TERRORISM AND ISLAM: DISTORTION OF ISLAMIC
CONCEPTS TO JUSTIFY VIOLENT ATTACKS

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TERRORISM AND ISLAM: DISTORTION OF ISLAMIC
CONCEPTS TO JUSTIFY VIOLENT ATTACKS

A Thesis

by

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Spring 2011

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DEDICATION

To my parents: Fardous and Turki, and to my second family in Chico: Nina and Mazen.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to especially acknowledge my parents, Fardous and Turki Masadeh, who have been supportive since the beginning of my academic career in the United States. I am indebted to my best friend and sister, Nina, and to my best uncle, Mazen for their invaluable assistance. They supported me both financially and emotionally and for that I am eternally grateful. I want to express my gratitude and thanks to my committee member Mahalley D. Allen and Chair James E. Jacob, who pushed and believed in me all the way. They, as always, were there with advice and encouragement. I will always be thankful to my friend Rob Scheerer, who kept encouraging me all the way and lent me his personal computer when mine broke two weeks before the deadline. Finally, I know without my colleagues and best friends, Emily Peart and Jose Valdovinos who not only inspired me, but also stood next to me during tough time, I won’t be enjoying the happiness of success. Was it not for all these people, I honestly doubt that I would be in the position that I am today. Thank you all.
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ABSTRACT

TERRORISM AND ISLAM: DISTORTION OF ISLAMIC CONCEPTS TO JUSTIFY VIOLENT ATTACKS

by

© Mais Turki Masadeh 2011

Master of Arts in Political Science

California State University, Chico

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The terrorism of religious groups is not a unique phenomenon to the contemporary world. Indeed, the roots of modern day Islamist militias and terrorist groups can be traced all the way back to the 18th century. My purpose in writing this thesis is to find a relationship between Islam and terrorism and how Islamist groups succeed to justify their violence in the name of Islam. In order to achieve that, I examine case studies of two contemporary yet controversial Islamist groups, the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda. My decision to choose the two organizations as case studies is because they have claimed responsibility for the most terrorist attacks in the Middle East and North Africa in the last two decades. Throughout this thesis, I explore the development of the Islamic society from the early days of Islam in 610 C.E. to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. The developments occurred in the Islamic society led to the creation of reactionary movements and ideologies.
The findings of this research show that the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda are modern expansions of the latter creations. Additionally this paper explores how these terrorists groups succeeded to create new mechanisms for legitimizing their terror, mainly through Islam. The data and literature presented in this research show that the two organizations are not the vanguards of Muslims as they claim. Instead they use Islam as tool to give their terrorism a meaning. This paper investigates the Islamic concepts and values the two groups apply to justify their terror in the name of God. Ultimately, the findings in this research do not show a relationship between the religion of Islam and terrorism. Instead, it shows how the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda distorted Islam to justify their violence.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The weekend of November 9, 2005, started off like any other weekend. It was an ordinary, peaceful Saturday. Weekends in Jordan are usually an ideal opportunity for families and friends to get together and visit over a warm cup of tea. Restaurants, café shops, and lounges are filled with people on the weekends, ready to share the comfort of others in familiar social settings. Like many other social occasions, it is preferred that weddings take place on weekends so that everyone can attend the celebration. That Saturday was like any other weekend to me. My uncle and his family were visiting, my sister and I were chatting in the kitchen while the younger children played around us.

Suddenly, police cars, ambulances, loud alarms and the unordinary sounds of chaos in the Jordanian capital of Amman disrupted the quiet of a peaceful evening. The silence in the house had everyone wondering what was going on. We all rushed to the living room to put on the news. Mesmerized in front of the television, cell phones started ringing and voices could be heard on the other side of the line fearfully saying “Hamdulilla–Thank God–you are OK.” The television only displayed black smoke, police and rescue vehicles, remains of concrete, and people crying.

Speculations from the media almost immediately began announcing that it might have been a series of bomb explosions that targeted three foreign hotels. The images flashing on the screen were hard to watch and difficult to identify. The horrifying
scenes on the TV showed the Radisson SAS Hotel with police and firemen appearing out of the smoke carrying people who looked as if they could just as easily be alive or dead. At that point, it became evident that a suicide bomber had targeted a wedding at one of the hotels. For the first time in Jordan’s history, the Kingdom witnessed a terrorist attack by a suicide bomber. Later, it was disclosed that the bombing was, in fact, a coordinated attack on three different locations. The explosions targeted the Grand Hyatt Hotel, the Radisson SAS Hotel, and the Days Inn, at 8:50 p.m. Innocent men, women, and children were dragged by rescuers and transported by medical teams to hospitals. Blood, broken glass, and human flesh were scattered everywhere. The whole Kingdom was shocked at the sheer ferocity of the attack.

Two days later, on November 12, the Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan confirmed that the attackers had been identified as Iraqi. The suicide bombing attacks on the three hotels were perpetrated by Ali Hussein al-Shamari, Rawad Jassem Abed, and Safaa Mohammed Ali, who had entered Jordan three days earlier. On November 13, King Abdullah II of Jordan announced the arrest of a woman believed to be a fourth would-be suicide bomber. Sajida al-Rishawi, whose explosive belt failed to detonate, confessed that she and the three suicide bombers were under the command of the Jordanian radical Islamist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the head of al-Qaeda in Iraq until he was killed during a U.S air strike in 2006.

Several days after the Amman bombings, al-Qaeda took claim for the attacks in Jordan. They said that the hotels were targeted because they had become favorites with

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“Americans and Israeli intelligence and other Western European governments.”

Although Jordan is an Islamic country, it had been targeted by a group who referred to themselves as Muslims. Most of the dead were Jordanian civilians. The attacks on the three hotels took the lives of fifty-nine people and injured over 115. Among the dead were a number of other Arabs, two Chinese, one American, and an Indonesian.

There are many intense arguments among scholars over the relationship between Islam and terrorism and whether a correlation exists. Islam must seem like a paradoxical religion to non-Muslims, in the sense that, on one hand, it is constantly being viewed as the religion of peace, while on another, its adherents are responsible for the majority of terrorist attacks around the world. Islamic scholars stress that it is a faith built upon high ethical standards, while others pronounce that it is a religion of the law.

Through this thesis, I argue that Islam is not a threat to the West and has never been a violent religion. Instead, contemporary radical Islamist groups have reinterpreted and distorted traditional Islamic concepts to justify their indiscriminate use of terrorism. Their actions have led to inevitable conflict between the Islamic world and the West, and thus, Islam is now viewed by many as a violent religion. With this in mind, I will focus on the emergence and the actions of two controversial Islamists organizations, al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood.


3. Ibid.


First, I find it necessary to define Islam. The second chapter addresses the origin of Islam, its foundations, and its message. Many terrorist groups repeatedly cite religious verses to justify their attacks. What are these verses and how legitimate are they? The chapter further discusses how Islamic law has evolved with time and has thus become vulnerable to manipulation by radical Islamist groups in order to allow them to issue unofficial religious rulings. Chapter 2 will conclude with a discussion of the meaning of *jihad*.

Chapter 3 will explain, in detail, how the Islamic world has expanded from a small minority in Mecca into a powerful world empire. It will also discuss how the leadership role of Islamic leaders has shifted and changed through time. Chapter 4 will begin with a discussion of the Western influence on the Ottoman Empire. I will discuss what impacts Europe has had on the Islamic empire. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire provided a great environment for many radical groups to emerge and survive. This information leads to the important question of what the circumstances were that allowed for such a fertile breeding ground.

The origin of Islamist ideas and ideologies are explained in Chapter 5. Specific attention will be given to Wahhabism and Qutbism, two main elements in the development of Islamic terrorism. I will discuss their meanings as well as the impacts they have had.

Before discussing how Islamist groups have succeeded in developing and expanding under the name of Islam, it is necessary to offer a thorough definition of generalized terrorism and how it differs from religious terrorism. Chapter 6 provides a
historical perspective regarding the rise of the term “terror.” Chapter 6 will conclude with a discussion of how, if at all, the nature of terrorism has changed in the post-9/11 world.

In Chapter 7, I will focus on the formation of two important terrorist groups, al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood. The most fascinating and important findings are found in Chapter 7. In this chapter, I analyze data collected from Arabic news sources and the Incident Tracking System (WITS) database regarding Islamist terrorist attacks in the following twelve countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Gaza Strip, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The findings challenge the claims made by al-Qaeda, in which they name themselves as the vanguard of Muslim communities. Moreover, this chapter draws attention to the political recognition of the Muslim Brotherhood in Islamic countries.

Chapter 8 presents critical traditional Islamic concepts that have been reinterpreted and distorted by radical Islamist groups. This chapter explains how these groups have made and continue to make convenient use of this distortion in order to justify an indiscriminate use of violence.

I will conclude this thesis by pointing out that case studies of two Islamist groups, al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood, are like any other criminal or terrorist group. They have adopted false ideologies in order to justify their actions. Not only have these ideologies championed severe and violent assumptions about Islam, but they have also brought enmity, disorder, and division to the Islamic community. As a result, Islam is now viewed, by many, as a violent religion.
CHAPTER II
DEFINING ISLAM

For nearly fourteen centuries, Islam has been the fastest growing religion in the world. Beginning in the seventh century C.E., in what is now Saudi Arabia, Prophet Muhammad created an Islamic community and state in Mecca. Arabs united under the Prophet and inspired by the new religion set out to conquer the world spreading Islam. After the death of the Prophet in 632 C.E., Muslims quickly overran Persia and took over most of the territories of the Christian Byzantine and Sassanid empires. In just one hundred years, Islam had set the foundation for the largest empire the world had ever seen, stretching from the Indus River in southeast Asia to Djibouti in North Africa. Major events and movements, however, had occurred to change this religion from one of tolerance and acceptance to one of conflict and violence. In the last few decades, Islamic symbols, ideology, and institutions have reemerged as a significant force in public life. Mainstream Islamic organizations became an influential actor in social and political aspects of the society. As new Islamic republics emerged in Iran and Sudan, other

10. Esposito, Oxford History of Islam, x.
countries faced major opposition to Islamic movements in countries like Yemen, Jordan, Palestine/Israel, Egypt and elsewhere.

Islamist groups repeatedly cite Islamic religious texts, debate Islamic law, and give rise to new rules to justify their acts. Although many justifications succeed, others do not. In this chapter, I will explain the historical and religious foundations of Islam through an examination of the following questions: What are the religious texts in Islam that are cited most often? How has Islamic law evolved with time? Finally, I will examine the controversial Islamic concept of *jihad* (holy war), and attempt to answer the question of whether it is an act of terror or an act of defense.

Islam

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic verb *aslama*, which means “to surrender, to give up to Allah (God).” It is also derived from the world *slam* (peace). Those who believe and accept Islam are called Muslims, a word derived from the same root. Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion, like Christianity and Judaism, both of which also originated in what is now the Middle East. Islam, as a religion, considers itself to be a reaffirmation and consummation of the earlier religions of Christianity and Judaism. The main principle of Islam is that there is one *Allah* – and that the Prophet Muhammad is the last and final prophet to carry His message. The main source of this religion is the *Qur’an*, a sacred text that is the divine word sent by God to the Prophet Muhammad, used for guidance and reference by Muslims in their daily lives around the world.

---

12. Ibid.
Qur’an (Holy Book)

The Qur’an is regarded by Muslims as the Word of God, Allah. The Qur’an is divided into 114 chapters (suras). These suras are divided into verses called ayat. The first sura (al fatiha, the opening) is said in Muslim prayers and frequently recited by Muslims. The Qur’an’s moral teachings are almost similar to the ones in the Christian Bible. Both holy books urge mankind to be generous and kind to the poor, help the weak, and take care of orphans. They call for justice and fairness and forbid hatred and hoarding. The Qur’an, however, contains detailed teachings for marriage, divorce, inheritance, fasting, and other life and religious duties.

Although Christianity and Islam are in many ways similar in their teachings, they unfold profound disparities in dogma and worship. In the Qur’an, Jesus is regarded as a prophet and the son of the Virgin Mary. Like Christians, Muslims believe that Jesus had a miraculous birth, spoke in the cradle and performed miracles, but they don’t believe in the Trinity. The Qur’an does not teach that crucifixion took place. Jesus is viewed in

the Qur’an as a prophet and a messenger of God, but not as the son of God. The latter point marks the core difference between the two religions.

