejection. Herein lies the first necessary facet of LWT psychological radicalization; isolation. Other terrorists may experience ill-directed anger but find solace in a group of people that share similar frustrations. LWTs, however, avoid potential rejection by such groups and find solace amongst their own company. Nonetheless, it is difficult to pinpoint what variables make psychological underpinnings manifest themselves in LWTs who usually have a "limited amount of exposure…with extremists."[9] It is necessary to look at how vulnerable (although psychological vulnerability isn't always present) individual psychologies are exploited and manipulated to commit autonomous terrorist acts. Although individual psychologies can, and have, led to the formation of fully radicalized LWTs, it is indisputable that other factors play a role in the process. LWTs are supposedly autonomous actors, but how can this be if other factors are necessary in catalyzing their violent actions? The answer lies in the fact that acting autonomously isn't necessarily the same as thinking autonomously.

US Army major Hassan believed that Muslims were being exploited as a result of the US's wars in the Middle East; a belief held by many radical jihadi groups of which Hassan was exposed to.

The A-Priori of Beliefs - Influence in Isolation

LWTs are differentiated from their organization-affiliated terrorist counterparts because they act autonomously. As previously mentioned, Spaaji points out that LWTs operate individually, do not formally belong to a terrorist entity, and have a modus operandi that is free from external influence. From the Spaaji definition, it is clear that terrorists obtain the label "lone wolf" based off of their actions, not their beliefs. Coming under the ideological influence of a certain group doesn't necessarily nullify the LWT label of a terrorist because beliefs can be separated from actions. When being a relatively isolated individual, radical influences can form a stronghold in thought processing. For example, United States Army major Hassan believed that Muslims were being exploited as a result of the US's wars in the Middle East; a belief held by many radical jihadi groups of which Hassan was exposed to. His perspectives on Islam and the plight of modern Muslims were formed in isolation but not constructed completely autonomously, leading to radical influences on his belief construction. However, he executed the Fort Hood massacre completely autonomously from resource and tactical standpoints. By acting in an autonomous manner, Hassan fills all the criteria of a LWT even though his beliefs were influenced by a broader social movement. Hassan's isolation was exploited by radicalized ideas that manipulated his belief system, resulting in the combination of his beliefs with his own isolationist tendencies and producing an autonomously-constructed massacre. Therefore, the effect of beliefs in isolation can be seen as a crucial pre-cursor to action.

Marc Sageman, among others, claims "the notion that beliefs and attitudes cause behavior is incorrect."[10] He asserts that there is no a-priori in beliefs relative to actions. Instead, it is more accurate to say the performance of certain actions forces people to subsequently change their beliefs in an attempt to align such beliefs with said actions. According to Sageman, this is the process of cognitive dissonance. In cognitive dissonance, actions are derived from morally ambiguous decisions which end up creating distress, or dissonance, between the conscious and rational facets of the human mind. In order to dispel this uncomfortable dissonance, beliefs are derived from actions so that the two can be aligned and mental harmony can be relatively revived. If this were true, the notion that LWTs act autonomously would be nullified because beliefs would be autonomously constructed from group-inspired and group-initiated actions but actions would be produced by external influences.

Sageman's claim that beliefs are not a-priori to actions isn't inaccurate but rather ill-formulated contextually

9. Charles A. Eby, "The Nation that Cried Wolf," 71.

10. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 78.

Authorities search for the suspects following a shooting that killed 14 people at a social services facility on Dec. 2, 2015, in San Bernardino, California.

in explaining the radicalization process of LWTs. His study primarily involves the analysis of group dynamics in terrorism and delves into case studies such as the Madrid and Hebron bombings that highlight the importance of "group bonding activities."[11] Thus, cognitive dissonance isn't applicable to the case of LWTs because of their relative physical isolation from the influence of group actions. Instead, LWTs may come under more influence from what Sageman refers to as vicarious cognitive dissonance. During vicarious cognitive dissonance, individuals form a strong identification with a certain group or movement and their moral principles may be altered to fit the actions of others they believe to be a representation of the aforementioned group or movement. Although Sageman posits vicarious cognitive dissonance is a result of the a-priori of actions, the manipulation of beliefs isn't derived from the observer's actions but, rather, the actions of a group or movement member. The observer alters beliefs from his or her interpretation of another's actions. This interpretation of the observer in itself is an individually-constructed belief, not an action. In the case of LWTs and their isolation (and subsequent reliance on vicarious cognitive dissonance), beliefs are constructed before actions. It is this accumulation of beliefs which aligns potential LWTs with a certain identity; an identity that forms another necessary facet of the radicalization process.

