American University in Cairo

AUC Knowledge Fountain

Spring 5-11-2012

Going international: the development and operations of al QaÃida in the Islamic Maghreb

Sarah Faye Mangrem
The American University in Cairo AUC

Follow this and additional works at: https://fount.aucegypt.edu/etds

Part of the Islamic Studies Commons, and the Sociology Commons

---

Going International:
The Development and Operations of
al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb

A Thesis
submitted to the
the Graduate School Global Affairs and Public Policy
of the American University in Cairo
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Middle East Studies

By

Sarah Faye Mangrem

Thesis Advisor: Dr. John Schaefer, Ph.D.
Reader 1: Dr. Mohammad Serag, Ph.D.
Reader 2: Dr. Joseph Hill, Ph.D.

Cairo, Egypt
16 May, 2012

Table of Contents

Going International:
The Development and Operations of
al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb

By Sarah Faye Mangrem

Abstract

Since 2006 there has been a uniquely independent and autonomous branch of al

Qa'ida operating in the Sahel and Sahara region of North and West Africa. Relative to

associated movements elsewhere, al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb is geographically

and financially isolated, dependent on its own members to mobilize both human and

financial resources. Yet at this they have been particularly successful; smuggling

contraband across African borders, kidnapping Europeans for ransom and playing

middleman for Latin American cartels transporting huge amounts of drugs to

Europe. The 2012 Tuareg rebellion and subsequent military coup in Mali has

provided opportune timing as arms flood out of Libya, sold to the highest bidder at a

time when al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb is flush with cash. Using framing and

resource mobilization theory, this thesis defines and contrasts this movement

within larger context of al Qa'ida. It argues that, for the first time, we must discard

laden and meaningless terms, and begin to understand al Qa'ida, and its affiliates as

social movements, in order to understand both its past and possible future.

Chapter 1

Introduction

An extraordinary amount of focus has been given and an enormous amount of predominantly analytic work has been done on al Qa'ida (AQ) and al Qa'ida Affiliated Movements (AQAM) in the past decade. The spectrum of literature, from Western-centric defense-based standpoints to pro-AQ rhetoric attempting to proliferate and publicize the organization and its methods, is indeed enormous. AQ has developed and transformed itself over the past decades, with personal shifts, geographical alignments (or misalignments), and a constant flux between highs and lows in financial support and number of fighters. AQ has also continued to surprise and challenge Western governments and security apparatuses, incorporating and affiliating outlying movements and organizations that do not necessarily completely conform to AQ's ideology but which nonetheless enhance the movement though worldwide reach, financial contributions or manpower. This thesis will argue that there continues to be a lack of understanding about AQAM in large part because it continues to be labeled simply as a terrorist or violent jihadi group of disaffected men and women by defense strategists and international relations theorist. I contend that in reality, the AQ of ten years ago no longer exists, and we must begin looking at the organization as a grass-roots, self reproducing movement in order to come to terms with the AQ of today. This introductory chapter will look first at the history of al Qa'ida as a whole, gaining an understanding of its purposes,

motivations and ideals. It will then move on to AQ's affiliated movements, paying particular attention to al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its unique position in the history of Algeria and North/West Africa as a whole.

To a certain extent, the history of AQ is widely known around the world, and many people have an understanding of its global trajectory and ideologies. For the purpose of expanding our understanding outward from the core leadership, this introductory chapter will quickly trace the history of the movement from its conception. The two most important and central components to the creation of AQ were the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the decade of war that followed, and the 1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent stationing of US troops in Saudi Arabia.

In the first conflict, Osama Ben Laden and his mentor Dr. Abdullah Azzam co-founded the Afghan Service Bureau in 1984 with the intention of training, arming and housing the thousands of Arabs who, galvanized by the Communist invasion, traveled to Central Asia to fight alongside the Afghan *mujahedeen* (holy warriors) there. After the Soviet withdrawal, the Bureau was left with loyal fighters, a generous funding operation and many international options for intervention. It was at this time in the late 1980s that Azzam and Ben Laden began to conceptualize using this trained force as an international vanguard movement for the establishment of Islamic governments, and the Service Bureau grew into al Qa'ida, or 'base'.[1]

---

[1] Riedel, Bruce, *The Search for Al Qaeda*, (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2008), 42-44.

Several important events occurred at the end of the Soviet-Afghan war that helped facilitate internationalizing the organization's jihad and the solidification of the new AQ. The first was the development of a core ideology by the leadership, most importantly that of Azzam, which will be discussed later. The second was the thousands of 'Afghan Arabs,' Muslims from the Arab countries of the Middle East who retuned home still inspired and emboldened from the Afghan jihad and looking to effect radical social and political change in their home countries. Third was the continued funding for the Bureau, who had few fighters left in Afghanistan to spend it on after the departure of the Arab *mujahedeen*. Therefore, "The resources at MAK's [the Afghan Service Bureau] disposal were diverted by Al Qaeda away from Afghanistan into regional conflicts where Islamist guerrillas were involved, principally in Kashmir and Chechnya, but also in Mindanao, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Somalia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Algeria and Egypt."[2]

In the second conflict, the stationing of US troops in Saudi Arabia from the beginning of Operation Desert Storm in 1991 to their late withdrawal years after the conflict angered Ben Laden and focused his attention on the US and its allies. Al Qa'ida initially proposed using its vanguard of trained *mujahedeen* from the Afghan jihad to push Iraq's forces from Kuwait, but its leaders were humiliated and infuriated when the Saudi Kingdom elected instead to allow foreign troops to enter the Kingdom to deal with what Ben Laden thought was a regional issue. As tensions mounted between AQ and Saudi Arabia, the organization moved to Sudan where it

---

[2] Gunaratna, Rohan. *Inside AL Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York Columbia University Press, 2002), 4-5.

remained for the first half of the 1990s. It was during this time that AQ and its

leadership solidified their contention with the West, and began searching for

potential allies in other jihadi movements from the Maghreb to the South Pacific.

This search led to the formalizing of structures built on alliances in a number of

Muslim countries:

> While in Sudan in 1994, Ben Laden established the Islamic Army Shura, bringing
>
> together groups from Algeria, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco,
>
> Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Tunisia. Around the same time, he forged less
>
> formal ties to militants in Burma, Chad, Malaysia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Thailand, and
>
> Uganda.[3]

In 1996, after US began pressuring Sudan to expel Ben Laden and his followers, he

began issuing *fatwas* and making statements against the new enemy. With backing

by several recognized Imams who issued similar *fatwas* at the same time, and thus

reinforced the Ben Laden *fatwas*,[4] these religious opinions were recognized as a

declaration of war against the US and its Western Allies.