Prophet Muhammad

In the early part of the seventh century, an Arab prophet appeared in the Arabic peninsula of what is now Saudi Arabia. Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca circa 570 C.E. and passed away in 632 C.E. It is believed by Muslims that he is the last messenger of God. The Prophet continued the message of the prophets who had preceded him, urging people to worship and obey the one God. He was faced with rejection and opposition by the Meccans to the point where he was forced to immigrate to another city, Medina, in 622 C.E.

The immigration or hijra marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. It is also considered a shifting point of the Prophet’s leadership. When the Prophet was in Mecca, he opposed the city’s tradition of paganism in his role as a messenger and believer of an eternal God. Once he immigrated to Medina, he became a ruler who gained the support of the locals and formed strong allies. After he gained enough support in Medina, he waged jihad, a holy fight against the Meccans, and conquered Mecca in the month of Ramadan in 630 C.E.

The career of the prophet Muhammad, whom all good Muslims seek to emulate, falls into two parts, the immigration to Medina and the subsequent declaration

15. Goldman, Believers, 63.
of the holy war in Mecca. These two parts inspired two traditions in Islam. One is the authoritarianism marked by the leadership of the Prophet: his ability to rule, gain followers of Islam, and form allies in Medina. The second tradition, jihad, is embraced by radicals and activists marked by the holy fight, against the Meccans who rejected Islam. Some Muslims demonstrate these two traditions in daily life by striving to overcome challenges to succeed and by holding a leadership role. For instance, parenthood may involve teaching or in being an imam (religious leader). Others, however, manifest these two traditions by violence in an attempt to destabilize and topple governments that embrace Western interests. 

Haddith (The Prophet’s Words and Deeds)

The Qur’an provides the main beliefs and practices for Islam; however, it does not provide teachings for everyday life issues. This has left Muslims uncertain about how to address specific life matters. To overcome this problem, Muslims looked into the practices of the Prophet since he helped interpret the verses of the Qur’an and derive laws from them. The Prophet’s words and deeds were documented by his companions and are called hadith, which means narrations in Arabic. The writings of hadith were forbidden in the early days of Islam in order not to confuse the narrations with the Qur’an. At the beginning, the narrations about the Prophet were shared and taught to people verbally. After the Qur’an was well established and copied, scholars of hadith started to evaluate and gather it into collections. This happened mostly during the eighth and ninth centuries. The ninth century witnessed the formation of vast compilations of hadith, numbering

19. Ibid., 11.
hundreds of thousands of items which, along with the Qur’an, would henceforth serve to
teach the laity of Muslims and become a second major source of shari’a (Islamic law).\textsuperscript{21}

It is worthy to note that some hadith are more reliable than others. When gathering the
collection, it was obvious that many of the narrations about the Prophet’s words and
deeds were questionable and not authentic. Therefore, a science for hadith criticism
appeared to study and trace the accuracy of the narration. In structure, any hadith
contains two parts: the first containing the names of the transmitters back to the Prophet’s
companion who claimed to hear it or see it. The second part contains what the Prophet
said or did.\textsuperscript{22} Criticisms of hadith discuss its authenticity. In this regard, the collection of
the hadith is divided into six collections ranging in the level of reliability, legitimacy, and
accuracy. Two of six collections are considered legitimate references for Muslims after
the Qur’an. Referring to the scholars who combined them, they are the collections of
al-Bukhari (d. 870) and Muslim (d. 875). These two are considered traditional Islamic
schools of thought in jurisprudence and are the primary sources of shari’a.

\textit{Shari’a (Islamic Law)}

\textit{Shari’a} (traditional Islamic law), is an Arabic word meaning “the right path.”

It is a body of law which originates from the Qur’an and the Prophet’s teachings. Thus,
Muslims consider it a sacred law and an important part of the religion. \textit{Shari’a} in the
Muslim world is similar to constitutional law and political philosophy in the West.\textsuperscript{23} It
discusses permissions and precipitations of life issues that weren’t discussed in the

\textsuperscript{21} Cambridge Encyclopedia, “The Abbasid Empire.”
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., “The hadith or Traditions of the Prophet.”
\textsuperscript{23} Lewis, Crisis of Islam, 8.
Qur’an and *hadith* but was reached by a consensus of opinion by Muslim scholars throughout the history of the Islamic community. Mostly, *shari’a* deals with common areas of human interactions in a society such as divorce, commercial matters, and public law. Following Muhammad’s death in 630 C.E., his companions who ruled after him continued the message of Islam. These rulers, called caliphs, conquered territories outside the Arabic peninsula to reach Syria and Persia. Through Islamic conquest, different and new communities entered Islam. With the expansion of the Islamic world, the creation of one body of Islamic law became necessary. During the Umayyad dynasty, beginning in 661 C.E., Islam reached India, northwest Africa, and Spain. As a result, new influences affected Islamic law. It became necessary for Islamic legal scholars to interpret *shari’a* in a way to adapt it to the expanding Muslim Empire. The Umayyad appointed Islamic judges, or *Qadis*, to decide cases involving Muslims. After the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty and a new one taking over, the Abbasid, in 750 C.E., Islamic law developed further. The Abbasid encouraged all Islamic scholars to debate *shari’a*, including teachers, legal, and religious scholars. These specialists were able to debate laws in order to reach a consensus regarding certain issues. The part of reaching a religious injunction toward a certain matter is called a *fatwa*. This transition to interpret Islamic law allowed *shari’a* to be able to adapt to changing circumstances and new issues. The *fatwa* proposes a flexibility to issue religious laws or opinions about


25. Strictly speaking, a “*fatwa*” is a legal opinion in Islam, delivered by someone who has had formal training in Islamic jurisprudence. I will use the term in a broader sense to describe religious pronouncements. In many cases, al-Qaeda leader lack formal religious training. But *fatwa* is their word of choice for their pronouncements.
questionable issues. Nowadays, *fatwa* is still provided by radical Islamists as well as religious scholars to justify certain acts.

On February 23, 1998, *Al Quds-Arabia*, an Arabic newspaper published in London, printed the full text of a “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders.” It was a statement issued by Osama bin Laden and leaders of jihad groups in Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to declare a holy war against the Jews and Crusaders who were regarded as infidels. The declaration began with an *aya* in the Qur’an which addresses war and then continues:

> Since God laid down the Arabian Peninsula, created its desert, and surrounded it with its seas, no calamity has ever befallen it like these Crusader hosts that have spread in it like locusts, crowding its soil, eating its fruits, and destroying its verdure; and this at a time when the nations contend against the Muslims like diners jostling around a bowl of food.

The declaration continues to set out three facts, which it says, are known to Muslims:

> First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.

> If some people have in the past argued about the fact of the occupation, all the people of the Peninsula have now acknowledged it. The best proof of this is the Americans’ continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using the Peninsula as a staging post, even though all its rulers are against their territories being used to that end, but they are helpless.

> Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded 1 million . . . despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the


27. Ibid.
protracted blockade imposed after the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation.”  
So here they come to annihilate what is left of this people and to humble their Muslim neighbors.

Third, if the Americans’ aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews’ petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there.

The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into petty states and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel’s survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the Peninsula.  

These crimes committed by the Americans, the letter says, are a clear declaration of war on God, his messenger and Muslims. In such situations, it is the consensus of the *ulema* (Muslim scholars) to declare that *jihad* becomes a personal duty of every Muslim. Their *fatwa* then proceeded:

To kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military, is an individual duty of every Muslim who is able, in any country where this is possible, until the Aqsa mosque (Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem and the Haram mosque in Mecca are freed from their grip, and until their armies, shattered and broken-winged, depart from all lands of Islam, incapable of threatening any Muslim. 

By issuing this *fatwa* by Osama bin Ladin and the Jihad group’s leaders and scholars, it calls for every Muslim to launch attacks against the armies of the Americans and against those who are allied with them.

**Jihad (Holy War)**

The word *jihad* comes from an Arabic root *j-h-d* which means strives or “effort towards moral or spiritual goals.” It is often used in classical texts with the

28. Ibid.  
29. Ibid.  
30. Ibid.  
closely related meaning of struggle, and hence also to fight.\textsuperscript{32} In Islam, \textit{jihad} has multiple meanings, ranging from the individual’s war with his own sinfulness, to waging literal war in defense of the name of \textit{Allah}, his Prophet Muhammad and Islam. The first usage is called the greater \textit{jihad}; the latter is, ironically, the lesser. \textit{Jihad} is cited in the Qur’an’s \textit{ayat} as “striving in the path of God” (e.g., IX, 24; LX, 1). \textit{Jihad} has also been interpreted variously by the \textit{ulema} and \textit{shari’a} to mean moral striving and also armed struggle.

When the Prophet was calling for Islam in Mecca, and struggling against the pagan oligarchy, the word \textit{jihad} has often carried a moral element. However, the term held a military connotation after he conquered Mecca. Therefore, scholars divided the obligation of \textit{jihad} into two ways. One falls into the “House of Islam” (Dar al-Islam), where the Muslim laws prevail and rule. The second falls into the “House of War” (Dar al-Harb), where the rest of the world is ruled by infidels. “Between the two domains, there could be truces but not real permanent peace.”\textsuperscript{33} It is the duty of each Muslim to defend the domain of Islam from any kind of aggression. That is why \textit{jihad} is regarded as a religious duty and could therefore be considered an act of worship. Some Islamic scholars interpreted \textit{jihad} as a “defensive measure against hostile forces.”\textsuperscript{34} In this regard, it has been taken as a way to extend Islam to other countries, particularly in what is called Arab conquest.

According to \textit{shari’a}, it is lawful to wage a war against four types of enemies: infidels, apostates, rebels and bandits. Although the four types are considered legitimate, only the first two count as \textit{jihad}. The apostate, in Muslim eyes, is far worse than the

\textsuperscript{32} Lewis, \textit{Crisis of Islam}, 30.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Cambridge Encyclopedia}, “The Content of \textit{Shari’a, Jihad}.”
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
unbeliever or infidel. The unbeliever has not seen the light, and there is always hope that he may eventually see it. The apostate, however, is one who has known the true faith, and abandoned it. For this offense, there is no human forgiveness.

The Prophet emphasized the importance of *jihad* in the Muslim worlds. The following are a few examples from *hadith*:

A day and a night of fighting on the frontier is better than a month of fasting and prayer.
Learn to shoot, for the space between the mark and the archer is one of the gardens of paradise.
Paradise is in the shadow of swords.
He who dies without having taken part in a campaign dies in a kind of unbelief.  

The Qur’an also addresses *jihad*. A good example can be found in IV, 95:

Those of the believers, who stay at home, other than the disabled, are not equal to those who strive in the path of God with their goods and their persons. God has placed those who struggle with their goods and their persons on a higher level than those who stay at home. God has promised reward to all who believe but He distinguishes those who fight, above those who stay at home, with a mighty reward.

Similar sentiments can be found in the Qur’an in VIII, 72 and IX, 41 and 88. Although the importance of *jihad* has been mentioned in both the Qur’an and *hadith*, there are also some rules of warfare for the conduct of holy war. They are as follows:

God has forbidden the killing of women and children.
Be advised to treat prisoners well.
Looting is no more lawful than carrion.

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35. These and other texts on Jihad will be found in the standard collections of *Hadith*, some of which are also available in English translation. The above are taken from Ala al-Din, Ali ibn Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi, Kanz al-Umma, vol. 2 (1312; repr. Hyderabad: 1894-1895), 252-86.
36. Qur’an, IV, 95.
Jihad is sometimes presented as the Muslim equivalent of the Crusades. Both were waged for the true faith against an infidel. However, there is a crucial difference between the two. While jihad was presented from the beginning of Islam, the Crusades appeared later in the development in Christian history. Christendom had been under attack since the seventh century and had lost most of its territories to Muslim rule. The concept of a crusade, therefore, carried a dimension of holy war, more of a meaning of a just war against the enemy. Jihad, on the other hand, appeared in the life of the Prophet and in the actions of his companions. Jihad has continued to present day. Mostly, it falls in the House of War. For al-Qaeda, jihad is a call to battle “Satan’s U.S. troops and their supporters allying with them.” This, the co-signers of the 1998 fatwa declare, is “in accordance with the words of almighty God: Fight the pagans . . . until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God.”

Islam originated as a reaffirmation of the earlier religions of Judaism and Christianity. The Qur’an and the hadith form of Islamic law, along with the interpretations of laws by religious scholars. Islamic law evolved through time and place, and thus it is probable it will evolve during the present and into the future. Jihad is understood as a way for “striving in the path of God” whether striving for one’s self for good causes, or for the Islamic communities great causes, which include waging holy war

38. Lewis, Crisis of Islam.
in the name of God. As was discussed above, Islam forbids the killing of women and children and stresses the rule of treating prisoners well.