Identification

The Importance of External Factors

In order to commit terrorism, individuals must perform an action. It has been established that, in the context of LWTs, beliefs form the base off which actions are derived. Therefore, beliefs, being the base of actions, must be manipulated to a high extent in order to produce terrorist-like actions. Terrorism does not occur in a vacuum and the radicalization of LWTs doesn't either. As Katie Cohen of the Swedish Defense Research Agency articulates, there exists no LWT "gene."[12] Individuals are not born with an uncompromising impulse to autonomously carry out a terrorist-like attack. The lack of a LWT "gene" can be seen in the ideologies of LWTs. The belief systems of LWTs are normally "contorted" and comprised of a mixture of individually-inspired and group-inspired ideological microcosms. Inner individual beliefs of LWTs attach themselves to that of external entities and have the potential to be modified, which can result in the process of identification. In identification, the beliefs of an individual align with beliefs of a larger group. As previously shown, LWTs do not form their beliefs completely autonomously and, as a result, ideologically identify with that of certain group or movement. In this light, it can be seen that external mechanisms form the structure of the identification process.

11. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 12.
12. Katie Cohen, "Who will be a Lone Wolf Terrorist? Mechanisms of Self-Radicalization and the Possibility of Detecting Lone Offender Threats On the Internet," Swedish Defense Research Agency 3531 (December 2012): 12. Accessed November 6, 2014.

Identification Mechanisms

Certain mechanisms act as structural elements that "set the stage" for potential LWTs to embark on a dangerous process of identification. These mechanisms of identification come in the forms social movements, movement resources, and the isolation of potential LWTs. Social movements form the structure driving the radicalization process by advocating for a cause. The resources that social movements utilize also provide a conducive environment for LWT identification because they propel the message a certain movement is trying to project. The isolation of potential LWTs serves as a third mechanism of identification by providing an altering the way in which identification occurs. Although it is difficult to assert exactly which types of external factors help maleate LWT belief systems, most mechanisms that drive them come in the form of social movements.

The first mechanism of identification is that of the social movement. Social Movement Theory gives great insight into the diffusion of external influences that play a part in shaping and projecting individuals' ideas. According to Social Movement Theory, social movements consist of a "set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society."[13] The primary goal of a social movement (SM) is to induce the sympathy of a population so that its cause can gain societal traction. Gaining the sympathy of followers often entails the process of ideological alignment where people align their belief systems with the values and goals held by the social movement. In order to increase belief alignment potential, a social movement may have a relatively (compared to individual ideological preferences) broad platform of beliefs so it may appeal to a wide range of individuals. The broad spectrum of beliefs in SMs are represented via varying amounts of social movement industries (SMIs) and social movement organizations (SMOs). SMIs are the organizational facets of the broader SM and are comparable to the different industries present in the study of economics.[14] SMOs are actual organizations that formulate their operations based on the goals of a SM and try to implement them (goals). They function more as a foot solider for the overall movement.

The facilitation of SM belief systems (via SMOs) formed to project societal frustrations serve as a fertile basis off which potential LWTs can align themselves. By providing this basis, SMs and their projections manipulate and fuse with the beliefs of potential LWTs. As has already been stated, it from these very manipulated beliefs from which action is later derived. In the case of LWTs, SMs represent a broader movement of violently radical rhetoric such as global jihadism or white supremacy. In order to adequately project the frustrations that serve as the basis of a social movement entity, it must have followers to support its cause. SMOs, as described earlier, are the SM entities that attempt and physically manifest the goals of the larger SM and are thus extremely active in promoting support for their cause. Groups such as al-Qaeda and the Klu Klux Klan operate as SMOs dedicated to a larger, over-arching cause. SMO operations revolve around maintaining group survival and ensuring a favorable cost/reward relationship for individuals that participate in their activities.[15] In short, SMOs need dedicated followers to advance their goals. Social movements (and SMOs) themselves are not enough to serve as the sole mechanism of identification, however.