Forced out of Sudan, the AQ organization moved back to Afghanistan where

it received support from the Taliban and its leader Mullah Mohamed Omar, who had

quickly consolidated control over much of the southern part of the country after the

Soviet withdrawal.[5] On February 23, 1998, AQ, along with several other violent,

anti-western movements, announced the formation of an alliance: the *World Islamic*

---

[3] Nelson, Rick and Thomas M. Sanderson, "A Threat Transformed: al qaeda and associated
movements in 2011", Center for Strategic and International Studies, (February 2011), 3.
[4] Ben Laden's ability to give religions opinions, *fatwa,* is a point of contentions between his followers
and opponents. While he spend many years studying religion, and is known as a sheik to his
followers, others do not recognize the legitimacy of his religious credentials, necessary to issue *fatwa*.
[5] Gunaratna, 41-42.

Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders. It has been suggested by

European intelligence agencies that the Algerian jihad organization, the *Armed*

Islamic Group (GIA) was a secret signatory, but this has never been proven.[6]

Hereafter, AQ became a movement that formally aligned or dis-aligned itself with

other, likeminded movements and organizations. Ben Laden, his second in

command Dr. Ayman al Zawahiri and several remaining ideological and spiritual

leaders formed the AQ core, and those who have not been killed or arrested have

remained in hiding in the inaccessible and difficult areas of Afghanistan and

Pakistan. This regime continues to fulfill the function of command, are recognized as

the senior leadership and remains the headquarters of the movement.

    Al Qa'ida and Associated Movements

    After this brief sketch of the formation of the AQ core, I now move to al Qa'ida

and its associated movements. Within this broader historical framework, the

motivations, ideologies and justifications for the associated movements can be more

clearly distinguished. AQAM can be broken down into distinct components, on the

one hand comprising the core, and on the other those movements associated and

aligned with its ideology and purposes. These associated movements often continue

operating independently of the core movement and, and as was the case before their

alignment, continue to be motivated by concerns that are distinctive and indigenous

to them. Additionally, while they may adopt AQ's core ideology to a greater or lesser

extent, for example agreeing with the need for a violent struggle, they may focusing

less on Western targets and more in the internal struggle for power in the country in

---

[6] Ibid, 45.

which they operate. Other individuals and movements may simply be inspired by AQ, hoping to one day travel and fight alongside the *mujahedeen*, or they may merely harbor anti-Western sentiment and a have vague plans to perpetrate a 9/11 style attack.

Additionally, AQAM are in constant flux, gaining or losing supporters, and as movements and organizations either seek closer relations with or are wooed by the AQ core, others distance themselves for the vanguard movement. This is one reason why is has been so difficult for Western armies to stamp out their activities. For example, in Somalia the violent jihadi movement known as *Al Shabab*, the youth, continues to seek closer contact with AQ, pleading allegiance to AQ in early 2010 and publically declaring its alignment with AQ ideology. On the other hand, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), long thought by Western Intelligence to be moving closer to full alignment and incorporation into the movements, has in recent years have distanced itself from the AQ core.[7] This thesis focuses exclusively on those movements that have chosen to align themselves to the greatest extent with AQ and have been permitted by the core to use the al Qa'ida name and to be formally recognized as a formal affiliate and partner.

If AQ's plan in the 9/11 attacks had been to draw the US and its allies into wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, then it worked perfectly. In Iraq, a group of exceptionally violent militants under the leadership of Abu Musab al Zarqawi pulled Iraq into a sectarian civil war following the 2003 US invasion. In October 2004, al Zarqawi's organization was formally renamed al Qa'ida in Mesopotamia, often

---

[7] Nelson, Rick, 10.

written as AQ in Iraq (AQI), and pledged its allegiance to AQ's emir. Two years later

the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) renamed itself as al

Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and also pleaded allegiance to Ben Laden. The third

and most recent movement to both affiliate itself and be accepted by AQ is located in

Yemen, and is known as al Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).[8] Yet despite this

public and ceremonial renaming, these associated movements have continued to

carry on much like before, factors that will be examined in AQIM.

A central and defining characteristic of AQ has become a very centralized

core surrounded by decentralized associated movements. This structure has

allowed local, established groups to not only join the AQ network and to work

towards global, anti-Western jihad and the implementation governments in Muslim

majority states that govern on the basis of Islam, but also to simultaneously

maintain relative autonomy within the organization. In other words, "what is

referred to as the 'Al Qaeda network' is in reality a conglomerate of a number of

terror groups and their cells, of varying autonomy but who share a common

ideology and who cooperate with each other."[9] Therefore, despite a degree of

internal disagreement, AQAM is a conglomeration of like-minded groups,

organizations and movements of grass-roots participation that have coalesced

around a central leadership and that have a shared name and ideology with similar

goals and motivations.

The Algerian Trajectory

---

[8] Nelson, Rick, 8.

[9] Gohel, M.J. quoted in Raufer, Xavier. "Al Qaeda: A Different Diagnosis." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism.* Vol. 26 (2003) 394.

Islamism and jihadi ideologies, both violent and non-violent, are well established in Algeria and the countries that surround it. Elements of violent jihad there have long been associated with AQ, as with the rumored involvement of the GIA with Ben Laden's association of jihad organizations in the 1990s. Much of the current movement's agenda and dogma is grounded in the Civil War, where the violent jihad groups were originally formed before coalescing into AQIM.

Algerian expert Graham Fuller argues that in the decades after the war for independence from France, an intellectually and morally bankrupt military junta lacking any legitimacy both domestically and internationally dominated the Algerian state. Due to both national and international pressure in the late 1980s the political process began to open, and the first free and transparent elections in Algeria's history were held in 1991. The first round of elections were swept by the newly formed *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), which had quickly garnered popularity in the towns and countryside, taking the base away from the *Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)* whose members had ruled Algeria in the decades since independence. Fearing a complete takeover by the Islamic party, the Algerian military canceled the second round of scheduled elections, ousted the president and effectively took control of the state. The non-violent FIS was banned and thousands of its members arrested, placed in prison camps deep in the Sahara where many remained throughout the war that ensued. Through harsh authoritarian rule and by taking advantage of decades of mismanagement at all levels of government, the military and its political party, the FLN, remained in power throughout the decade of war.[10]

---

[10] Fuller, Graham, *Algeria: the Next Fundamentalist State?,* (RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 1996), x.

The Islamist movement in Algeria is the product of a complicated history of repression and increasing conservatism over the many decades of violent struggle in the North African country. Many experts on Salafism, such as Quintan Wiktorowicz, argue that Islamism in Algeria is equated with the conservative strain of Islam, and that the North African country offers a remarkable lens though which to view a Salafi trajectory: from *Da'wa*[11] activism, to an increasingly politicized movement within a relatively open (though short lived) democratic system, and finally a flourishing of jihad Salafi organizations and leaders intent on both an Islamic Algerian state and global jihad though international ties to jihadi groups elsewhere.