This chapter presented the foundations of Islam. Most of the Islamic concepts presented above will be mentioned again throughout this work. In the next chapter, I will explore the literature regarding how the Islamic community developed from a small minority in Mecca and expanded to form an empire. This chapter will also include a discussion of the following two questions. First, what is the Caliph? Second, what was the role of jihad in the expansion of the Muslim community?
CHAPTER III

CALIPHS AND JIHAD IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ISLAMIC SOCIETY AND CULTURE

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims formed an *Umma* (Islamic community) which should be governed in accordance to the will of God by his Prophet.\(^41\) The death of the Prophet Muhammad raised many of concerns about who should succeed him as leader of the faith.\(^42\) The *Umma* looked to the successors and deputies who accompanied the Prophet most of his time. They found that Abu Bakr, who was descended from the same tribe as the Prophet, was best suited to rule the Islamic community.\(^43\) The *Umma* believed that it was necessary to appoint a ruler whose guidance and practices would maintain the Islamic community and prevent apostasy, the rejection of Islamic faith after a person was a follower of Islam.\(^44\) Abu Bakr indeed accompanied the Prophet most of the time and was his successor in temporal matters but not in religious ones.\(^45\) Following the death of the Prophet in 632 C.E., Abu Bakr was

\(^{42}\) Goldman, *Believers*.
\(^{45}\) *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, “The Early Arab Conquests and the First Civil War.”
held by the Sunni Muslims to have been the first Caliph or successor in Islam. On the other hand, there was a group of Muslims who believed that Ali ibn Abi Talib should succeed the Prophet. Ali was the son-in-law of the Prophet; he married the Prophet Muhammad’s daughter, Fatima, who had born Ali ibn Abi Talib two sons, Hasan and Husayn. The disagreement over who would rule the Islamic community after the death of the Prophet led to the first civil war and to the creation of two sects in Islam: the Sunnis and the Shi’a. While the Sunnis followed the companions of Prophet Muhammad, the Shi’a followed Ali.

The appointment of Abu Bakir as a Caliph created another problem as well. A number of important tribal leaders in the Arabic peninsula were not inclined to accept the leadership of a regular man. At the same time, apostasy started to plague the Islamic community that forced the Caliph to respond with force. This tradition of using force against apostasy is still carried out in many Islamic countries today.

To spread Islam outside the Arabic peninsula, Muslims waged jihad, an armed struggle against the surrounding countries. They continued to form armies, which, in turn, conquered Syria, Iraq, and northern Mesopotamia in rapid order. In 634 C.E., Umar ibn al Khattab took the caliphate after Abu Bakir. In 640 C.E., he led the Arabs to control the

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46. Ibid.
48. Cambridge Encyclopedia, “The early Arab conquests and the first civil war.”
50. Cambridge Encyclopedia, “The early Arab conquests and the first civil war.”
whole of the Fertile Crescent.\textsuperscript{51} The army reached the north to press into Armenia and into Azerbaijan. In the following year, the army conquered Egypt, which thereafter became a base for operations further west. In the east, most of the rest of what has been the Sasanian Empire had been overrun at the time of the third Sunni Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, who ruled from 644 C.E. until he was murdered in 656 C.E.\textsuperscript{52}

Ali ibn Abi Talib took the caliphate afterwards. He ruled from 656-61 C.E. Shi’a regard Ali as the most important figure after Prophet Muhammad. According to Shi’a beliefs, Prophet Muhammad suggested on different occasions during his lifetime that Ali should be the leader of Muslims after his death. He is regarded as the man free from sins and appointed by God to be the first imam.\textsuperscript{53} Interestingly, Ali tried to gain power on the basis of an Iraqi coalition, but Mu’awiya, a governor from the Umayyad dynasty in Syria, took over. That move ended the rule of Medina-Rightly-based Caliphs who are also regarded as Rightly-Guided Caliphs, or what in Arabic are called Al-Rashidun, and marked the start of the new Syrian-based Umayyad dynasty. Notably, Husayn, the son of Ali, established the Shi’a opposition.

The Umayyad, who ruled from 661 C.E. to 750 C.E., contributed significantly to the development of the Islamic community, particularly in architecture and arts. They were a Syrian-based dynasty who made Damascus the capital. The large Islamic population posed the need to find a new way of ruling that would ensure the control of

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Muhammad Tabatabai and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Shi’ite Islam (Selangor, Malaysia: Book Dist. Center, 1979).
many Arab tribes. Therefore, Mu’awiya, the first Umayyad Caliph, along with his Syrian army, ruled over the Arab nobility of different provinces with an iron fist, notably Iraq. After his death in 680 C.E., the Arab tribes of Iraq took back their role in the running of their provinces. This changed the Iraq ruling structure from a military system into a tribal one, which is apparent in Iraq nowadays.\textsuperscript{54}

Sixty years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam had not only been sustained, but also expanded by Arab conquest. Like the Arab regime changes, Islam too had evolved throughout these years. The differences appeared after the end of the Medina-Rightly-based Caliphs and the start of Umayyad era. The role of the Caliph while in Medina was limited to guiding the Islamic community over temporal issues. His duty remained around protecting Islam, maintaining the unity of the \textit{Umma}, and practicing \textit{shari’a}. On the other hand, the role of Umayyad Caliph went further in religious matters. He regarded himself as the religious guide of the Arab community and, thus, the deputy over Islam.\textsuperscript{55} Derived from the Qur’an, God used prophets in order to communicate His wishes to mankind. From the Umayyad perception, God had earlier used prophets. He now used Caliphs to communicate His wishes.\textsuperscript{56} One way to view the religious role of the Umayyad Caliph is explained by the inscriptions over the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, which the fifth Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik, ordered built. The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Cambridge Encyclopedia, “The Umayyad Caliphate.”
\item \textsuperscript{56} Hugh Kennedy, \textit{The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates} (London: Longman, 1986).
\end{itemize}
inscriptions tell us “…Muhammad is God’s messenger, may God bless him … he is God’s servant.

Abd al-Malik, prince of the believers, built this dome in the year seventy-two, may God accept [it] from him and be pleased with him.” Clearly, the inscriptions indicate that the Caliph is characterizing God’s deputies on earth. This distinction of roles was brought on by the Caliphs themselves.

Not all Muslims, however, accepted the Umayyad vision of the Caliph’s role. Much of Arab nobility within the many tribes found themselves with no power over their provinces and without any say in public affairs. In contrast, other Arabs accepted the Umayyad rule because non-Arabs began to convert to Islam in the conquered areas and, thus, the strictly Islamic society became increasingly apparent in the course of Umayyad rule.58

Notably, the role taken by the Umayyad marked the formative stage of Islamic art and architecture. Arabic became the official language and Islam the principle religion throughout the conquered lands.59 Islamic art and architecture are influenced and inspired by the classic civilizations, Roman and Greek. However, they developed new forms, techniques, and styles that distinguished their art from those of the old. A new expression and unique style marked Islamic art. The most distinguished building is the Dome of the

58. Cambridge Encyclopedia, “The Umayyad Caliphate.”
Rock in Jerusalem built in 691 C.E., the first major Umayyad architectural undertaking completed under the patronage of the Caliph Abd al-Malik (685–705). Later it was associated with Muhammad’s ascent to heaven. The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus is another example of the uniqueness of Islamic artistic style.

Between the years 744-50 C.E., the Umayyad family in Syria became divided by the system of military divisions on which its rule was based. Opponents of the Umayyad rule and their government became stronger, Arab tribes got back their political power, and the scattered divisions of military factions weakened the Umayyad rule. Finally, rebels from Khorasan opted for a new Caliph from the Prophet’s clan of Hashim, and what had just been called the “Arab Kingdom” gave way to the Abbasid Caliph.

After the Umayyad was overthrown by the Abbasid Caliphate, they fled to Al-Andalus in Spain where they established the Caliphate of Córdoba, which lasted until 1031 C.E. The initial construction of the Great Mosque of Córdoba under his patronage was the crowning achievement of this formative period of Hispano-Islamic art and architecture.

The Abbasid Caliphate was the third of the Islamic caliphates. They ruled in Iraq from 750 C.E. to 1258 C.E. and founded Baghdad in 762 C.E., making it the capital. After they were defeated by the Mongols in 1258 C.E., they continued to rule in Egypt from 1261 C.E. to 1517 C.E. During their rule, the Islamic empire flourished for over two hundred years. During this period, Islamic artists, engineers, scholars, poets and
scientists contributed enormously to literature, art and science. During the centuries known as the medieval ages in European history, the most advanced civilization in the world was growing under the united banner of Islam.\(^{65}\)

Islam was the leading civilization in the world, marked as such by its great and powerful kingdoms, its rich and varied industry and commerce, and its original and creative sciences and literature. Muslims preserved earlier knowledge from the Roman, Greek, Chinese, Indian, and Byzantine empires that otherwise would have been lost; instead, they were translated into Arabic and Persian. Not only did Muslims collect the ancient world’s knowledge, but they also added their own inventions and innovations to the existing work. Howard R. Turner writes, “Muslim artists and scientists, princes and laborers together made a unique culture that has directly and indirectly influenced societies on every continent.”\(^{66}\)

In order to preserve ancient knowledge and improve on it, the Abbasid established the “House of Wisdom” in the capital Baghdad where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather the entire world’s knowledge into Arabic.\(^{67}\) During this period, the Muslim world became the center of science and education. Baghdad was known as the world’s richest city and center for intellectual development of the time and had a population of over a million people, the largest in its

\(^{65}\) Lewis, Crisis of Islam, 29.
\(^{66}\) Howard R. Turner, Science in Medieval Islam (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), 270.
time. Scholars from all over the world came to Baghdad to learn and contribute to the body of knowledge. During the ninth century, Baghdad boasted over 800 doctors and great discoveries were made towards the understanding of anatomy and diseases. Not only was it famous for its libraries and houses of education, but also for its competitiveness in architecture and engineering. As the capital of the caliphate, Baghdad also became the cultural capital of the Islamic world. Its importance in the Islamic world remains as its traditional role as the epicenter of Islamic civilization.

In the end, the Abbasid Empire was overthrown by the Turkish army they created, the Mamluks. The power of the Mamluks steadily grew and took over Baghdad. The Abbasid Empire finally ended in 1258 C.E. when the Mongolians invaded Baghdad and left it in total destruction. The city was burned, including the libraries. The destruction of Baghdad marks the end of the Islamic Golden Age that is traditionally dated from the middle of the eighth century to the middle of the thirteenth century, clearly during the Abbasid Empire. The Mamluks continued to claim authority in religious matters until 1518 C.E. when the power was transformed to the Ottoman and the capital was relocated to Constantinople. The Ottoman Empire was established in 1299 C.E. and lasted until 1923 C.E. The title Caliph remained during the Ottoman Empire, however,

68. Ibid.
after it was defeated, much of its territory was partitioned between the British and French Empires. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, an Ottoman general, succeeded in liberating their Anatolian homeland, now called Turkey, through a secular nationalists movement. His views were more secular than religious. Thus, the first steps were taken toward adopting modern ways and abolishing the Caliph title in November 1922. However, it was not just a title being abolished, but a tradition within Islam that dated back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his successors since 632 C.E., a tradition that ended less than one hundred years ago.

In sum, *jihad* was carried out in order to spread Islam to neighboring countries. It explains how the Islamic society expanded from a small minority in Mecca to a world empire. Although it is regarded as an armed struggle, Islam addressed traditions and rules for warfare. On the other hand, the role of the Caliph has changed over time. It started as a successor for the Prophet Muhammad in temporal matters. However, at the time of the Umayyad Caliph, the role shifted to become God’s deputy on earth. That role was carried on to allow the Caliph to issue *fatwas* and debate *shari’a*, particularly in the Abbasid era. The Caliph’s role played a significant aspect in the development of the Islamic *Umma*. This explains why some Islamic leaders today strive to reclaim and revive it. The abolition of the title, however, is perceived as a loss of a key Islamic tradition. Although the title was eliminated in 1922, radical Islamists repeatedly cite it in their pursuit to become religious leaders in modern times.


CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF WESTERN INFLUENCE
IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In 1453 C.E., after the end of the Byzantine Empire, the expansion of the Ottoman Turks in Anatolia culminated with the occupation of Constantinople, which became the capital. In 1516-17 C.E., the Ottomans defeated the Mamluks and occupied Syria and Egypt.75 Apart from Iran, all of the countries in the Middle East containing Christian communities came under Ottoman rule. The Ottoman State was a Muslim state, but also one of mixed religions and nationalities.76 The vast areas that fell under the Ottoman Empire helped to expand its growth and also played an enormous role in its diversity. The collected knowledge from different regions contributed significantly to advance literature, art, and science. Under the Persian and Turkish dynasties, the empire of Islam was the richest, most powerful, creative, and enlightened region in the world.77 In addition to the ancient civilizations that lived throughout the ages and the immense knowledge of the Empire that impacted European art, science and philosophy, the Middle Eastern region is rich in natural resources. Before the discovery of oil in Persia in 1908 and Saudi Arabia in 1938, the region was known for its trade and commerce that vastly

75. Cambridge Encyclopedia, “The Ottoman Empire.”
76. Ibid.
77. Lewis, Crisis of Islam, 51.
exceeded Europe in both volume and value. In fact, cotton and silk were two of the many products for which the Empire was famous. From the eighteenth century onward, foreign merchants and Ottoman non-Muslims became dominant in the growth of international trade. With increasing affluence, the political significance of foreign traders grew especially in Syria. Muslim merchants, however, dominated internal trade between the interior and coastal cities. With many foreign merchants settling in the Empire, mostly European, their success drew the attention of many Europeans to invest and live in the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to trade, the Europeans brought education to the Ottoman Empire. Trade accompanied the arrival of teachers and missionaries who saw a chance to embed Christianity in the region. The development of education and science in the Empire created many exchange opportunities with Europe. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Empire wanted to compete effectively with European countries. This period marked a great renewal in the exchange of knowledge and literature between the Western and the Eastern worlds; especially as considerable volumes of European literature, science, and philosophy were translated into Arabic and Turkish. This process not only conveyed knowledge, but also instilled Western ideology in Islamic education. As a result, Arabs and Turks were encouraged to move to Europe and study foreign languages. Such developments had a profound effect on the intellectual capital of the Islamic community. Many countries, such as Egypt, welcomed American and European ideas into its educational system; American and British missionaries also came

to the Middle East to learn Arabic and build schools. In 1866, the American missionaries founded the Syrian Protestant College, which is now the American University of Beirut, and the American University of Cairo was built in 1919. The fast spread of Western educational theories in the Islamic countries raised concerns among Islamic fundamentalists and proved to have a significant impact in creating new Islamic groups.

The emergence of Christianity in the Empire and the arrival of Western ideologies challenged traditional Islamic ones and raised concerns among radical Muslims. In 1744, Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab, an Islamists leader, founded a movement to return to the earlier sacred Islam. Wahhabism, named after its founder, aims to return to the pure and authentic Islam of the Prophet by removing and, where necessary, destroying all the later accretions and distortion. Islamists movements started growing and becoming more powerful in order to challenge the changes that were facing the Islamic Empire. Wahhabism was directed against anyone whom it saw as betraying and degrading Islam from within. The movement was against those who attempted any kind of modernizing reform and against anyone who sought to corrupt or debase the true Islamic heritage of the Prophet and his companions. Wahhabism grew stronger while the Empire started to face challenges.

By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was known as the “sick man of Europe.” The money borrowed from European countries to pay for reforms, education

80. Ibid.
81. Lewis, Crisis of Islam, 120.
and modernization led to debt and bankruptcy and even stronger Western domination. Between the periods of 1828 and 1908, the Empire faced challenges in defending itself against foreign invasions, especially from the financial control of Europe.

Yet another challenge came to light. The Empire, which combined different countries with different languages, heritage, and ethnicities, underwent ethnic conflict. A leap of nationalism affected many countries of the Empire and, not surprisingly, a sense of ethnic nationalism grew. An inspiration from the French Revolution that resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy and created a democratic republic inspired many provinces and instilled the idea of independence. The desire for independence by many provinces weakened the solidarity of the Empire and played a significant role in its collapse in 1918.  

With all of the challenges that were facing the Empire, Wahhabism grew stronger. Even after the Empire collapsed, the movement survived and extended to other countries that faced colonialism. The movement was an inspiration for other Islamic leaders to form organizations and continue to fight for the authenticity of Islam.

As discussed above, trade and educational exchanges played an important role to bridge Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The vast exchange of knowledge and theories influenced Islamic society. It accompanied the arrival of missionaries and teachers to the region. The challenges that faced the Ottoman Empire led to the emergence of Wahhabism, which rejected the expansion of Christianity in Islamic lands. That was only the start. While the Empire collapsed, the movement survived.

In the following chapter, Wahhabism and other Islamic fundamentalist ideologies will be discussed in further details.
CHAPTER V

ISLAMIST IDEOLOGIES

Contemporary Islamist movements played significant roles in reestablishing specific conservative Islamist ideologies. In direct opposition to the existing political structure, they organized and spread their own religious and political agendas. This chapter discusses two important Islamists ideologies in the Arab world: Wahhabism and Qutbism. The study of these two ideologies is enlightening, exhausting, and yet leaves unanswered questions. In this chapter, the conditions behind the emergence of Wahhabism and Qutbism and the interpretations they espouse will be explained in relation to how the ideologies intend to bring Islam back to its original teachings.

Wahhabism

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, religious Islamist movements that spread through the Muslim world emerged with the intent of reviving “true” Islamic beliefs and practices. Wahhabism in Arabia is the best known example of early Islamic movements. It was founded in the eighteenth century and started as a reform movement to challenge the Western influence in the region. In 1744 C.E., Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, the founder, called for a return to authentic Islamic teachings exactly like it was during the early days of Islam. He believed that it was an obligation to spread the movement for a restoration of a purely monotheistic religion. Instead of calling the

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85. *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, “Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism.”
adherents of this movement Wahhabis, he preferred the term Salafis, roughly translated, “into the disciples of Muhammad.” This term is well suited for the purposes of Wahhabism. Different scholars address the followers of Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab by different names. The followers called themselves Muwahhidun, or those who profess the unity of God.\textsuperscript{86}

Ibn abd al Wahhab was raised in the Hanbali tradition by ulema, or Muslim religious scholars, residing in the central Arabian region called Najd.\textsuperscript{87} The Hanbali School is a legal Islamic school that accepts the Qur’an as the only source of jurisprudence.\textsuperscript{88} Unverifiable hadith are not even considered.\textsuperscript{89} Ibn abd al Wahhab’s ideology was influenced by the work of Ibn Taymiyya who was born in 1328 C.E. Ibn Taymiyya “opposed any modern development in theology and mysticism, and endeavored to reinstate the faith in the manner of the early Muslim Salafis.”\textsuperscript{90}

The most dangerous effect of the Wahhabism movement came from Abd al Wahhab’s teachings to determine whether one is a Muslim or infidel. He held that any worship of any God other than Allah constitutes polytheism (shirk) and therefore the perpetrator is an infidel.\textsuperscript{91} In this regard, Muslims who disagree with his definition of monotheism were not heretical Muslims but were considered misguided and deluded.\textsuperscript{92}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} Philby, Arabia of the Wahhabis.
\item \textsuperscript{87} David Dean Commins, Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), 21.
\item \textsuperscript{88} S. H. Amin, Middle East Legal Systems (Glasgow: Royston, 1985), 131.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Cambridge Encyclopedia, “Ibn Taymiyya.”
\item \textsuperscript{91} Commins, Islamic Reform, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Ibid., x.
\end{itemize}
The reactionary teachings of Wahhabism reject many practices that are not forbidden in mainstream Islam, such as visiting tombs or buildings with domes. They also forbid watching television, going to movies and taking pictures. Additionally, they consider the reading of the Qur’an in a loud voice before prayers a heresy. Above all, Wahhabism espoused stoning to death for the offenses of blasphemy and adultery. They raze tombs and thus arouse animosity of Muslims who believes these sites sacred.\textsuperscript{93} Anyone who rejects the Wahhabi creed is considered a \textit{kafir} (nonbeliever).\textsuperscript{94} Accusing Muslims of being nonbelievers justified their killings and looting their wealth. Most derisively, Wahhabi \textit{ulema} would issue \textit{fatwas}, or religious rulings, to demolish Shi’a mosques,\textsuperscript{95} which established even greater enmity and divisions between the two Muslims sects. Moreover, the Wahhabi atrocities against Shi’a Muslims in Iraq spread the fanaticism and sullied the Wahhabis’ reputation throughout much of the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{96}

In one incident, the leading Hanbali scholar of Damascus, Hasan al-Shatti (1790-1858), commented on essays that one of the Wahhabi \textit{ulema} sent him.\textsuperscript{97} In his notes, the leading scholar wrote that the practices of the Wahhabis are considered \textit{takfir}, which means contrary to the values of Islam. Shatti considered the decisions the Wahhabis had made to be outside the general recognized rule of Islamic law and their

\textsuperscript{94} Commins, \textit{Islamic Reform}, 23.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
interpretations of scripture demonstrated ignorance. He also added that whoever regards Muslims as nonbelievers is himself a nonbeliever.

The teachings of Ibn Abd al Wahhab began to spread quickly for two reasons. Initially it was by force of arms. It started in Najd, an area of Arabia, from which it moved to central and eastern Arabia. Wahhabis even raided the lands under Ottoman administration. Supporters of Wahhabism also realized the value of linking their movement to state power. In the 1930s, they created a close alliance with King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, founder of the First Saudi State. This joining marked the movement’s progression from purely religious reform, revealing Wahhabism’s eventual political aspirations.

King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the Wahhabis’ primary patron and supporter, wanted to make sure that Wahhabism would survive. First, not only did he support them financially but he also ceded control over all religious institutions to the Wahhabi ulema. Second, he dedicated the Saudi dynasty to supporting the Wahhabis, passing a rule in the constitution that his children would continue his patronage upon succession. These measures ensured the position and influence of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and the power of the House of Saud for generations to come since the two were now specifically intertwined.

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98. Ibid.
There were many factors that contributed to the revitalization of the Wahhabi movement. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Wahhabis realized the implications of Western education and exchange opportunities in the region. To overcome what they saw as a problem, the Wahhabi ulema decided to build universities and educational centers that focused on teaching Islamic religion and *shar’āi*, even taking into account ideology when hiring faculty. By doing so, they imposed their beliefs and practices on universities, thereby opposing the impact of Western teachings on Islamic youth and facilitating their own ideas instead.

The discovery of oil in the 1930s led to many new developments in the region. Not only did it provide financing to the Wahhabi movement, but it also created opportunities for them to expand to neighboring countries such as Egypt and Algeria. Saudi Arabia began industrializing in the 1950s, which created high income jobs. Many Saudi youth graduated from Wahhabi schools; but since the focus of Islamic and religious studies do not provide the technical skills for a modernizing economy, the Saudi youth were completely underprepared and untrained to work in the petroleum industry. To overcome this problem, the prince at the time had to contract with foreign firms for infrastructure development and oil extraction. In fact, Western interests, primarily British, Dutch and French oil companies, began operating in the Middle East in the early twentieth century. American interests began in the early 1920s, starting with a growing concern over the depletion of their own oil resources and the fear of a European monopoly of Middle Eastern oil.\(^\text{102}\) Standard Oil of California was the first American company to begin exploration. Oil brought many foreigners to Saudi Arabia for

\(^{102}\text{Lewis, Crisis of Islam, 126-27.}\)
investment purposes and the number of business men increased enormously in the Kingdom.

The outward flow of oil and the inward flow of money not only brought immense changes to Saudi Arabia, but also impacted Wahhabism. The Saudi job market welcomed technicians and geologists from other countries since the Saudi youth lacked those skills. This created frustration, anger and depression among the youth. As a result, more youth joined the Wahhabi movement to express their hatred toward Westerners. This provided the Wahhabis an easy way to gain support outside Saudi Arabia and expand their movement to Egypt and Algeria.

With the support of Ibn Saud’s family, Wahhabis have gained high positions in different religious institutions throughout Saudi Arabia. This established Wahhabism as the most powerful influence within Saudi Arabia, which houses the two holiest places of Islam, Mecca and Medina, with Mecca being the host of the annual pilgrimage which brings millions of Muslims from around the world. At the same time, teachers and preachers of the ulema used their personal resources to promote and spread their own versions of Islam.