To acquire followers, SMOs need to deploy resources in order to make their cause attractive. Resources thus represent the second identification mechanism. Moral, cultural, human, material, and socio-organizational resources all aid in advancing the efforts of an SMO.[16] The most important moral resource is legitimacy. Legitimacy acts as a resource in an SMO by strengthening its image of societal support and credibility. Cultural resources give a movement "strategic know-how" that enables them to mobilize their efforts to sustain recruitment amongst a population such as the utilization of new social media and the knowledge of how to organize a specific type of protest.[17] Human resources solidify an organization's expertise, labor size, and leadership to give it credibility in numbers, charisma, and work

13. McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald,"Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," The American Journal of Sociology 82, no. 6 (1977): 1217-1218. Accessed November 4, 2014.
14. Ibid. 1219.
15. Ibid. 1226.
16. Edwards, Bob and Patrick F. Gillham, "Resource Mobilization Theory," The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements (2013). DOI: 10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm447. Accessed November 11, 2014.
17. Ibid.

capacity. Material resources include tangible assets of an organization such as monetary funds, property, and supplies that are available for the diffusion of the organization's goals. Socio-organizational assets constitute an organization's infrastructure, social network, and organizational capacities. These different types of resources function as a mechanism of the identification process of LWT radicalization because they structure the credibility and capacity of the SMs and SMOs. Resources are external factors that ultimately lay the foundation for the diffusion of an SM's or SMO's goals. Such diffusion structures the appeal of an SM or SMO to make its message more conducive to attracting potential LWTs.

..al-Qaeda targets potential lone wolf terrorists by using social media to facilitate the international popularity of its "Inspire Magazine" which diffuses its message and ideology across the globe.

The extent to which these resources can be acquired and deployed thus dictate the success of an SMO. The notorious terrorist organization known as al-Qaeda (AQ) is an SMO that has been able to deploy its resources to help produce an image that individuals can align their belief systems with. In terms of moral resources, AQ has been able to expand and maintain its operations transnationally via franchising its ideology and membership around the world, giving it widespread legitimacy. It has also been supported by international "celebrities" such as Osama bin Laden and enjoys sympathy from national governments such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Culturally, AQ targets potential LWTs by using social media to facilitate the international popularity of its "Inspire Magazine" which diffuses its message and ideology across the globe. AQ's human assets include expertise in the art of terror tactics like the sustainment of terror financing networks and a wealth of battlefield experience. AQ's material resources entail the acquisition of safe-haven property and transnational funding. From a socio-organizational resource standpoint, AQ offers potential recruits access to digital support networks so that physical contact doesn't have to ever be made for belief alignment to be diffused. By combining all these variations of resources, AQ has had the opportunity to diffuse its ideological base to potential LWTs. By transnationally diffusing its large amount of resources, AQ structures its message for maximum appeal to many potential recruits, including potential LWTs. These four types of resources, when deployed in concert, construct a product that is made available to potential consumers (potential LWTs). The act of making a certain product appealing to isolated individuals is known as "slick packing" in Social Movement Theory. Slick packaging is deployed to increase the overall appeal of a certain social movement product. The more appealing the product, the more likely an isolated individual will enter the process of lone wolf radicalization.[18]

The third structural mechanism in the identification process is the actual isolation of LWTs. Although isolation has already been established as the first step in the overall LWT radicalization process, it nonetheless transplants itself in identification as well. The way in which potential LWTs identify with a certain movement is partially constructed by their isolation. LWTs frequently "create their own ideologies."[19]