Unfortunately, due a marked increase in the use of the Salafi name in both the international media and academia, a severe misunderstanding of this often innocuous term has resulted. Similar to the use of Islamism or Islamist, which refers to the use of the Islamic religion in guiding social and political processes, the negative connotations of the terms far outweigh their true meanings. Generally, a Muslim or Islamic movement that proclaims itself to be 'Salafi' wishes to denote a since of closeness to those who followed the Prophet Mohamed and a desire to act along similar lines to those who had proximity to him (the *salaf*) in the first decades of Islam. With this understanding in mind, the self-proclaimed Salafi movement of Algeria is a uniquely violent organization unassociated with many, separate Salafi Muslims and movements elsewhere. In this paper, the use of such laden terms as Islamist or Salafi will be avoided, except when self-applied by the movement in

---

[11] Da'wa in Arabic means a call, such as a call to the religion, and usually refers to a peaceful missionary work by Muslims.

question and appropriate. Given this understanding of the terms, Wiktorowicz's

trajectory above is missing the central catalyst that radicalized the Salafi strain

operating in Algeria, and makes the violent jihadi trajectory to AQIM a unique

example.

Similarly, the overused term 'terrorist' will also be avoided. In this case,

renowned social scientist Charles Tilly, who has spent years working on social

movement theory, has successfully argued the need to abandon the use of terrorism

to describe violent actors in a post 9/11 context. He argues:

> The terms terror, terrorism and terrorist do not identify causally coherent and
> distinct social phenomena but strategies that recur across a wide variety of actors
> and political situations. Social scientists who reify the terms confuse themselves and
> render a disservice to public discussion.[12]

These terms, therefore, will be avoided in the following chapters, and replaced with

a more descriptive analysis to avoided misunderstandings and abuse of innocent

belief systems.

In a paper for the Carnegie Endowment, Amel Bouberkeur offers an

interesting analysis of the radical politics in post conflict Algeria that examines the

various competing religious movements born out of the violence of the Civil War.

The author argues that while *Da'wa* Salafism was long known in North Africa, "It

was only with the founding of the FIS in 1989 that political Salafism found structure

and organization."[13] The war was fought between the military controlled

---

[12] Tilly, Charles, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorist," *Sociological Theory Theories of Terrorism: A Symposium*, Vol 22, No 1, (March, 2004), 5.
[13] Boubekeur, Amel, "Salafism and Radical Politics in Postconflict Algeria," *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Middle East Center,* no. 11 (September 2008), 5.

government and various guerilla groups with different levels of religious affiliation and commitment. Disaffected and marginalized Algerian youth flocked to mosques where they would hear the fiery rhetoric of more radicalized Imams and were encouraged to join armed organizations like the GIA and the *Armee Islamique du Salut* (AIS) and to fight against the State.[14]

The GIA attracted the most radicalized youth, and in 1993 it announced its ultimate goal to be 'jihad in Algeria,' though it failed to qualify or explain this new slogan. Under the leadership of Jamal Zaytuni, the GIA became increasingly violent to the point that its indiscriminate killing of civilians strained ties with its affiliate and patron Ben Laden and his nascent al-Qaeda, at the time headquartered in Sudan. Additionally, other regional jihad organizations began withdrawing support for the GIA as it committed massacres throughout the 1990s.[15] The GIA, it appears, became too violent and radical for other jihad groups to continue their support, and were subsequently isolated for the zealousness of its guerrilla activity focused against the Algerian state and its non-combatant citizens.

Desires for a truly global jihadist organization intensified with the formation of the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC) in 1997 by a dissatisfied former GIA leader. With access to the smuggling routes across the Sahara and a savvy Internet profile, the GSPC quickly attracted international attention. The group was able to finance itself independently, and soon began recruiting and training jihadi fighters for missions both at home and in Iraq, making

---

[14] Ibid, 6.
[15] Filiu, Jean-Pierre, "The Local and Global Jihad of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Middle East Journal,* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2009), 219.

contact within and forming stronger alliances with Ben Laden's jihadi network. On September 11, 2006 AQ's deputy in command celebrated the anniversary of the groups largest attack by announcing the approval of the GSPC's affiliation with AQ. Four months later, the Salafist group in Algeria was officially renamed al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

Who are AQIM, and what are their motivations, philosophies and goals? Where does AQIM fit into the larger picture of al Qaeda core and AQAM peripheries, and what is the purpose and configuration of this relationship? Fashioned from the complicated and entangled history of inherently Algerian-centric organizations, AQIM is a remarkable example of a nationalist group focused on strictly local, at times xenophobic, jihad that is adopted, co-opted, or franchised under the al-Qaeda umbrella.

Important to this analysis is the geographical area in which AQIM operates. Similar to the inaccessible and isolated regions of Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, the innermost areas of the Sahara desert provide ideal cover for the clandestine and secretive movement. After successful anti-terrorism initiatives in Algeria pushed the movements and its followers out of the north, for the past years AQIM has been operating in the desolate areas of southern Algeria, northern Mali and Niger and eastern Mauritania. Geographically, this area encompasses the Maghreb and Sahel regions, a mass of dry land roughly the size of France but sparsely populated. In addition to these known areas of operation, the Nigerian group *Boko Haram*, meaning Western-style learning (*Boko* in Housa, a local language

predominate in Niger and Nigeria) is forbidden (*Haram, a word shared between Arabic and Housa*), have suggested ties with AQIM and analysis of bombs used by the group in northern Nigeria employ similar expertise to those used by AQ elsewhere.[16] Furthermore, with the current upheaval in the northern states of Mali, and the claim there by some of the smaller organizations involved of ties to AQIM, the future weeks and months may bring new information about AQ strongholds in Africa. Therefore, the geographical area where AQIM is known to have operatives will be referred to as North/West Africa and will include the Sahara region from the Sahel to central Algeria.

My primary conceptual framework draws on social movement theory, and while it is plentiful, few scholars have attempted to apply any form of the theory to AQ or any similar movement, and those who have attempted have yet to produce groundbreaking work. A possible exception to this is *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach,* edited by Quintan Wiktorowicz. In particular, the book includes a chapter on the Algeria's GIA that helps to explain its development from a marginalized group of young, disenfranchised men to the exceptionally violent organization which eventually broke apart due to the bloody massacres it perpetrated against civilians in the civil war. A paper by Colin Beck, "The Contribution of Social Movement Theory to Understanding Terrorism," attempts to provide a conceptual framework for the study of 'terrorism' through a literature review. This paper is useful inasmuch as it provides relevant literature previously done on social movement theory, but stops short of offering any in depth

---

[16] Bodansky, Yossef "Nigeria's Boko Haram Links with al-Qaida", *Defense & Foreign Affairs' Strategic Policy, (*August 2010), 14.

contributions. Finally, in "Islamism and Social Movement Theory", Asef Bayat acknowledges the usefulness of social movement theory in complicating and illuminating aspects of Islamist movements. Bayat takes a queue from Benedict Anderson, acknowledging the complexities associated with the term 'Islamism,' and the 'imagined solidarities' that are created. In contrast to earlier attempts, this thesis will go deeper, including application of theory and analysis, rather than simply reviewing what could be done.