The supporters of Wahhabism succeeded in establishing power in Saudi Arabia and creating a base of followers to spread their ideologies to people in other countries. They formed alliances to maintain their authority. Their version of Islam has had a considerable pervasive impact on Saudi Arabia and affected many social institutions, especially education and religion.
Another example of the social impact of Wahhabism is the marginalized role of women in Saudi Arabia, with some parts of the Kingdom enforcing even more severe laws on women. These developments contradict the original Islamic laws that encourage education for men and women and also stress more productive and egalitarian arrangement for women in society. This was typical during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. For instance, the Prophet’s wife, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, was a merchant and successful businesswoman. She became an idol for Muslim women to follow. She would feed and clothe the poor and assist them financially. Later, Wahhabi *ulema* issued *fatwas* to limit the roles of women in society, which has led many Muslims to question its legitimacy. Finally, Wahhabis succeeded in conveying their hostile ideology to other countries and henceforward inspired other groups to form their own movements.

**Qutbism**

Qutbism is the ideology of an Egyptian writer and educator named Sayyid Qutb. He was one of the most important ideologues of Muslim fundamentalism and an active member of the fundamentalist organization known as the Muslim Brotherhood.\(^{103}\) Qutb rejected the British occupation and their influence in the Islamic Egyptian society. For that, he began to criticize the West and hoped to purge any Western influences by calling for radical Islam, a concept that he pioneered.\(^{104}\) However, his concept of radical

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Islam, also called Salafi Islam, did not base its teachings on hatred of the West.\textsuperscript{105} In fact, it focused on the return to a simpler form of Islam that Qutb and his followers felt had been lost as a result of Muslim governments’ tendency toward fomenting nationalism and secularism, rather than Islam.\textsuperscript{106} According to Qutb, radical Islam functions to mobilize activists in support of Islamic resurgence, and, where necessary, provides justification for acts of violence to defend Islam in the name of God.\textsuperscript{107} His interpretations were the catalyst for the rise of radical Islamic groups who justified killing in the name of Islam. He further viewed \textit{jihad} as a permanent conflict that is an essential part of the phased process to remake Islamic society.\textsuperscript{108} His observation of Islamic society in Egypt led him to claim that the entire society became \textit{jahiliyya}, meaning that the mainstream of people who think they are Muslims were not actually Muslims. In other words, they were potentially guilty of apostasy, and this led him to mark these claimed Muslims as \textit{kafir} (unbelievers or infidels).\textsuperscript{109}

Born in a village in Egypt, Qutb studied in Cairo and worked in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. It was then that he was sent to the United States where he studied educational administration from November 1948 to August 1950. His time spent in Colorado was a crucial phase in the development of his fundamentalist ideas and

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\textsuperscript{105} Marc Sageman, \textit{Understanding Terror Networks} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 1-25.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} David Cook, \textit{Understanding Jihad} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 139.
\end{flushleft}
ideologies. Qutb’s ideas and writings provided an insight into the “American life” and their relations with Islamic countries. In this regard, his writings addressed the United States as an evil force that began with bloody wars against the Native Americans which, he claimed, were still underway in 1949. In 1948, the State of Israel was declared. In response, many Palestinian had to flee to surrounding countries, particularly Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. The loss of Palestine not only outraged Arab and Islamic countries but also increased antagonism toward the West. Arab nationalists, as well as Islamic fundamentalists, started to organize armies to fight the Jews in the Holy Land. Sayyid Qutb was aware of American support of Israel. He observed that these two allies are one “Satan” and personified the onslaught against Islam and Islamic countries.

In his writings, Qutb described America as an extreme example of Western materialism. He wrote that everything in America, even religion, is measured in material terms. One of his crucial observations of America included describing its religious life. Qutb wrote that the increasing number of churches must not be misunderstood as an expression of religious life but rather as a business to attract members. When describing how churches operate, he explained that they compete for “clients” and for publicity the same way the entertainment industry acts to gain customers. Success of the churches is measured by size and number and that is all that matters. He described an example of how some American churches created “halls,” with the blessing of religious leaders that

held dances where people of both sexes could meet, mix and touch.\textsuperscript{111} Lights are even dimmed in order to promote intimacy.\textsuperscript{112}

Qutb noted, “The dance-hall becomes a whirl of heels and thighs, arms enfold hips, lips and breasts meet, and the air is full of lust.”\textsuperscript{113} He also quoted the Kinsey Reports on sexual behavior to document his description of universal American debauchery.\textsuperscript{114} These thoughts that portrayed “American life” explain why Islamic radical groups regard dance halls, night clubs and sometimes weddings as legitimate targets.

Qutb’s ideas were spread through by his writings. His famous book, \textit{Ma’alim fi al-Tariq (Signposts on the Way or Milestones)} was and still is a strong influence on \textit{jihadi} extremists such as Osama bin Laden. According to observers, \textit{jihadi} extremists “cite Sayyid Qutb repeatedly and consider themselves his intellectual descendants.”\textsuperscript{115} Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abdullah Azzam, and Osama bin Laden are only few examples of Qutbism advocates. Qutb’s writings justify violence and terrorism against non-Muslims and apostates in an effort to bring about the reign of God.\textsuperscript{116} Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the head of al-Qaeda in Iraq until 2006 agreed that \textit{jihad} by force is the greatest religious obligation for Muslims after faith itself. Followers of al-Zarqawi who were responsible for the Amman bombings in 2005 had similar views and ideas.

\textsuperscript{111} Lewis, \textit{Crisis of Islam}, 78.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
In sum, Wahhabism and Qutbism have been primary forces in shifting the image of Islam from peaceful to violent and leading the way for other violent groups to multiply and flourish. The interpretations they adopted in order to bring Islam back to what they understood as its original teachings led to specific and extreme changes in the very Islamic teachings and concepts that they were trying to maintain.

In the following chapters, I present reactionary cases for these movements that not only affected Islam but the entire world. They are al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood. But before that, it is essential to understand what terrorism means. The next chapter will define different kinds of terrorist acts.
CHAPTER VI

DEFINING TERRORISM

Contemporary usage of the terms “terrorism” and “religious terrorism” are marked by relative semantic anarchy. In this chapter, I will try to bring some clarity to this discursive confusion by asking the following questions: How has terrorism developed? How do we draw distinctions between religious terrorism and a more generalized terrorism in which religion is one of several roots? And, most importantly, what are the motives and causes of terrorism?

History of Terrorism

“Terror” was first used to describe a political practice during the French Revolution. The “regime de la terreur”117 instituted by the Committee for Public Safety around the revolutionary leader, Maximilien Robespierre, sought to suppress and intimidate counter revolutionaries.118 It was, in short, an “instrument of governance”119 of the revolutionary state and, ironically, had distinctly positive connotations promising the establishment of order amidst anarchy.120

118. Ibid., 15-16.
120. Ibid., 15-17.
By the mid-19th century, however, in context of revolts against the *ancien régimes*, the term began to acquire “many of its familiar revolutionary, anti-state connotations of today.”¹²¹ The Italian republican extremist revolutionist, Carlo Pisacane, was one of the first to theorize its use. Terrorism was to serve as “propaganda by deed,”¹²² generate attention for the terrorist groups, and “to inform, educate and ultimately rally the masses behind the revolution.”¹²³ This didactic purpose dictated the choice of symbolic and high impact targets.¹²⁴

In late-nineteenth century, terrorism had many familiar looking features: the anarchists, in some ways the truest heirs to Pisacane, engaged in a flurry of disparate attacks by small, close-knit and hence hard-to-penetrate cells, inspired by a shared ideological canon but with little coordination.¹²⁵ Irish nationalists operating from America pioneered some of the practices that would become “standard terrorist operating procedures,” such as off-shore bases, systematic attention to fundraising so as to sustain long-term campaigns, and attacks on transportation hubs, especially subway systems with time-delayed devices.¹²⁶ In the Balkans, the campaigns of Bosnian radical groups against Austria-Hungary, supported by elements within the Serbian state, offered one of the first examples of state-supported terrorism – including familiar characteristics like incomplete control over proxies and very unclear relations between terrorist groups, covert but

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¹²² Ibid.
¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Ibid., 17-18.
¹²⁵ Ibid., 19-20.
¹²⁶ Ibid., 20-22.
official state policies, and independent support by sympathetic elements within the state and army. According to Hoffman:

> It is fundamentally and inherently political. It is also ineluctably about power: the pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change. Terrorism is thus violence—or, equally important, the threat of violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim . . . the other fundamental characteristic of terrorism: that it is a planned, calculated and indeed systematic act. 

Hoffman explains that terrorism is designed to create power where there is no one or to consolidate power where there is very little.” Nonetheless, the phenomena covered by this term have shifted over time. By the 1930s, the meaning of the term “terrorism” had changed yet again, and had moved back to something closer to its original meaning, referring to the mass repression of citizens by their own governments, which would include examples such as in Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union.

In the decades post-WW II, “terrorism” came once again to connote mainly revolutionary, non-state violence, mostly in the context of revolutionary/nationalist anti-colonial struggles for national liberation. For instance, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) initially started as an armed nationalist organization to liberate Palestine. Its stated goal was the “liberation of Palestine” through armed struggle. However, it was responsible for many acts of terrorism against Israel in the 1970s. As a

127. Ibid.
129. Ibid., 44.
result, it was considered by the United States and Israel to be a terrorist organization until the Madrid Conference in 1991. After the Declaration of Principle in 1993, the PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist and rejected violence and terrorism. In response, Israel officially recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. In 2004, the United States, however, redeclared the PLO as a terrorist organization because of its violence activism.

With the fading of the era of post-colonial national liberation, terrorism further evolved. Conventional terrorist groups of the Cold War period were relatively clearly defined organizations; for example, the Red Army Front (RAF) in Germany, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Islamic Resistance Movement, also known as Hamas.

From the 1990s on, more amorphous, network-based movements developed that shared a common ideology but operated in disparate environments, fighting local struggles against local opponents that were, however, understood as facets of much larger shared narratives of global or regional resistance. These movements, examples of which most prominently include al-Qaeda, spawned the jihadist wave, but also radical


environmentalists, usually shared little mutual coordination and less hierarchy, like sub-
groups of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Today, there seems to be greater unanimity between states on the question of
“What is terrorism?” In the wider international public sphere, however, the debate
continues unresolved. States have killed far more people than terrorist groups have,
though states generally subscribe to a set of rules and norms governing warfare,
enshrined in the Geneva and Hague conventions. When breaches occur, they are
generally prosecuted as war crimes. A recent example would be how the state of Libya
reacted toward the uprising that occurred early in the year of 2011.136 In the international
arena of terrorism, we also hear the term “religious terrorism.” So what marks it as
religious? And how it is different from any other kind of terrorism?

Religious Terrorism

Religious terrorists constitute a different type of threat. The spread of religious
terrorism is a product of the 1990s, and, according to Hoffman, is inherently more violent
than other forms of terrorism.137 More death may be found in the “radically different
values systems, mechanisms of legitimization and justification, concepts of morality, and
world-view embraced by the religious terrorist, compared with his secular
counterparts.”138 Secondly, the audience that religious terrorism is directed toward is
different from that of other forms of terrorism. Whereas political terrorists may seek the

(accessed April 19, 2011).
138. Ibid., 94.
audience of current and potential sympathizers, “religious terrorists are, at once, activists and constituents engaged in what they regard as total war.”\(^{139}\) In his conclusion, Hoffman warns that because of the distinct nature of religious terrorism, defending against it and fighting the spread of it is difficult.

In a *New Your Times* article, Bermen defines religious terrorism as an ideological war and critiques the “father” of *Salfi* Islam, Sayyid Qutb.\(^{140}\) Bermen argues that the successful strategy in the “war on terror” is not through military invasions and government overthrows – when the United States asserts its power in this way, it only adds fuel to the fire. The only way to fight a war that is essentially a war of ideas – fundamentalist Islam and Western secularism – is with ideas.\(^{141}\)

What marks religious terrorism, in general, is the choice of targets.\(^{142}\) Often times the symbolic target and/or date of a religious terrorism attack overshadow the strategic importance of the attack. Religious terrorists target a specific building or place not because of the magnitude of destruction that may take place, but to highlight the “vulnerability of government power.”\(^{143}\) For example, the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001, took thousands of lives and destroyed a symbol of American economic power, but, in reality, businesses were up and running again in days, and the American economy did not crumble after the attacks.