LWT ideologies many times consist of a combination of an externally-created ideology (or combination of external ideologies) and individually-experienced personal grievances. Isolation can be seen as a structural mechanism of such hybrid ideologies because of its effect on what Social Movement Theory deems isolated constituents (ICs). ICs represent the theory's LWT counterpart. ICs are comparable to LWTs in that they are isolated from the normal "consumer base" of social movements and are influenced via indirect means. In order to reach this isolated consumer base, one specific structural mechanism has increased its prominence; the internet. In the dotcom world, individuals with isolationist tendencies find solace in "the ease of accessibility and anonymity" that it offers.[20] The diffusion of radical ideas is able to enter a time-space compression via internet channels that can reach a larger amount of vulnerable, isolated individuals at a historically unprecedented level. For example, five-sixths of lone wolf terrorists studied in the US in the year 2011 came under some kind of radical influence from internet usage.[21] This increase in internet

18. McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements," 1231.

19. Kate Cohen, "Who will be a Lone Wolf Terrorist?" 10.
20. Charles A. Eby, "The Nation that Cried Lone Wolf," 9.
21. Ibid. 39.

usage provides many channels of "direct access to a community of like-minded individuals…a community that can act as a replacement" for the lack of social interactions LWTs often experience.[22]


ISIS militant in Syria

The effects of the internet's anonymity also has important structural implications. It has been found that the "anonymity of the web…leads to an increased level of endorsement for violence."[23] It is sensible that individuals are more willing to express increasingly violent intentions under the mask of an unidentifiable internet profile. This willingness to express more honest emotions may also be enhanced by "small group" dynamics. LWTs operate individually but still sustain contacts with other like-minded individuals over the internet. These communities, as previously stated, compensate for lacking social interaction among potential LWTs and, as a result, have the ability to maleate their opinions by providing potential LWTs with an identity or purpose. Groupthink perpetuates the increased expression of radical ideas across radical internet communities. The internet can be seen as a mechanism that structures the identification process of potential LWTs. While still allowing autonomous action and thought, the internet is able to expose isolated individuals to a wide variety of information and unconventional communities that may help direct their patterns of thought and belief.

Identification Triggers

The mechanisms that may lead isolated individuals down the path of radicalization do not produce LWTs themselves. Plenty of people are exposed to radical movements daily, yet a seemingly negligible percentage of this vast population turn out to become LWTs. How does this happen? As previously established, there is not a single profile of LWTs. However, what every LWT does inhabit is a grievance.

In the case of LWTs, a grievance consists of an inner animosity aimed at an external source. The potential LWT formation of internal grievances are not too surprising given their tendencies to be narcissistic and isolated. Being narcissistic, potential LWTs often times perceive events only in the context of how they (potential LWTs) are effected and thus blame external sources when events do not produce favorable outcomes. In compliment, isolation has the potential to decrease accountability for individual mistakes as, normally, the potential LWT is the only entity holding him or her responsible for his or her action. This grievance can be derived from a variety of sources but nonetheless is individually constructed and serves as a trigger for identifying with a certain group or movement that seems to address the aforementioned grievance. At this point, the convergence of internal and external forces must be noted. The grievance identification trigger is an internal force that needs a scapegoat in order to be psychologically dealt with. At this point, the messages of SMs and SMOs and their slickly-packaged "products" exercise their resources, are diffused, and help construct the internal grievance accordingly. Just as a virus inserts its DNA into a vulnerable cell, a radical SM or SMO has the potential to insert its own belief system into that of a vulnerable individual. The "function" of the person's belief system is then altered just as the "function" of an infected cell changes within the body, disrupting its normal means of operation. The net appeal of the radical SM's or SMO's influence is catalyzed once it becomes attached to a vulnerable belief system.