The next chapters will involve an examination of AQAM, with a particular focus on al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, using aspects of social movement theory. These ideas will further be illuminated in Chapter 2, methodologies and conceptual framework. Chapter 3 will focus on framing theory, and the astute use of certain terms, principally the term jihad, by AQAM to incorporate and define the movement's strategy, goals and belief structures. Chapter 4 will examine the resource mobilization endeavors of AQAM, the way it uses media resources, such as the celebrity of its leaders and prominent supporters to build a following and the moral resources that come with high education and religious achievement. In Chapter 5 the current situation in North/West Africa will be examined, along with the effectiveness of the Tuareg rebellion and the establishment of an independent state in the north of Mali. The theories used herein are particularly interesting and innovative when applied to this current situation, as the rebellion and its aftermath provide both a unique and timely application.

Chapter 2

Methodology and Conceptual Framework

Al-Qa'ida is the most dominant example of a violent jihad movement operating in the world today, yet academics and experts are missing fundamental aspects of the organization and chronically lack depth in comprehending its realities. Though academics interested in violent jihad movements have begun to touch on aspects of the organization's movement-like strategies and inclinations, they have yet to focus specifically on AQ, and as a result the movement continues to be mislabeled. As noted above, for example, Asef Bayat and Quintan Wiktorowicz have begun the project, while Colin Beck went further and looked at how social theories can help our understanding of terrorism. Other frameworks have been used, and Valentine M. Moghadam has looked at Islamism's place in globalization and the social moments that come with it, while Mohammed Hafez has used the political process approach to help explain the violence of the GIA in Algeria. While globalization and political processes are useful in elucidating and partially accounting for AQAM activity, they fail to account for many of the mechanisms that continue to propel the movement, particularly after the deaths and arrests of many top leaders. It is not sufficient to simply trace the activities of this movement and its leaders, but to examine in depth the ways in which their personal contributions, be it personal fortune, prestigious degrees or intimate regional knowledge, have created a mass movement that reaches from Asia to West Africa, and from Europe to the US. The al

Qa'ida of the 1980s no longer exists, it has been replaced by an al Qa'ida composed

of associated movements and inspired individuals, a fact that can only be

understood by looking at AQ as an international movement network through a

social movement theory framework.

This thesis will use two specific aspects of the theory, namely framing theory

and resource mobilization theory to examine the ways in which AQIM both created

and is expanding its operation. Specifically, such an approach can illuminate the

ways AQIM is both similar to and different from AQ, increasing our understanding of

both. One of the important questions I seek to answer though this use of theory is,

how much of a part of the AQ organization is AQIM? How have their ideologies,

motivations and purposes converged or diverged since 2006? How does the

relationship between the AQ core and AQIM differ from those between AQ and

AQAM? After more that 6 years of operating in the Sahel and Sahara, these questions

have yet to be asked about AQIM, and this thesis will be the most comprehensive

examination into the similarities and differences yet produced on al Qa'ida and its

associated movement in the Islamic Maghreb. In this chapter I propose to set both a

methodology and conceptual framework before proceeding to the application of

framing and resource mobilization theories to AQIM.

Methodology

The methodology of this thesis includes a variety of resources, data collection

sources and methods. The following chapters are broken down into a framing

chapter, a resource mobilization chapter and a chapter examining the current

situation in the area where AQIM is most visible today and the Tuareg rebellion that

has opened political opportunities to AQIM leaders. These three chapters will form the main content of the paper, followed by a concluding chapter.

While there is a decade of rich and voluminous work done on the AQ core, given both the clandestine nature and relative newness of the Algerian jihadi's affiliation with AQ, sources on its associated movements are nether easily acquirable nor plentiful. Additionally, no material exists specifically applying social movement theory to AQ, making this project a first attempt. However, as is the case with many organizations, groups and movements around the world, AQIM continues to exist through propagating its name and 'selling' its messages. Both AQ and AQIM have been vocal in their attempts to do this, using interviews, letters and messages, and attacks perpetrated to expand both the brand and message. The core materials used herein include a selection of the best work done on AQ as a core organization, newer work on AQIM and news sources. This material accompanies French and Arabic communiqués issued by AQAM, as well as their English translations and analysis of the religious component to their message.

Of the volumes written on AQAM, the majority has concentrated on the AQ core, particularly the top leadership personalities, the attacks perpetrated on 9/11, and the global importance and aftermath of those attacks. While some of the work is academic, policy institutes and anti-terrorism initiatives have led in the production of analysis and content. This thesis will examine works such as Raymond Ibrahim's *The Al Qaeda Reader,* which provides a translation for many of the speeches, press releases, and written works of AQ's top membership.[17] Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre

---

[17] Ibrahim, Raymond ,*The Al Qaeda Reader, (*New York: Random House, 2007).

Milelli have also compiled many of the interviews, speeches and press releases of AQAM, providing analysis of each.[18] Kepel has written numerous other works dealing with jihad, including jihad and Islamism in Algeria, such as *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*[19] and *The Roots of Radical Islam.*[20] Finally, a few scholars focus directly on AQIM in Algeria, including Jean-Pierre Filiu, who has written both scholarly articles and work for the Carnegie Endowment on the subject. [21] Policy institutes interested in AQAM include the Jamestown Foundation and the Middle East Policy Council. In addition to producing papers on AQ, some of these institutes also track terrorist activity, including bombings in Algeria, Mauritania and the rest of North/West Africa. Of these sources, the START database produced by the University of Maryland has proven to be the most complete as well as professional.

A number of large, well known and lesser-known news sources have been closely following the development of AQIM and the broader situation in the Maghreb and Sahel. The New York Times, in particular, has reported on AQIM since 2008, when it was granted an interview with the Abdelmalek Droukdel, the GSPC leader who oversaw the transition to AQIM.[22] Additionally, AQIM has granted interviews with and sent statements for publication in a number of North/West African newspapers such as Magharebia, which continue to provide information on the groups activities.

Conceptual Framework

---

[18] Kepel, Gilles and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words,* (USA: Harvard College, 2008).
[19] Kepel, Gilles, *Jihad: the Trail of Political Islam,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).
[20] Kepel, Gilles, *The Roots of Radical Islam* (The Prophet and Pharaoh, London, 2005).
[21] Filiu, Jean-Pierre, "The local and Global Jihad of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb."
[22] Droukdel, Abdelmalek interview with The New York Times, Published: (July 1, 2008).

The conceptual framework for this paper is particularly important, given that this theory set has never before been applied to AQAM. First, an understanding of AQIM's place within social movements and organizations needs to be determined. Is AQ generally, and AQIM specifically, a movement or an organization, and what is the difference? Social scientists who work in this field treat social movements as collective behavior among a group of like-minded individuals, be it tightly ordered protests or loosely affiliated ideologies.[23] The core leadership provides organization to the movement, in the form of "leadership, administrative structure, incentives for participation, and a means of acquiring resources and support."[24] The organization provides rational decision-making and structure to the often vague feelings of anti-Westernism. Counter-terrorism institutes have argued that, "Ben Laden built not only al-Qa`ida, 'the vanguard of the Islamic movements,' but a global movement"[25] beginning in the 1980s. The purpose of AQ is, therefore, to galvanize collective social action in order to effect global change, and there are many aspects of both social moments and organizations that can be applied to AQAM. At its most fundamental AQAM is an organized group of people, who through association and similar ideologies are classed together. They are seeking to initiate social, political and even economic change on a global scale with a collective challenge to perceived opponents and authorities and international structures. There is core leadership and a porous periphery of combatants and members, which continue to grow or

---

[23] McAdam, Doug and W. Richard Scott, "Movements and Organizations", in *Social Movements and Organizational Theory,* ed. Gerald F. Davis et al, (New York: Cambridge Press, 2005), 6.
[24] Ibid, 6.
[25] Gunaratna, Rohan, "What the Experts Say", CTC Sentinel, May 2011, 18.

decline in number. However, many of the fundamental points that transform a group of people into a social movement are absent. The main reason for this is the fact that AQ is a secretive, clandestine, and most importantly, outlawed organization. Many of the public displays, necessary for a social movement, are not an option for AQ.