\(^{139}\) Ibid., 95.
\(^{140}\) Berman. “Philosophy of Islamic Terrorism.”
\(^{141}\) Ibid.
\(^{143}\) Ibid., 135.
Another important feature of religious terrorism is “cosmic-war.” According to Juergensmeyer, the idea of a “cosmic war” – a struggle in which the reasoning, end point, and final result extend beyond individual human experience – is also a theme for religious terrorism. A cosmic war involves the struggle between good and evil, religion and secularism, and often the goals of religious terrorists are not measurable. Religious terrorism also exploits the religious ideas of sacrifice and martyrdom in order to justify their actions. Religious terrorists often characterize themselves as “warriors” with goals that are intangible and unreachable.

What Causes Terrorism?

How are we to understand the processes by which some men and women are sufficiently radicalized to join extremist movements? Is poverty a factor at all, or is it all about politics? If not poverty, what about other forms of less material social or political deprivation, or even cultural and religious factors?

Many factors have been suggested to explain why people, whether men or women, bomb themselves and others. One central aspect is economics. Economics plays a great role in the selection of targets for terrorism. In a study of the origins and targets of terrorism, a correlation was found between country of origin, country of target, and

144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid., 119-243.
different economic and political factors in those countries. The results show that those perpetrators of international terrorism tend to find targets from foreign countries that are more local, such as embassies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The study also concludes that both terrorism and suicide attacks are mainly the product of organizational strategy rather than ideas and plans made by individuals. Another important finding includes the idea that terrorists are more likely to come from low-income countries with low GDP growth and countries with more political instability. Conversely, targeted individuals tend to live in wealthier, more democratic countries than the average person, but attacks tend to be in countries more similar to the perpetrators’ own. After all, the study suggests, “the genesis of terrorism involves political factors, while the targets are more economic in nature.”

Religion is a significant factor in terrorism. A religious motive like the notion of jihad and its rewards in the afterlife are from an Islamist’s perspective, a main factor that drives youth to terrorism. From an Islamist’s point of view, the interpretation of the term “infidel” plays another role. Wahhabism, for instance, defines the infidel as someone who rejects their creed. Thus, it provides a reason to attack any Muslim who is not following the Wahhabi teachings.

148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY

ISLAMIC TERRORISM

Religious movements, like Wahhabism and Qutbism, have succeeded in distorting Islamic teachings and have created new interpretations of what differentiates a Muslim from an infidel. Their influence has had a considerable impact on Islamic teachings and ideologies. Many Islamist groups and individuals took up Wahhabi ideology as a force for implementing the changes they have espoused for Islamic society. In fact, the origin of modern Islamist fundamentalist movements and organizations emerged in the late nineteen and early twentieth century.153 The “Islamist movement,” broadly speaking, includes all reactionary reformists seeking to change their societies through specific and severe interpretations of Islam. Although these Islamist movements differ in their goals, methods, leadership and agendas, they have one character in common: “Reshaping Islam into a religious power capable of confronting the West.”154 This chapter discusses the ideologies, successes, and impacts of key Islamists and the movements they established, with particular attention paid to al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood. This chapter examines their emergence, goals, and impacts on terrorism.

Muslim Brotherhood

Contemporary Islamic groups in the Arab world owe much to the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun), which was founded in Egypt in 1927 by a twenty-two-years-old schoolteacher named Hasan al-Banna. Their motto is, “Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. Qur’an is our law. Jihad is our way; and death for the sake of God is the highest of our aspirations.” Later groups that emerged in the twentieth century were inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, using Islam as a tool to implement their agendas.

Like Muhammad abd al-Wahhab, Banna adopted the Hanbali School’s view of Islam. His father, Shikh Ahmad al-Banna, was a pious imam and a teacher of Hanbali jurisprudence. At a young age, Banna showed an interest in politics and also participated in opposition against mandatory British rule. At the age of thirteen, Banna participated in a demonstration during the revolution of 1919. When he graduated from college, he was appointed a teacher in a city called Ismailia on the west bank of the Suez Canal, which was a residence for many British and French involved in the Canal. During that time, he was exposed to the trends of secularization brought by the British and French. He grew concerned about the abandonment of Islamic values by youth. The school teacher started going to coffee shops and restaurants to preach about Islam. He became a religious preacher at different mosques in Ismailia to teach Qur’an and the teachings of

Prophet Muhammad. Banna was known for his intellectualism, good choice of words, great speaking ability, and a charismatic persona that made the public respond positively to his calls. Banna received much support from Egyptians. One day, his close companions came to his house, expressing a willingness to protect Egypt against Western involvement. They felt that a Western presence was not only consuming the resources of the country, but also negatively influencing the minds of Egyptian youth. Founded by Banna in 1928, the original aims of the Muslim Brotherhood were moral and not political. It sought to reform society by purging any Western influences. The founder, al-Banna, was assassinated in 1949 because of his anti-government views.\textsuperscript{158}

The Muslim Brotherhood focused on three distinguished features. First, the Brotherhood went beyond preaching in schools and mosques to form an activist organization that recruited members from many Arabic and Islamic countries. By the beginning of the 1950s, according to an early study, the Brotherhood had 1,500 branches throughout Egypt, with over a million active members.\textsuperscript{159} The movement spread to Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, and Sudan, and even before the assassination of its founder, Hasan al-Banna in 1949, the Brotherhood had established contacts with individuals in Morocco.\textsuperscript{160} The second feature of the Muslim Brotherhood was “its notion of Islam as comprehensive to all aspects of human endeavor.”\textsuperscript{161} Al Banna writes, “Islam is a doctrine and worship, nationhood and citizenship, religion and state, spirituality and

\textsuperscript{159} Muhammad Shawqi Zaki, Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun wal Mujtama al-Masri (Cairo, The Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian Society, 1989).
\textsuperscript{160} Ghadibian, Democratization and the Islamist Challenge, 60.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
action, Qur’an and sword.”162 The organization believes that Islam is manifested in all life issues, including missionary work, social life, and economics. The third feature was their political mission.163 They emphasized two main goals. The first is that all Islamic lands must be free from foreign domination, and, second, that a free Islamic state will arise in this liberated homeland, administered according to the precepts of Islam, applying its social regulations, proclaiming its principles and mission to all mankind. 164

The Muslim Brotherhood soon developed ideas of social and political reform.165 In 1948, after the declaration of the state of Israel, they formed a voluntary militia to fight against the Zionist one.166 Some of its members took to terrorism and their actions included the murder of Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha in 1948.167 After the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952, in which the Brotherhood played a significant role, they came into increasing conflict with the secular nationalism adopted by the second president, Jamal Abd al-Nasir (Nasser). The Brotherhood began emphasizing the need to realize the extent of the Islamic Umma, derived from their motto, and reinvigorate the idea of pan-Islam. They criticized the concept of one-state nationalism, despite the reality of accepting it. In 1954, after an attempt to assassinate Nasser by a former Brotherhood member, most members were imprisoned, exiled or

163. Ghadibian, Democratization and the Islamist Challenge, 60.
164. Hasan al-Banna, Six Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (Kuwait: International Islamic Federation of Student Organization, 2009), 63.
165. Ghadibian, Democratization and the Islamist Challenge, 61.
166. Ibid.
executed. The repression of the Brotherhood led many people into exile abroad, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Sudan, Syria and Iraq. After being forcibly moved to new countries, they established new roles for themselves particularly in publications.

The Muslim Brotherhood survived in exile, after their political leaders ceded power in Egypt. However, there was still some conflict between them and other nationalist movements, particularly in Syria and Iraq. They competed with the Ba’th Party, which seized power in 1963. It was a secular political party, opposed to Western imperialism and called for the unity of one united Arab state. Its motto was “Unity, Liberty, and Socialism.” On one hand, the local interests of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt proved stronger than the unity concept, but, on the other hand, the conflict between nationalists and Islamists ended the possibility of solidarity. Although they professed a common goal, that is the resistance to Israel and the restoration of Palestine, they could not work together. Egypt, Jordan and Syria were defeated in the Six Day war against Israel, proving their inability to unite. The year 1967 is significant in that it refocused attention on the debate over Islam as a source of identity and ideology, dismissing most ideas of secularism and nationalism that only were perceived as disillusionment.

Another crucial event led to the recognition and support of the Muslim Brotherhood among Arab youth. It was the economic crisis of the early 1980s. A sharp decline in oil prices occurred and governments did not know how to respond to the

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frustrated and unemployed youth who made up over sixty percent of the population in most Arab countries. It is in the context of economic hardships, social separation, political aggression, and the erosion of the legitimacy of Arab regimes that Islamic groups have made a strong comeback.

The Muslim Brotherhood uses the symbol of *jihad* in combining Muslim nations and fighting “imported Western ideologies” and colonialism. They believe that *jihad* must be an armed physical struggle against injustice and disbelief. Many groups diverged from them to continue the fight against Westerners in other Arab and Islamic countries. The Muslim Brotherhood established branches in most of the Arab world. In Palestine, the Brotherhood fought alongside the Arab armies during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. After the influx of Palestinian refugees to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, more Palestinians youth were encouraged to join the group. After the 1967 war, also called the Six Days War, fought by Israel and the neighboring countries of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the Egyptian regime controlled Gaza, the Brotherhood turned against Egyptian authority. In 1987, Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, was founded by the Muslim Brotherhood. It was formed out of affiliated charities and social institutions that had gained strong support from the local Palestinians. It was during the first *Intifada* (the Palestine Uprising), which took place from 1987 to 1993, that Hamas transformed into a

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173. Ibid.
174. Muslim Brotherhood’s Official English Website.
militant Palestinian group that changed the position of the Muslim Brotherhood fighting the Israeli occupation.\textsuperscript{176}

The Muslim Brotherhood’s members remained active in exile. They have founded their own political parties in many Arab countries not only to keep the organization strong, but also to ensure passing their own political agenda. The best way to achieve this was to win parliament and legislation elections. All the branches and affiliated institutions in Arab countries by the Muslim Brotherhood developed and became well organized interest groups. They even foster their influence by obtaining seats in parliamentary elections in Arab countries.\textsuperscript{177}

The increasing violence, however, in the last two decades, as well as having Islamic groups claiming responsibility, has resulted in a decline for Islamic support. In order to know how much Islamist parties were favored in elections, I examined their performance in elections between the years 2000 to 2010.

As Table 1 shows, Islamists became less favored in politics by people in the last ten years. For instance, in 2007, the Islamic Renaissance Movement in Algeria did not win any seats in the elections. As one sees, they ranked at number seven. In other countries, like Egypt and Jordan, one notices that the government was trying to limit their role in politics.


\textsuperscript{177} Ghadibian, \textit{Democratization and the Islamist Challenge}, 80-81.
Table 1. Islamist Groups’ Performance in Elections, 2000-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Election Type</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Islamic Participants</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Islamic Renaissance Movement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Islamic Renaissance Movement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Independents of Muslim Brotherhood</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood</td>
<td>Arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|         |               | 2010 | Islamic Action Front | Boycott 
| Kuwait  | Parliament    | 2006 | Islamic Bloc (Sunni) | 1 |
|         |               | 2009 | Sunni Islamists | 2 |
| Sudan   | Parliament    | 2000 | National Congress Party | 1 |
| Yemen   | Legislative   | 2003 | Political Party | 1 |


The influence of the Brotherhood has reached Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iran, Algeria, Somalia, Tunisia, and Morocco. They have even established organizations in the
United Kingdom and the United States. More members have joined and they have become a strong opposition to their governments. Activists involved with the Muslim Brotherhood have established their own organizations in the United States. They include the Muslim Students Association (MSA) which started in 1963, the North American Islamic Trust in 1971, the Islamic Society in North America in 1981, the American Muslim Council in 1990, the Muslim American Society in 1992, and the International Institute of Islamic Thought in the 1980s. According to the *Washington Post*, the MSA’s members represent all schools of Islam and political leanings; some are moderate, while others express anti-American views and resistance against Israel.

In summary, The Muslim Brotherhood is perceived as a violent group. Their history of opposition to nationalist movements and their role in assassination attempts is proof of their violence. They have succeeded in using Islam as a tool to gain the support of thousands of members. Their belief that the only way to restore the authentic Islamic community is by fighting the West has led to the formation of new groups and supporters all over the globe.

The Rise of al-Qaeda and Binladenism

The twentieth century has been the most violent century in the history of humanity. Countries at war faced the rise of violent non-state actors and warlords. These

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180. Ibid.
181. Ibid.
actors respond with violence and terrorism to maintain power against the state.\textsuperscript{182} Al-Qaeda, like any other violent non-state actor, has attacked civilians and military personnel in many Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Notably, they were responsible for the September 11 attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. in 2001. After the attack, the United States responded by launching the “War on Terror.” This international military campaign led by the U.S. and the United Kingdom, supported by NATO and other countries, was waged originally to eliminate al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.\textsuperscript{183}

What is al-Qaeda? Who are the warlords behind it and what motivates them? What is al-Qaeda ideology? What are the conditions allowed it to arise? These are questions that need to be examined in order to get a better understanding of the overall issue of Islamic terrorism. The following section will address that.