Although grievances can catalyze the construction of beliefs systems by finding solace in the messages conveyed by SMs or SMOs, they are not the only trigger in the formation of LWT identification. Grievances help potential LWTs align their inner beliefs with of

22. Kaite Cohen, "Who will be a Lone Wolf Terrorist?" 15.

23. Ibid.

external sources. They run individual beliefs parallel to that of a certain movement or group but have not been able to completely converge the two belief systems. In order for a potential LWT to completely identify with a specific movement or group, an individual must undergo vicarious cognitive dissonance. As previously explained, vicarious cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual's belief system is altered after a person of an in-group is observed committing a hypocritical act.[24] This hypocritical act creates dissonance in the observer. The observer wants to fully identify with a group or individual but has a difficult time doing so as a result of the hypocritical act that was witnessed, thus creating dissonance between the observer's pre-existing morals and urge to identify with an external source. To quell this dissonance, the attitudes towards the hypocritical act are altered to support it (the hypocritical act). By morally sanctioning the wrongful act of an outside source, attitude changes become solidified as both belief systems converge. In this case, the structured message of an external force solidifies identification by providing a product with such high appeal that individual, internal psychological impulses force the convergence of belief systems between the mechanism and individual. This convergence is catalyzed by the trigger of psychologically vulnerable individuals to dedicate themselves to an entity bigger than themselves at the cost of their natural moral compass. Identification is completed when this forced convergence in belief systems is solidified. After the completion of identification, the final necessary means in the radicalization process of potential LWTs is initiated; externalization.

Externalization

At this point in the radicalization process, potential LWTs are isolated and have subsequently identified with an overarching movement. As complex as the first these first two steps may be, a lone wolf terrorist has not yet been formed. Rather, a socially marginalized "ideologue" has been produced. In order to be considered a terrorist, one must perform a terrorist act. To be considered an act, a potential LWT must physically externalize his or her inner frustration. A new combination of mechanisms must come into contact with a different set of triggers in order for externalization to occur.

Rightwing extremist Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in twin attacks in Norway appears in court, July 26, 2014.

Mechanisms of Externalization

Externalization is, similarly to isolation and identification, manifested via structural elements. These three elements include the formation of a perceived injustice, development of a negative identification, and a lack of legitimate political outlets available to externalize frustrations. These mechanisms interact with one another to direct a potential LWTs inner animosity outward. Once in place, these elements lay fertile ground for certain triggers that ultimately result in a terrorist act. The three mechanisms of externalization follow a pattern of occurrence. First, the "what" that is the root of a certain problem is identified. Next, the "why" a problem needs to be nullified becomes solidified. Finally, the "how" a problem or frustration should be dealt with is considered by potential LWTs.

After the identification process, potential LWTs end up forming a favorable opinion of a certain movement's values, beliefs, and actions. These favorable opinions form what is known as positive identification. A potential LWT positively identifies with a movement. This positive identification, depending on the movement with which the potential LWT is identifying, can have negative effects. Identifying with a certain movement or group means that those opposed to it may be viewed in a negative light. Since social movements are formed in order to change the status quo of a certain issue, antagonistic forces, such as those trying to maintain the status quo or change it in a different direction, may be seen as "the enemy." Usually, this is not an issue because social movements and their entailing organizations are not militant towards one another. In the context of transnational terrorist or criminal entities, however,

24. Atran, Scott and Marc Sageman, "Theoretical Frames on Pathways," 81.

militancy is the lingua franca. Groups or individuals impeding on the progress of a certain militant movement are literally seen as an enemy force that needs to be completely undermined or destroyed. In the case of potential LWTs, the process of vilifying an asserted antagonistic entity results in the process of negative identification towards those opposed to their (potential LWTs') groups. Seemingly common sense, negative identification has grave consequences when contextualized in potential LWTs. If a movement asserts that a certain entity is its enemy or decreases its capacity to reach its goals, members become fixated on such a "problematic" entity. This fixation is extremely dangerous when considering isolated individuals. The extent to which a problem occurs can be drastically miscalculated among isolated actors, especially when psychologically vulnerable to narrow-minded assertions and the appeal of grandiose actions. This fixation ultimately turns a certain entity (whether a person, group, government, or label) into an enemy. Since both parties are "opposed" to one another in terms of competing for similar resources of a shared issue, the enemy's gain is seen as the potential LWT's loss. Thus, the enemy becomes a target so that it cannot decrease the LWT's operations. This targeting acts as a structure for externalization because it provides the potential LWT with a direction to where actions can be manifested towards if need be. Essentially, this direction represents the "what" of which externalized actions will be focused on.