An examination of AQIM's political aspirations provides a unique example. AQ and AQIM harbor a desire to see a political transformation from secular democratic government to a return of the Caliphate and a unified Islamic *umma*. In this regard, many of their actions are overtly political. Bombings of the UN building in Algiers and repeated attacks on police, military and governmental buildings in Algeria are designed to make a pointed political statement.

Therefore, while it may have political aspirations, historically AQIM has not joined into the public debate on politics in Algeria or North/West Africa.[26] Nor does it act as a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics. Rallies, vigils, petition drives and public meetings are not in the AQIM repertoire. Perhaps one clear exception is AQ's use of the media, where is has always been particularly astute at releasing interviews, tapes and other communications. Its leaders in Algeria and Central Asia continue to speak on behalf of AQ members, praising successful attacks, galvanizing public participation and encouraging future action. Additionally, as Chapter 5 will show, the Tuareg rebellion in Mali and the subsequent involvement of AQIM in the capitals of the northern states may in the future prove to be an inroad to the political arena. This aside, however, AQ is not

---

[26] Chapter 5 will be used to examine possible AQIM excursions into politics after the Tuareg rebellion in Mali.

historically a 'politicized' movement, reasserting its place as a unique, underground and clandestine movement.

It is better therefore to think of AQAM as an organization that continuously sells its ideology though actions, propaganda and ideological conversions, in an attempt to create objectives and fulfill its goals. It holds aspects of both organizations and movements. Bob Edwards and John McCarthy argue that social movements and organizations should be conceptualized as "more or less routinized bundles of 'ways of doing things.'"[27] Among the diverse branches of AQ around Africa, the Middle East and Asia, this may be more true for some than for others. The height of AQ in Iraq, for example, looked more like a social movement than bands of North/West African armed men smuggling contraband across the Sahara. In this thesis, therefore, resource mobilization theory is will help explain these differences while creating a broader picture of AQAM.

Framing

Framing theory attempts to understand "the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue."[28] In other words, people frame or "assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize

---

[27] Edwards, Bob and John D. McCarthy, "Resources and Social Movement Mobilization" in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements,* David A. Snow, et al., (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 136.

[28] Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory*," Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 10, (2007), 104.

antagonists."[29] A cornerstone of framing theory is that an issue can be understood or interpreted in a number of ways, depending on multiple values or considerations entailed in the frame into which it is placed.[30] The human mind contains a memory in which is stored a set of beliefs of various degrees of strength and availability. It seems that as humans draw on this collection of beliefs in order to make a decision or understand an issue, the framing of the matter influences the outcome. As Dennis Chong and James Druckman explain framing works "by making new beliefs available about an issue, making certain available beliefs accessible, or making beliefs applicable or 'strong' in people's evaluations."[31]

The effects of a movement or organization's frame depend on multiple variables, including strength and replication of the frame being used, the competitive environment, and the individual motivations of the target population. Movements and organizations present their issues, needs and actions in certain, specific frames though which they hope to influence the most people. Often, organizations and movements try out different ways of framing issues to find the most successful one that makes the largest impact. As unique issues are framed, the ways and techniques used may resonate with the target group particularly well. Others may be found to be useless and subsequently discarded. Dynamic frames that encompass multiple concepts and ideologies are often called 'strong' frames. Strong frames can involve powerful symbols that in turn attract the endorsements from celebrities or notable intellectuals and leaders that in turn helps to frame the

---

[29] Benford, Robert D and Snow, David A, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol 26, Is. 1, (January, 2000), 198.
[30] Chong and Druckman,104.
[31] Chong and Druckman, 111.

issues in a more legitimate, popular light.[32]

In this thesis, specific aspects of framing theory are selected that can best be applied to AQ and AQIM. Ideology is particularly important when looking at religiously based organizations and movements. The religious ideologies, strengthened by symbols and celebrity that are employed by AQAM includes the use of jihad, takfir, salafism and a religious mandate from God. These terms will be briefly defined here, and examined in depth later. The term jihad has become almost universal in the past decade, but remains little understood. Fundamentally, jihad is a struggle between an individual and himself or within a broader context, such as a war fought for religious reasons. Takfir is the excommunication of a Muslim from the faith, often used to denounce corrupt leaders or insufficiently pious individuals in an Islamic community. The last term, salafism, refers to Muslims who seek to practice their religion as similarly as possible to that of the followers of the Prophet Mohamed.

In Algeria, it is the religious ideology of AQIM that ties it to the people and allows the organization to frame its issues and motivations. Additionally, much of AQIM's ideology is inherited from older organizations that fought in the Civil War. In AQIM, frame articulation and elaboration are both heavily influenced by AQ. Interviews, videotapes and speeches given by AQIM have evolved considerably after 1996, from what was apparent copy-catting by the GSPC to coaching by AQ. The issue of frame alignment between AQ and AQIM is particularly interesting, given the cultural, geographical and, importantly, financial isolation of AQIM zone of

---

[32] Chong and Druckman, 111.

operation from the core AQ.

Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization is another important and interesting component to this theory that helps us to better understand AQIM and its unique place within AQAM. Resources are unique to each movement:

> [The] Presence of resources and thereby their potential to be mobilized by specific social movement constituencies varies over space, through time, and across constituency. Resource mobilization theory is at root aimed at better understanding how groups are able to overcome prevailing patterns of resource inequality in their efforts to pursue social change goals.[33]

This social theory assumes that all human individuals who are members of or seek to join a movement are rational actors with the ability to examine the benefits or determents of that membership association. Additionally, it examines a movement's ability to procure resources and mobilize members in the name of the movement's goals and aspirations.[34] This chapter offers a unique opportunity to better understand al Qa'ida and its associated movements by examining its resource mobilization endeavors to better comprehend of how the organization operates as a movement. In particular, it examines the ways in which AQ successfully reproduces itself as a secretive movement through the social capitals of its leadership.