Warlords and violent non-state actors usually provide an alternative to state administration, which includes security and material goods for their followers.\textsuperscript{184} The definitions of warlords vary among scholars. One definition states that warlords use force to maintain their region and create their own tradition.\textsuperscript{185} According to Chan, these kinds of warlords gain support from people by providing three normative values: identities and

\textsuperscript{185}Ibid.
beliefs, need for food and dignity, and traditions that have been ignored by society. They use the term warlords can describe militias and gangsters, leaders of independence movements, and leaders of armed groups. They emerge from fractured societies and failed states. Generally, failed states are states that cannot secure legitimacy and provide security to their citizens. Other scholars explain that warlords are largely leaders who lead by confidence and charisma that lends itself to a love of media attention. One example of this is the Afghani Taliban of 1994, who demonstrated personal ambition, displayed high confidence, and utilized foreign aid. Contrary to the previous definitions of warlords, who are seen as ethnic and extensive regional followers, another scholar, Skaperdas, sees warlords as mostly economic actors who are motivated by personal greed. There are two types of personal greed. One is materialistic greed where an individual maintains their own region in an attempt to make a profit. Greed can also be political, where individuals try to implement their own ideology and forward their political agenda. The question that naturally arises is whether or not al-Qaeda is led by a warlord.

In my opinion, Osama bin Laden is a warlord who is not motivated by economic profits or power, but by his religious beliefs. Although he was born into a

186. Ibid.
188. Ibid.
190. Ibid.
192. Ibid.
wealthy family, he chose to diverge from them and join *jihad* in Afghanistan. His ideology, “Binladenism,” aims to free Islamic countries from European and American influences. As noted in Chapter 2, the declaration sent by bin Laden and the *Jihadist* groups claims that the American aim behind the occupation of Islamic lands is religious and economic.\(^{193}\) Americans invade Islamic countries, humiliate, and continue their aggression against Muslims.\(^{194}\) Moreover, bin-Laden’s ideology includes the idea that the Jewish-Christian alliance seeks to destroy Islam.\(^{195}\)

I see Binladenism as a combination of Wahhabism and Qutbism. He is opposed to any Western influence and urbanization, and, at the same time, seeks to restore *shari’a* to Islamic society as it was during the time of the Prophet.

Now that I have established a baseline understanding of the ideology of al-Qaeda, I will look at the conditions that have allowed it to rise and expand.

In 1978, The Afghani government, along with Soviet Union forces, began extensive land and social reforms in Afghanistan.\(^{196}\) The changes were perceived bitterly by devout Muslims.\(^{197}\) It led to the creation of militias and warlords who were opposed to the government. All of these non-state actors were Muslim in their religious orientation and referred to themselves *Mujahideen*. The following year, in 1979, The Soviet Union

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194. Ibid.
197. Ibid.
invaded Afghanistan to support the Afghani government in its conflict with the
Mujahideen.\textsuperscript{198} Although the Afghan War lasted until 1992, Soviet Union forces only
remained in Afghanistan until 1989.\textsuperscript{199}

During the Afghan War, the United States secretly provided the Mujahideen
with weapons.\textsuperscript{200} The military support for the Mujahideen not only resulted in the Soviet
Union withdrawal, but also played a vital role in the growth and development of Islamist
militias and military independent groups.\textsuperscript{201} The Afghan War brought many Muslims
from all over the world to Afghanistan. The war was regarded as an obligation for jihad
against Russian infidels and the corrupted Islamic government. Osama bin Laden, like
many Muslims, came to Afghanistan to defend Islam and fight the infidels. Bin Laden
studied economics and business administration in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he was
taught by Wahhabi scholars.\textsuperscript{202} It was during this time that he was affected and
influenced by Wahhabism teachings and Qutbism.\textsuperscript{203} He adopted the Wahhabism beliefs
and became a devout Salafi.\textsuperscript{204} Bin Laden believes that the restoration of shari’a and
moving back toward earlier, more conservative forms of Islam is the only way to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{199} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{201} Marc Sageman, “The Origins of Jihad,” and “The Evolution of Jihad,” In
\item \textsuperscript{202} Bin Laden, Osama. \textit{Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama
Bin Laden}. Edited and translated by Bruce B. Lawrence and James Howarth. London:
Verso, 2005.xii.
\item \textsuperscript{203} Global Security, “Osama bin Laden.” http://www.globalsecurity.org/
\item \textsuperscript{204} Lisa Beyer, “The Most Wanted Man In The World,” \textit{Time Magazine},
(accessed April 14, 2011).
\end{itemize}
maintain an Islamic state, and that ideologies such as Arabism, nationalism, communism, and democracy must be opposed.\(^{205}\)

In 1984, Abdullah Azzam, the ideological founder of al-Qaeda and colleague of bin Laden, founded *Maktab al-Khadamat*, or the Services Office, which transported money and volunteers to the *Mujahideen* in Afghanistan.\(^{206}\) This office was considered the pre-foundation of al-Qaeda.\(^{207}\) Their goal was to defeat communism and restore *shari‘a* to create an Islamic State.

During the Afghan War, the *Mujahideen* were fragmented into small militias and independent groups. Although their military efforts were initially uncoordinated, they gradually improved by the end of the war.\(^{208}\) Once the withdrawal of the Soviet Union was secured, bin Laden and Azzam transformed the Office Services into a military base for al-Qaeda, in order to continue *jihad*.\(^{209}\) In 1989, Azzam was killed in a car bombing, which left bin Laden as the sole leader of the military base and its ideology.\(^{210}\)

Clearly, al-Qaeda was founded to continue *jihad* against the corrupted Afghani government and the Russian infidels. It was also, however, an outcome of many combined factors in Afghanistan which included poverty, ethnic fractioning, and weak


\(^{206}\) Global Security.

\(^{207}\) Ibid.


\(^{209}\) Global Security.

\(^{210}\) Ibid.
institutions that resulted because of the war.\textsuperscript{211} Al-Qaeda is motivated by religious ideology, their mission is to defeat the West and stop their interventions in Islamic countries. Al-Qaeda feels this can be achieved by using \textit{jihad} as a method to restore and defend Islam. While Al-Qaeda claims to defend Islam and Muslims, data presented in the following section will show otherwise.

Al Qaeda’s Terrorism against Muslims

One of the most important aspects of this chapter is that the research methodology that was employed to generate the data depended exclusively on data collected primarily from the United States and the United Kingdom. This project draws on the Arabic language as a primary source for material. The use of Arabic material will hopefully add veracity to analytical conclusions about fundamental Islamists targeting victims, whether Westerners or Muslim.

The aim of this study is to determine the number of fatalities resulting from attacks by al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups in twelve countries (Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Gaza Strip, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen) from 2005 to 2008.

The main data used for this research was generated from Arabic newspapers, articles and reports, and from the Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS).

The WITS database is an open source dataset of terrorism incidents maintained by the National Counterterrorism Center.

In order to find out how many attacks were carried out by al-Qaeda and their affiliated groups in these twelve countries, I examined their terrorism acts from 2005 to 2008. Table 2 data from WITS indicates there were 2,232 such fatalities from 264 attacks during this period.

Table 2. Annual fatalities caused by al-Qaeda and affiliated groups, 2005-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Westerners</th>
<th>Non-Westerners</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>1,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>2,232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

212. The Worldwide Incident Tracking System, http://wits.nctc.gov/ (March 2, 2011) The WITS system does not directly code the perpetrator as a data field, but it is included in the event description. Islamists groups and their names were taken from the description.

The results show that most of the victims were Non-Westerners. This proves that al-Qaeda is not the Muslims advocate as they claim. In 2005, there were twenty-four individuals identified with a Western culture, in comparison to 1,547 fatalities of individuals who were identified with a non-Western culture, which correlates to 98.5 percent of their victims being from non-Western cultures. On the other hand, other sources suggest that in 2006, 98 percent of al-Qaeda victims were from non-Western countries.214

Table 3 shows the location and number of casualties by different Islamists groups, including al-Qaeda, from 2005 to 2008.215 The data shows that 10,654 deaths occurred in 4,053 attacks in the twelve countries. For example, the two attacks in Egypt resulted in no fatalities, in comparison to the sixty-one dead people resulted from the attacks in Jordan. The number of fatalities in Iraq are significantly higher than those in Afghanistan, even though the latter faced more attacks. The groups that have claimed responsibility for these attacks define themselves as Islamic groups. Examples include the Hamas in Israel, Taliban in Afghanistan, the Algerian Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat (GSPC) in Algeria, and the North West Frontier in Pakistan.


215. See Appendix A for detailed information about the coding process, excluded categories, and data used to generate the report from The WITS database.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Attacks</th>
<th>Dead</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Hostage</th>
<th>Victims</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1,769</td>
<td>3,496</td>
<td>4,529</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>8,796</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza Strip</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>1,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>5,566</td>
<td>11,099</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>16,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>178</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>212</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>280</td>
<td>820</td>
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<td>437</td>
<td>2,629</td>
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<td>Yemen</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,053</td>
<td>10,654</td>
<td>19,948</td>
<td>1,981</td>
<td>32,583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, one sees the same results in a different illustration. As seen in Figure 1, it’s easy to notice that most of the fatalities occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, because of conflict and the instability of the regime, it is expected to be a violent environment.

![Total Dead Victims 2005-2008](chart)

Figure 1. Number of causalities by Islamists groups, including al-Qaeda, perpetrated in twelve countries from 2005 to 2008.

It should be noted that the number of victims in 2008 is due mainly to the bombing of the Danish Embassy in Pakistan. Similar studies suggest that al-Qaeda

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attacks most Muslims. This was shown in a study conducted by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.\textsuperscript{217}

By comparing the results in Table 2 and Table 3, one concludes that al-Qaeda and their affiliated groups are responsible of killing 2,232 innocent people from the 10,645 overall fatalities in twelve countries. This means that al-Qaeda and their affiliated groups are responsible for 20.9 percent of the overall deaths in the twelve countries from 2005 to 2008. The violent acts of al-Qaeda are not carried out on behalf of Muslims, but for humanity as a whole. The results in this research show that the Muslims whom al-Qaeda claims to protect are more likely to be killed than the Westerners they claim to be against.

In close, the variation in victims from year to year reflects the changing capabilities of al-Qaeda to carry out terrorist attacks. The general goal of terrorists and militias is to maintain relevance and presence through a use of power.\textsuperscript{218} In order to accomplish this, al-Qaeda, like any other terrorist group, carries out attacks. After the United States declared a global “war on terrorism” in 2001, al-Qaeda’s power and effectiveness became limited, especially in Westernized countries.\textsuperscript{219} Because of this, they keep their presence known by attacking Muslim countries where many of their members are active.

\textsuperscript{218} Shultz and Dew, \textit{Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias}.
\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica}, “Document: George W. Bush: Declaration of War on Terrorism.”
CHAPTER VIII

ISLAMIST REINTERPRETATIONS OF TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC CONCEPTS

The basis of many traditional Islamic concepts and practices are derived from Islam’s sacred textual sources, the Qur’an and hadith. Other concepts have been created from interpretations of Muslim scholars and jurists, especially during the development of the Islamic community. Islamists, however, like al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood, are adept at distorting traditional concepts to support their violent and non-Islamic actions.

Jihad

*Jihad* (holy war) has a broad semantic content, contrary to popular Western understanding, and is different from *Qittal* (fighting). Both terms, *Jihad* and *Qittal*, have “significantly different meanings and uses in the Qur’an.” Qittal involves harm, killing, slaughter, and bloodshed. Jihad, however, is part of everyday Muslim life. Jihad could describe the struggle of parents to educate and raise their kids well. It could also describe the efforts students put into their education.

As noted in Chapter 2, the so-called greater *Jihad* (*Jihad al Akbar*) refers to struggle or persistence in leading a life free of evil. The *jihad* of the heart specifically

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embodies having a heart free of evil thoughts and desires, whereas the *jihad* of the tongue refers to giving voice to and leading a pious life according to the words of the Prophet, and the *jihad* of the deed refers to carrying out acts which assist the *Umma* (Islamic society), and to assist Muslims who are suffering.