Negative identification provides the "what" of externalization. At this point a potential LWT may have a good idea as to "what" should be targeted if necessary. The second externalization mechanism, a perceived injustice, provides the potential LWT the "why." A perceived injustice is exactly as it seems; an action by another, seemingly adversarial, entity that is seen as a direct attack on the potential LWT and his or her associated group or goal. This injustice is "perceived" because it may or may not have been a direct attack on the LWT. The action was construed by either the potential LWT or his or her identified group as an attack. Such an "attack" justifies the reasons for hating a certain enemy in the first place. The perceived injustice thus structures the potential LWT's opinions so that they believe something must be done to counter it so that similar actions do not re-occur.

A third structural mechanism for externalization is the lack of legitimate political outlets through which frustrations can be facilitated. If a potential LWT is exhibiting frustrations but is willing to use a legitimate outlet to induce change, the externalization of a terrorist act could be nullified. The positive use of political processes do not always pan out, however. Even if legitimate political outlets do exist, isolated individuals may so delusional about a certain problem that they deem any form of accepted political activism as inherently corrupt and unable to yield preferred results. Whatever the cause, a lack of actual or perceived political outlets give the potential LWT the "how" to externalize his or her action. If legal means of externalizing a frustration are not available, a different route must be chosen. A lack of effective political mechanisms thus structure the externalization of a potential LWT action by convincing the individual that the way in which frustrations can be vented must include something outside the parameters of legality. In the case of militant movements, violence is usually considered a more than viable action. The "what," "why," and "how" of externalization integrate at this point. A fertile basis of violent preferences for actions is solidified and waiting for a catalyst to ultimately manifest the structured potential LWT frustrations.

Triggers of Externalization

Three triggers accompany each of the aforementioned structural mechanisms of externalization. At this point, three mechanisms have "laid the foundation" for the externalization of a terrorist action and the official forging of a lone wolf terrorist. As stated before, catalysts are needed to physically manifest an action derived from the foundation that the mechanisms lay out. These catalysts are a development of strong reciprocity, moral obligation, and the formulation of alternative strategies to vent frustrations. An important point to note is that these triggers are largely derivatives of an individual's psychology. Mechanisms, in contrast, are implemented via sources outside the parameters of the individual. Only the potential LWT his or herself can decide to act on the structural mechanisms. This point illustrates the very nature of LWTs; their ultimate autonomy in formulating decisions. These triggers, like their respective mechanistic counterparts, follow a process that results in a LWT action. The pattern of "what," "why," and "how" a certain grievance become physically externalized takes place to produce an action and official an LWT in one fell swoop.

Strong reciprocity occurs when an individual is willing to make a sacrifice for a thing or idea which he or she is not directly affected by.[25] The development of this psychological inclination is actually derived from altruism. Individuals who exhibit strong reciprocity want to put forth their resources to sustain an overall cause or idea they deem worthy. However, in any social environment, there will always be those who free-ride off of altruistic behavior (defectors). Those who "defect" from a cooperating with a cause or movement are considered an enemy by individuals who behave altruistically because they (the defectors) impede upon the advancement of a certain movement, idea, or goal that others are working for. Strong reciprocity induces individuals to remedy the problem of defectors by either coercing them into cooperation or exterminating them. The defectors represent the entity of which the potential LWT negatively identifies with. The negative identification already put in place by this point is furthered via strong reciprocity by the individual's decision to carry out "justice" against the antagonistic defector. Thus, the psychological process of developing strong reciprocity against an "antagonistic" defector ultimately produces the "what" which needs to be subjected to justice.

A simple, yet crucial, psychological complement to strong reciprocity is a moral obligation. A moral obligation produces the trigger manifestation as to "why" a potential LWT must externalize an inner frustration in the form of a terrorist act. At this point, the psychological process of strong reciprocity has identified a target. Moral obligation provides individual justification for externalizing an act against the aforementioned target. Here, the perceived injustice comes to fore. The "injustice" is derived from an external actor (although formulated internally by the potential LWT). The formulation of a moral obligation continues the psychological process of justifying an externalized action. The moral obligation instills a determined will to carry out a potentially violent action because of the severity of the perceived injustice. The "what" is reinforced and sustained by the "why."