While mobilizing supporters is absolutely necessary for the sustainability of a movement or organization, grievances alone are often not sufficient to mobilize mass numbers of people and do not fully explain the creation and success of

---

[33] Edwards and McCarthy, 118.
[34] Jenkins, J. Craig, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements" Annual Review of Sociology, 9 (1983), 527-28.

movements. Anger over a perceived social injustice may galvanize individuals, but this chapter argues that access and control of resources, financial, moral or otherwise, is vital to the formation and success of the al Qa'ida movement. The resources of AQ, as will be examined in detail below, are concentrated in the core and tend to lessen as one moves outward to the peripheral associated movements. As a result, AQ core, including the leadership and important ideologues have greater access and more potential mobilization power than the movements that revolve around it.[35] Likewise, within an associated movement like AQIM, the core leadership possesses and controls greater amounts of resources than its operatives and adherents scattered around North/West Africa. Subsequent sections of this thesis will focus on the ways in which the core leadership of AQ and AQIM have successfully manipulated their celebrity, fame and moral resources to further the movements ability to mobilize men and money.

In closing, this is a unique and timely opportunity to examine AQ and its branch in the Islamic Maghreb using aspects of social movement theory. This transnational, even transcontinental, movement is today an important topic among academics, policy makers and anti-terrorism experts, yet basic features of the movement have been ignored. In many ways AQAM resembles traditional movements with a core leadership and peripheral membership that pays homage and obeys objectives and commands. The leadership acknowledges tactics that work or do not work, framing the movement's intentions within a specific frame that resonates with and sells the ideology and goals. The fame and celebrity likewise

---

[35] Francisco, Ronald A. *Collective Action Theory and Empirical Evidence,* (New York: Springer, 2010).

mobilizes the potential membership that has bought into this frame, rallying human and financial support.

This thesis is therefore the first attempt to move beyond political and international relations theories, and to prove that without an understanding of al Qa'ida and its associated movements as just that, *social movements*, all discussions on the topic are useless. It is simply no longer sufficient, given the decade of changes that have taken place within the internal structure of AQ to continue referring to the 'cellular' structure and 'departmentalized' arrangement of this 'group of terrorist.' The ideologies and inspiration that AQ sells is a popular commodity, despite Western administrations attempts to highlight the deaths of many of the organizational leaders, and without social movement theory application, will continue to be misunderstood. The following chapters examine the origins of the AQ message, and to prove their strength as a mobilization tool.

Chapter 3

A Religious Framing

No solution is possible without jihad

Knights under the Prophet's Banner

In many ways Algeria is an ideal place to articulate a violent jihadi and takfiri message that has so successfully resonated with unemployed, disenfranchised and forgotten male youth around the world. Algerian history in particular allows al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb to successfully advance the same anti-government and anti-Western frame that have been successful elsewhere. If we remember that a central motivation to an organization or movement framing its issues in a particular way is to increase membership or sympathetic support, then we can understand AQIM to be in effect 'selling' its ideology though the frames it creates around its important issues. The history of violent jihadi movements in Algeria has allowed for a natural continuation of violent jihad ideologies, from the GIA in the early 1990s, to GSPC beginning in the late 1990s to AQIM today.

Each Algerian organization or movement that preceded AQIM had roughly the same ideals and intentions: to remove the Algerian government, to force out Western influence and to create their own state systems. At the same time that international jihad was 'externalized,' Algerian groups began to focus less on the Algerian government and to broaden their focus to include Western companies and tourists in Algeria. The frames put forth in order to 'sell' or popularize these goals

were above all religious. First, the state was cast as secular, non-religious, and in collusion with the West. The Islamists pronounced *takfir*, that they were not proper Muslims and therefore, excommunicated from Islam. This labeling allowed for a carte blanche attack against the state and its perceived supporters, and the GIA in particular granted its members a full license to kill alleged non-Muslims. In order to position themselves as directly opposite to the excommunicated non-Muslims, Islamists in Algeria, and elsewhere, pronounced themselves to be Salafi, the most pious and devout Muslims. Lastly, when al-Qa'ida arrived in Algeria the new jihad brand was able to easily incorporate many of these aspects into their grand call for jihad.

This chapter will focus on and examine the ways in which AQIM and its forerunners have used religious symbols, terms and ideologies to legitimize, popularize and advance their actions in North/West Africa. Due in large part to Algeria's history and the social, cultural and governmental results of decades of war, AQIM has both a challenge and a unique opportunity to mobilize and encourage membership. An important point that allows jihadi organizations to remain exclusive is their use of *takfir*, and the strict 'us vs. them' dichotomy it creates. Central to this debate is whether it is allowable for a Muslim to assert that another Muslim (in many cases, an incumbent ruler) is an apostate. This is precisely what the GIA did during the Algerian civil war when they began to argue that participation in the democratic process in effect implicated the entire population in the un-Islamic or aggressive actions of the state. Justification for accusing another Muslim of *takfir* is found in several suras of the Qur'an, as well as multiple *hadith*

and later writings of Islamic intellectuals. Sura 5:44, to give one example, tells its readers "If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers." If a Muslim neglects his Islamic duties then, and fails to follow the religion as the Qur'an revealed and the Prophet taught, he is in danger of *takfir*. The Algerian Civil War was an important breeding ground for this ideology, and its presence in North Africa is thanks to the decade of violence there. However, it is not an ideology held by the majority of Muslims around the world, but is in large part unique to violent strands within Algeria and to AQ's anti-Western ideologies. It is therefore, a natural and easy progression for Algerian radicals to adopt AQ frameworks, when so much of the basic and grounded philosophy is already present.

The 'Jihad' Frame

Over the past decades the AQ core has been exceptional in its ability to mobilize thousands of youth in its appeal for international jihad. By calling for Islamic jihad against the 'Jews and Crusaders,' Ben Laden created a frame though which to articulate AQ's issues. What made it particularly successful was the way that the call to jihad resonated with impoverished, disaffected and marginalized Muslim youth around the Middle East and the world. While only a very small percentage were inspired or ever mobilized by the al Qa'ida frame, the fact that the Middle East, and indeed much of the global south, has such large populations of unemployed youth means the number of those who did respond to the call is not insignificant. The exclusivity of the organization, amplified by its use of *takfir*, its fame and the celebrity of its leaders has ensured a continuous supply of young

recruits to its battles around the world. In many ways, at least in the West, the term

jihad has come to be defined and understood by the ideologies, inspirations and

goals of al Qa'ida and its regional branches. But the use and religious connotations of

Islamic jihad existed long before the development of modern violent jihad

movements and groups.

The history of the term jihad in both Algeria and within the AQ repertoire

makes it a natural and easy frame for AQIM. The term jihad has a long and important

history in Islam, and many Muslims would identify less with the modern jihad of AQ

and 'terrorism' and more with the classical definition found in the Quran and *hadith*.

In Arabic, the word is derived from the noun *jahada*, which holds a number of

associations, including endeavor, training, exertion, effort, diligence, and fighting.[36]

Within Islam, the understanding of jihad has two distinct types: greater jihad and

lesser jihad. Of these the more important is greater jihad, the internal struggle that

each Muslim must face in order to become a better believer. Lesser jihad refers to

the external struggle, a fight in the name of religion, and is the focal point of the AQ

repertoire. In a hadith recorded by the Islamic scholar al-Khatib al-Baghdadiis, by

way of Yahya ibn al Ala, the Prophet Mohammed, on return from a battle, tells his

followers, "This day we return from lesser jihad (war) to the greater (self

betterment)." In subsequent generations, lesser jihad became an excuse to fight

wars against non-Muslim entities, for purposes of raiding land, property and slaves.