The lesser *Jihad* (*Jihad al Asghar*) is the *Jihad* of the sword, and refers to the obligation to take up the sword in defense of the *Umma* and in defense of Muslims of faith who have had the sword taken up against them. Accordingly, it is a defensive *jihad.*

Islamists like Hasan al-Banna, however, have interpreted *jihad* to mean an armed struggle that should be carried out against the West. Banna states that it is the obligation of each Muslim. This explains the *fatwa* of Osama bin Ladin and the *jihad* groups in their “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for *Jihad* against the Jews and the Crusaders.” Since they observed American presence as a threat to Islam, they declared an armed war against them. A second example is Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi’s description of the war in Iraq as “a new Crusader campaign against the Islamic world and it is a decisive war.” His statement in 2006 called for *Jihad* as an armed struggle against the American forces in Iraq. His definition of the world implies the necessity of destroying American forces in order to spread Islam.

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**Kafir (Disbeliever)**

*Kafir* is the singular version of the word of *Kuffar*. The structure of the word *Kuffar* means the people who bury or cover something. The Qur’an mentions the people of the book, Jews and Christians, as *Kuffar*, as they were responsible for suppressing the message of Islam during the time of the prophet Mohammad. In other words, Jews and Christians tried to stop the spread of Islam by force, in order to prevent it and hold it back, and thus, they were called Kaffara. By no means is this term offensive or disrespectful. Islamic jurisprudence and scholars use this term only refer to Jews and Christians who fought against Islam when it was presented to them at the time of Prophet Muhammad. Interestingly, Islamists such as the Wahhabis, redefined this word to refer to foreigners and other Muslims who do not follow the Wahhabi’s teachings. By referring to them as infidels, it opens the way to proclaiming the “armed struggle or *jihad* against them.”

**Al-Tatarrus (Human Shields)**

To justify the killing of innocent Muslims, al-Qaeda employs the use of human shields, a practice of avoiding hostility by hiding behind others. Al-Qaeda redefined the term to include the justification of the killing of innocents, arguing that these people were essentially human shields, and if innocent, they died as martyrs in the name of Islam.\(^{222}\) The notion that it is okay to kill Muslims who are being used as human shields is not widely invoked or discussed in literature.

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\(^{222}\) Scott Helfstein, Nassir Abdullah and Muhammad al-Obaidi, “Deadly Vanguards: A Study of al-Qa’ida’s Violence Against Muslims,” Combating Terrorism
In the September 11 attacks, thousands of innocent victims were killed, many of them women and children. Islam, however, firmly forbids the killing of women and children, or any innocent soul. So how was such an attack justified by extremists? In an interview with a senior reporter with the *American Lawyer Magazine*, Douglas McCollam talked with Abou el Fadl, a writer and Islamic legal scholar regarding the current state of Islamic law. Fadl was asked how bin Laden could get past the prohibitions of killing women, children, and other innocents. He answered,

> On killing civilians he has this tradition of the Prophet that says don’t kill a woman or a child. Bin Laden will say we have this tradition, but we also have a tradition that says necessity makes the forbidden allowed and this is a necessity.\textsuperscript{223}

Contrary to the tradition that Bin Laden bases his claims on, there is a popular *hadith* that reads, “Whoever interprets the Quran intellectually is wrong even if he appears to be correct.”\textsuperscript{224} After all, from an Islamic viewpoint, fundamentalist and radical interpretations are incorrect, even if they seem right and justified.


\textsuperscript{224} This is an authentic *hadith* that has been related in the main sources of Abudawud, At-tirmizi and An-nisa’i.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Through the research done in this thesis, I found that Islam does not call for terrorism and is not a violent religion. Instead, the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda have distorted specific concepts to create their own interpretation of the faith. They came up with a unique mechanism for legitimization in order to justify their violent attacks. Islam, in fact, has been used as a tool by these groups to give their struggle meaning and, thus, gain followers and support for their cause. I decided to examine case studies of two contemporary yet controversial Islamist groups, the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda, because they claim responsibility for the most terrorist attacks in the Middle East and North Africa within the last two decades.

I came to the conclusion that al-Qaeda is a modern extension of Wahhabism. The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, is a new version of Qutbism. The most dangerous aspect of the Wahhabim movement, as discussed previously, is the marking and defining of an “infidel.” An infidel, for Wahhabi, is anyone who rejects their creed. 225 Their own definition has led to the creation of different Islamic teachings. For example, they espoused stoning to death for the offenses of blasphemy and adultery and they issued fatwa to demolish Shi’a mosques. By doing so, they created animosity and

division between Muslims. The belief system of Bin Laden is not any different. He has issued fatwas against the United States and its allies, labeled them infidels, and, therefore, waged jihad as against them. The Muslim Brotherhood has continued to espouse Sayyed Qutb’s radical ideas. Radical Islam functions to mobilize Muslims with shared socioeconomic grievances in support of Islamic resurgence, and, where necessary, provide justification for acts of violence in order to defend Islam in the name of God.

For the last twenty years, the actions and crimes of al-Qaeda have inflicted harm on the poor and oppressed people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere, which are not known to be countries of origin for large-scale terrorist activity. Additionally, the violence and harm caused by the Muslim Brotherhood has extended to Islamic countries and other innocent people worldwide. These organizations also emerged from a deep reservoir of anger, fear, desperation, and hatred toward the cultural ideologies of the West.

The data I presented in this research show that both the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda are not the vanguards of Muslims as they claim. The Muslim Brotherhood is trying to increase their political power to forward their political agendas by seeking seats in parliament and legislative elections. Most often, Al-Qaeda harms Muslims and is responsible for 20.9 percent of the fatalities that resulted from attacks by Islamist terrorists.

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230. Ibid.
groups in the twelve countries examined in this research. This is interesting, considering that religious texts in the Qur’an and hadith forbid killing and animosity:

If anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the whole humanity; and if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole humanity. 232

Through this work, I concluded that there are many factors that have led to a hatred of the West. One of these factors is the Western influences in the eighteenth century in the Islamic region that started because of exchanges of education and trade. 233 In present time it takes the same shape, but it has also expanded in political and economical ways. Examples include the American oil investments in Saudi Arabia and the American support for Israel. Another factor was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, which was followed by the British and the French mandate as previously mentioned. In 1922, the abolishment of the title Caliph resulted in the loss of an important Islamic tradition. The declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 was another major reason for the development and expansion of violent groups.

The divisions of the Islamic countries have led to political instability which has created many economic disadvantages. 234 One can observe the continuation of this dilemma by looking at youth, living under corrupted and useless governments, who suffer from oppression and hopelessness. Because of this, in my opinion, they become easy targets for recruitment by terrorist groups.

Through this work, I concluded that the development of the Islamic society through Arab conquest has led to the developing and evolving Islamic law (shar’ia). This change has

232. Al-Qur’an V:11X
allowed for the possibility of religious scholars issuing fatwas regarding certain matters. As was shown through previous research, only trained and certified imams, or religious scholars, can issue fatwas upon consensus. Osama bin Laden, as well as other leaders of fundamentalist groups, continue to issue fatwas that have been formally rejected and condemned by other religious scholars in the Islamic world.\textsuperscript{235}

Al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood have a disdain for globalization and cultural hegemony. They have made their mission of waging holy war against the corrupted West and the more liberal secular regimes in the region loud and clear.\textsuperscript{236} In the last thirty years, al-Qaeda has fought a holy war against the former Soviet Union, bombed U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and bombed trains in Madrid. The Muslim Brotherhood was responsible for the 1981 assassination of Sadat, the third president of Egypt, and most importantly, they were responsible for the creation of such well-known subgroups as the Islamic Action Front and Hamas, who carry out violence to maintain relevance and power.\textsuperscript{237}

Binladenism has adopted these views and continues to justify the killings by reinterpreting crucial concepts. It labels secular people and Westerners as Kafir (infidels). Therefore, any infidel, according to Binladenism and the Muslim Brotherhood, is an enemy of Islam. To justify the killing of innocent Muslims in suicide attacks, al-Qaeda argues that these people were essentially acting as human shields (Tattarus), and if


\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
innocent, they died as martyrs in the name of Islam. As Ayman al-Zawahiri, a prominent leader of al-Qaeda says,

We haven’t killed the innocents; not in Baghdad, nor in Morocco, nor in Algeria, nor anywhere else. And if there is any innocent who was killed in the Mujahideen’s operations, then it was either an unintentional error, or out of necessity as in cases of al-Tatarrus. 238

Bin Laden focuses on jihad as an armed struggle in order to purge what he sees as corrupted governments and Western infidels in Islamic lands.239 On many occasions, he has criticized the relations Saudi Arabia has with the United States and urged for a pure Islamic state that rejects American investments and influences in the region. Although bin Laden claims to have the desire to assist Iraqis and Palestinians in their struggle against Israel and the United States, his words and actions have been contradictory. He has pumped large amounts of money into jihadists in Sudan and Algeria. He even funded radical extremist militant fundamentalist groups in Indonesia, the Philippines and Bosnia more than he has in any Arab state.240

Despite numerous warnings and ongoing public debate about the indiscriminate actions of al-Qaeda, they continue to strike. On New Year’s Day, 2011, the Army of Islam, a group linked to al-Qaeda, carried out a suicide attack on the Coptic

Church in Alexandria, Egypt.\textsuperscript{241} Many religious scholars condemned the attack. In fact, in previous attacks by al-Qaeda, extremist scholars and supporters of al-Qaeda questioned the indiscriminate use of violence and the targeting of innocents. For example, Sheikh Hamed bin Abdullah al-Ali, former secretary general of the Salafi movement in Kuwait, counseled *jihadis* to recognize the sanctity of Muslim blood.\textsuperscript{242} Even one of al-Qaeda’s important senior leaders, Abu Yahya al-Libi, “alluded to operational mistakes that might alienate the broader population.”\textsuperscript{243} He also blamed the *Ulema* for their poor guidance and support.\textsuperscript{244}

Ultimately, the research done in this thesis does not show a relationship between Islam and terrorism. It shows how two influential Islamist groups, al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood, use Islam as a tool not only to justify their acts of terrorism but also to give meaning to their struggle against the West. The research shows that both groups are the product of the reactionary movements Wahhabism and Qutbism. The data presented in this thesis proves that al-Qaeda and their affiliated groups are responsible for 20.9 percent of all terrorist killings in the twelve countries. The results also show that most of the people killed are non-Westerners, which is interesting, considering that al-Qaeda’s anger is directed toward countries with Western cultures.


\textsuperscript{243} Helfstein, Abdullah and al-Obaidi, “Deadly Vanguards.”

\textsuperscript{244} Abu Yahya al-Libi, “Jihadist Forum Member Posts, Al-Libi Interview with Al-Sahab, 2002,” July 28, 2009.
Through this work, I also discovered that the development of the Islamic Law (shar‘ia) occurred in the Abbasid era, after the conquest of new lands brought new groups of people to Islam. This development allowed contemporary Islamist groups to issue *fatwas* and justify their violence, as seen in the “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders.”

Governments in the Middle East that are friendly with the United States, and whose societies are influenced by radical Islamists groups, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, in my opinion, have not responded effectively against threats by Islamist groups. Although Jordan and Egypt have taken significant steps to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from winning elections, the source of the threat still exists. These countries, and others, should consider fundamental changes in their political, economic and social structures.

In the future, I would like to expand my research to examine how groups succeed in linking Islam to terrorist attacks by looking at more than just two cases of religious terrorism in the Middle East. It would be interesting for future research to examine groups in different parts of the world, such as the Radical Extremist Militant Fundamentalist (REMF) group in Indonesia and Islamist groups in the Philippines. Moreover, I would like to take this research further and perform social and economical analyses on the countries of Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Their legal systems are certainly worthy of study. In Saudi Arabia, *shari‘a* is still dominant, whereas Egypt and Jordan are considered to be more secular states. An analysis of this type could potentially
help these countries find ways to prevent takeovers by radical Islamist groups and pave the way toward a more democratic system of government.


Federation of American Scientists. “Birth of Al-Wahhabi Movement,”

—. “Iraq: Tribal Structure, Social, and Political Activities.”


Global Security. “Baghdad–33°20'N 44°23’E.”


WORLDWIDE INCIDENT TRACKING SYSTEM (WITS)

FOR ISLAMIST ATTACKS IN 12 COUNTRIES, 2005-08

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<th>Grouped by country</th>
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**Filters for Perpetrator**

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- Confidence [not] Plausible
- Confidence [not] Inferred
- Group Nationality [not] Uzbekistan
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| 4,053   | 10,654            | 19,948  | 1,981   | 32,583  |