The final trigger in order for an externalized LWT act to take place is the formulation of an alternative way in which a frustration can be expressed. Here, the potential LWT has psychologically solidified his or her moral obligation to exacting exhibiting strong reciprocity against a specific target. What has not yet been determined is exactly "how" such a moral obligation will be acted on. As previously mentioned, legal political outlets that the potential LWT views as sufficient in taking care of his or her frustration(s) are lacking. In order to carry out his or her "obligation" as the only legitimate means of exacting justice, the potential LWT autonomously formulates an alternative outlet. Although acting autonomously, it is important to remember that potential LWTs act under the influence of a certain (often violence-prone) group or movement. The alternative strategy a potential LWT devises is frequently a violent act. The "what" and "why" end up facilitating the "how" externalization takes place. Devising an alternative strategy, often one of violence, is the final trigger in externalization. This strategy integrates the power of the two previously mentioned triggers and guides them to a self-directed action. When a potential LWT takes the route of his or her own individualized alternative outlet to vent a frustration, a lone wolf terrorist act is executed and a lone wolf terrorist is formed.

25. McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko, "The Psychology on Lone-Wolf Terrorism," 121

Conclusion

The process of an individual transforming into a lone wolf terrorist contains an immeasurable amount of interacting factors. These factors differ from individual to individual as psychologies and experiences are never the same between any two people. However, a commonality between every single lone wolf terrorist is that each underwent a process. This process, no matter the amount of variables involved, forged an individual that autonomously committed an act of terror. These acts of terror without a doubt have and will continue to differ according to place, time, extent of destruction, and justification. The point of this project is not to give an exact formula for the type of person that will become a lone wolf terrorist but to provide a procedural framework in regards to the psychological and socio-structural forces that interact to lead an individual down the path of lone wolf radicalization. The effects of both structural mechanisms and triggers are indisputable. We, as humans, are not born with the innate will and ability to perform a terrorist act on our own accord. Learned behaviors, rather, combine an individual's environment and psychological impulses to produce actions. This complex combination forges the radicalization process of the lone wolf terrorist.

Generally, it is clear that three main forces set the stage for the radicalization of a lone wolf terrorist: isolation, identification, and externalization. These forces are broad enough to encompass the variety of known LWTs yet specific enough to put specific facets of a LWT's radicalization into context. The key to these forces is the process by which they are experienced. Although anything in reality (especially in regards to lone wolf terrorism) is difficult to quantify, it can be seen that a lone wolf terrorist is formed via isolation, subsequent identification in isolation, and entailing externalization derived from isolated identification.

Mechanisms and triggers must also both be present within each of the overarching forces. Socio-structural and individual psychological elements must both also be present for a LWT to be formed. These two elements, under each of the respective forces, complement one another to form the radicalization process. Individuals are born with psychologies. These psychological bases are exposed to structural mechanisms that direct and mold vulnerable individuals. The complimentary nature of these micro and macro forces highlight the complex nature of lone wolf terrorist radicalization.

Members of the French GIPN intervention police forces secure a neighbourhood in Corcy, northeast of Paris, Jan. 8, 2015. (Photo Credit: Reuters)

The lone wolf terrorist is by no means a new phenomenon. Individuals have been, and will continue to be, morphed into autonomously-acting terrorists. This inevitability of recurrence warrants further study of lone wolf terrorism. This study provides a procedural framework for the radicalization process of lone wolf terrorists. What it does not yet do, however, is contextualize individual case studies within this framework. In order to better understand how individuals make the plunge into lone wolf terrorism, case studies must be applied to this study's structural explanation. A continuation of this study will be undertaken to do just that. As the radicalization of lone wolf terrorists will undoubtedly continue, so will the drive to understand and undermine it.