James Webb notes that in the Western Sahel area slaves were such an important

commodity, albeit with short life expectancy, that jihad was fought almost

---

[36] Matter, Philip ed., Jihad, *Encyclopedia of Modern Middle East and North Africa*, Vol. 2, Edition 2,
(New York: Macmillian Reference, 2011), 1236.

continuously in order to fulfill the great demand. Because Muslims could not be captured and enslaved, one great trader from the edge of the Sahara sent armed men in search of possible captives and in one year alone sent three thousand slaves across the desert to Morocco.[37] The concept of violent lesser jihad, therefore, is long entrenched in both the history and minds of the populations in North/West Africa.

The call for modern jihad in Algeria predates the creation of AQ and is contemporary with the beginnings of the use of *takfir* by radical Islamist groups in the country. In response to the elections held in 1991 and 1992 groups of radical youth proclaimed themselves ready for jihad and began perpetrating attacks against the state. These young men, who would become the GIA, believed that election of rulers went against Islam and that democracy was *kufr*, or apostasy. The first such case of Algerian jihad took place on November 28, 1991 and involved a bloody attack against the city of Guemmar, a military outpost in the northeast of Algeria.[38] According to jihad expert Gilles Kepel, this was the first indication that jihadism had taken root within Algeria's Islamist circles. Like AQ ideology, which would come later, the jihad factions in North Africa believed that power should be taken away from the secular state through struggle and force, not through the electoral process that they believed to be a product of the West. The November, 1991 attack was the first opportunity the jihadist had to begin their armed struggle against the Algerian state.[39]

---

[37] Webb, James L.A. Jr, *Desert frontier: ecological and economic change along the Western Sahel,* 1600-1850, (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), pg 77.
[38] Kepel, *Jihad*, 256.
[39] Kepel, *Jihad*, 257.

These jihadi sentiments, which continued to develop throughout the long and bloody Civil War, were concisely articulated by the GIA in a letter published in 1994 that stated, "The GIA is not fighting a war in order to open dialogue with 'apostate' rules, not to establish the 'democracy' of a moderate Islamic regime favored by the West, but to purge the land of the ungodly and establish, through jihad, an Islamic State."[40] As with all communiqués published by the GIA, this one also included the their poignant slogan, "No agreements, no truce, no dialogue."[41] Interestingly, this slogan was taken from the writings of Abdullah Azzam, long before his partnership with Ben Laden and the formation of al Qa'ida. This slogan was originally in reference to Palestine, where Azzam resolved that the Israeli issue could only be answered with "jihad, a rifle, and that is all."[42]

Eventually, the liberal use of *takfir* in order to purge Algeria of those whom the GIA determined to be un-Islamic (or not Islamic enough) eventually led to the rejecting of the method due to extreme violence. The GIA's replacement, the newly formed Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, which at first excluded civilians but continued to use the jihad frame in its battle against the Algerian state. In the group's first official communiqué in April 1999, it pledged to represent "the genuine path that jihad has followed since its inception in Algeria." As a violent Islamist organization, the GSPC expanded its sights to international targets and began aspiring, through jihad, to fight against Western influences in Islamic lands, to replace the secular Algerian government with the return of the Caliphate, and to

---

[40] Kepel, *Jihad*, 266.
[41] Kepel, *Jihad*, 266.
[42] Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 99.

implement Sharia law. Of central importance to its alignment process with the global jihad vanguard of AQ, the GSPC's vision of jihad was no longer limited to the Algerian conflict, but aspired to a regional and even universal battle similar to that of AQ's. The group wanted to take jihad to every corner of the world and attack non-believers, including Christians and Jews, in their own lands.[43] Despite reconciliation initiatives by the government in the late 1990s and 2000, the GSPC continued to operate a jihadi agenda at the same time that it began formally reaching out to Ben Laden and his AQ organization.

Through participating in international jihadi operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, members of the GSPC developed and cultivated a relationship with both Ayman al Zawahiri and AQ in Mesopotamia's leader Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi. It was most likely AQ's branch operating in Iraq that was in closest contact with the GSPC and managed the growth of interaction and communications between the two organizations. Leaders in Mesopotamia and in the Islamic Maghreb for example, took the same nom de guerre, that of Musab Bin Umayr, who died as a martyr during the battle of Uhud in 625. According to al-Zarqawi's 2006 obituary, Musab "became the patron saint for suicide bombers and is alleged to have kept the banner of the Prophet Mohamed flying in the battle of Yathrib, supporting it with his bleeding stumps after losing both arms."[44] In July 2005, with the GSPC's full support and public endorsement, AQ in Mesopotamia militants kidnapped and executed two Algerian diplomats in Iraq, an event that symbolically sealed the organizations'

---

[43] Kohlmann, Evan "Two decades of jihad in Algeria", *The Nefa Foundation,* (May 2007), 11-12
[44] Colburn, Patrick, "Al-Zarqawi: A life drenched in blood" Accessed March 15, 2012, ww.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/alzarqawi-a-life-drenched-in-blood-481636.html

bond.[45]

Unlike the collapse of the GIA that signaled the formation of the GSPC, the progression to AQIM was a simple pledge of allegiance and renaming of the existing organizational structure. Because the two organizations had grown so closely aligned, the GSPCs transition to the al-Qa'ida branch in the Islamic Maghreb was relatively smooth. Both organizations were particularly concerned with jihad, and the flow of jihadi volunteers from Algeria east to Iraq and Afghanistan was symbolic of the bond. Therefore, the jihad action frame articulated by AQIM is similar to, but not an exact replica of the AQ core frame. As militant jihad-oriented Algerians moved closer to AQ's core ideology, they moved away from the GIA's focus on Algerian politics. When AQ uses the term 'jihad', it is referring to its entire catalog of actions, ideologies and motivations. For example, when AQAM invokes the term, it is referring to its purpose of existence: a fight against the West, the establishment of an Islamic state, the implementation of Sharia law and a return to the Caliphate. AQ frames its fight within a call for jihad, and through using the term its leaders and members refer to a "shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements and urge others to act in concert to affect change."[46] An examination of Azzam's understanding and use of jihad follows, with particular focus on two frames: the move away from internal jihad to external jihad, and the romanticizing of martyrdom and jihad.

---

[45] Filiu, Jean-Pierre, "AQIM- Algerian Challenge or Global Threat", *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Middle East Center*, No. 5, 5
[46] Benford and Snow, "Frame Processes and Social Movements," 615.