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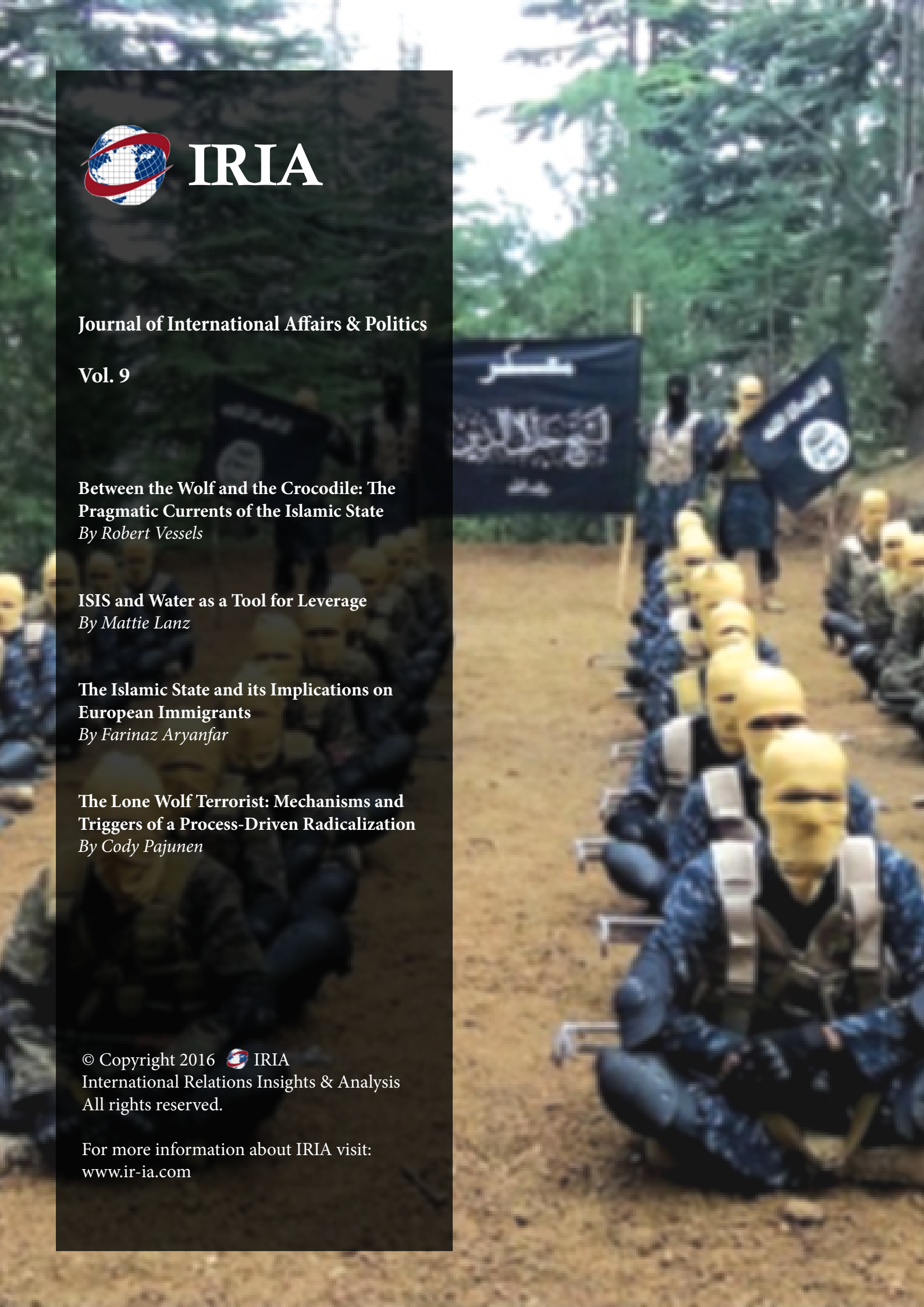
Cody Pajunen's research focus is transnational terrorism and the psychological basis of political violence. He also follows Turkish and Iraqi politics, and writes about group dynamics, insurgencies, and irregular warfare.



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