AQAM's understanding and justification for jihad is a frame that resonates with and mobilizes many Muslims around the world. The ideologues of AQ draw their understanding of jihad from selected hadith and Quranic verses and have successfully romanticized it for tens of thousands of youth around the world. If Ben Laden is the father of AQ, then Abdullah Azzam is the father of the international jihad trend that defines AQ strategy and framing. First, Azzam was able to shift the target and purpose of the modern interpretation of a state-centric from lesser jihad from an internal enemy to an external one. That is to say, he argued that jihad should be fought against occupiers of Muslim lands first, and the secular governments of Islamic countries second.[47] This shift helps to explain the gradual move of Algerian violent extremist from the internal to the external jihad. Whereas the GIA concentrated on attacking the Algerian state, its leaders, its employees, and even its perceived supporters (in the GIA's severe use of *takfir* ideology to help foster a 'with us or against us' mentality), the GSPC and eventually AQIM in contrast became increasingly concerned with French, UN and Western citizens and industries operating within the county.

AQ, and violent jihadi groups more generally, employ a selection of hadith and Quranic verses that lends justification and depth to their arguments for worldwide jihad against the enemies of Islam. A favorite verse from the Quran that AQ uses repeatedly is Surat al-Anfal, 8:39. In reference to non-Islamic states, the verse commands Muslims to "fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the

---

[47] Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 99.

religion, all of it, is for Allah."[48] Al Qa'ida celebrities such as Ben Laden, Al Zawahiri

and Azzam endorse the use of this verse to justify attacks on Western targets,

lending authority and depth to the argument and in so doing create a 'strong' and

'dynamic' frame.[49] For example, in a December 2011 letter to Muslim youth around

the world, Ben Laden closes with the verse after arguing that "Muslims are being

humiliated, tortured, and ruthlessly killed…and it is time to fight these satanic forces

with the utmost strength and power…jihad has become an obligation upon each and

every Muslim."[50] He laments the loss of homes and families and equated his youth

fighting in the Soviet-Afghan war with youth a decade later when he founded AQ in

1998, challenging Muslim youth to follow in his jihadi footsteps.[51]

In a similar reference to this particular verse, al Zawahiri argues that those

who need "to be fought at this day and age are those rulers who govern the people

without the *sharia*- they who fight against the people of Islam, who befriend the

infidels from among the Jews, Christians, and others."[52] Azzam also used the verse

repeatedly, threatening that without this jihad, "Unbelief would triumph and

sedition would win the day."[53] Therefore, the purpose of jihad is to "eliminate

tumult and sedition (*fitna*)" through the elimination of non-Muslims. Azzam, who

wrote at a less radicalized period in international jihad than al Zawahiri, believed

the goal of jihad also included conversion to Islam.[54] Such a belief could be one

reason for his eventual assassination by more violent factions within jihad circles,

---

[48] Zakr Online, Quran Sura 8, verse 39, translated by www.zakr.org
[49] Chong Druckman, 111.
[50] Ibrahim, Raymond, 268.
[51] Ibrahim, Raymond, 268.
[52] Ibrahim, Raymond, 145.
[53] Kepel, Al Qaeda in its Own Words, 111.
[54] Kepel, Al Qaeda in its Own Words, 128.

who wished to push jihad to a more confrontational place against non-believers and the West. In any case, beliefs like these became part of the core AQ message, and have since been used and reinforced by generations of AQAM ideologues and important thinkers, leading to an externalization of the enemy and an international jihad.

In a 2008 interview, the leader of AQIM, Abdelmalek Droukdel, used the same Sura in reference to the goals of his organization in North/West Africa. It is interesting to note however, that one can see the division and independence of AQIM as he continues: "Our general goals are the same goals of Al Qaeda the mother, and you know them. As far as our goals concerning the Islamic Maghreb, they are plenty."[55] AQIM's emir, therefore, both aligns his organization to AQ, and insists that that it continues to hold independent goals and purposes.

In addition to shifting the frame from internal governments to external, international targets, Azzam was also successful in romanticizing jihad and helping develop a cult of dutiful martyrdom within radical, Sunni jihadist circles. According to terrorism expert Giles Kepel:

> The political figure of the jihad fighter who deliberately puts an end to his own life while killing the greatest number of the enemy first emerged in Iran during the Islamic Revolution and then spread to Lebanon under the aegis of Hezbollah. Suicide attacks next jumped from the Shiite to the Sunni populations through the vector of

---

[55] Droukdel, Abdelmalek interview with The New York Times, Published: (July 1, 2008).

Hamas in Palestine, and then were hijacked by Al Qaeda, leading to the events of 9/11.[56]

Some of the most important justifications attempts and popularizing efforts employed by AQ where therefore being written and discussed at the same time that suicide martyrdom was making the transition from Shiite to Sunni organizations like AQ, including jihad-oriented organizations in Algeria.[57] In writings, such as "Join the Caravan" and "Morals and Jurisprudence of Jihad" Azzam argues in favor of jihad and challenges Muslims to participate. Offensive as well as defensive jihad must be undertaken, and Azzam encouraged attacking unbelieves in their own countries when they are not mobilized and expelling them from Muslim lands when they are present.[58] Within a nationalist and anti-Western postcolonial context across the Muslim world, and particularly in Algeria, this jihad frame resonates exceptionally well among impoverished youth.

Azzam was particularly successful in provoking and inciting young Muslim men to jihad and martyrdom. In "Join the Caravan," Azzam laments the lack of true and devout Muslims in Afghanistan, stating that he wanders the battlefront in search of men who can read from the Quran to no avail. He encourages Muslim men, prodding them to action: "The crisis besetting the Muslim world is due to the lack of responsible men who are capable of bearing the burden of integrity."[59] The time has come for "true men"[60] he pleads. Going even further, he argues that anyone who is

---

[56] Kepel, *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom*, 78.
[57] Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 100-101.
[58] From The Defense of Muslim Territories, translated in *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 106.
[59] Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 111.
[60] Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 113

not fighting jihad is committing sins.[61] The terms are clear for young Muslims

everywhere: if they were true men and true Muslims, then to the battlefields they

must go. If they fail to respond, they are to be considered sinners who were weak

and without integrity. This was a potent call for disenfranchised young men who

were struggling with their identity, piety and place in the world.

Later, al Zawahiri would threaten Muslim youth with humiliation if they did

not participate in AQ's jihad. Al Zawahiri quotes a hadith attributed to the Prophet

Mohammed, "If you take up a domestic life, hold on to the tails of cattle, are content

with farming, and thus abandon jihad, Allah will let humiliation lord over you until

you return to your religion."[62] Arguing that Muslims were once the "mightiest" of

people, he accuses believers of abandoning jihad and as a consequence bringing

humiliation to themselves.

Al Qa'ida has equated jihad and martyrdom using the terms interchangeably.

For AQ, and as a result the West, jihad has become synonymous with suicide

operations in which Muslims sacrifice themselves as martyrs for the cause.

Pamphlets, speeches and letters from AQ's most important ideologues include

discussions of jihad and martyrdom as much the same thing. In Azzam's "Morals and

Jurisprudence of Jihad" for example, he defines and discusses both terms, including

their etymology and proper usages. Thus, within the heavily laden term of jihad is

included the duty of martyrdom for young Muslims who are men enough to hear the

call. This framing is central to the ways in which al Qa'ida exists, expands and

reproduces itself. By examining the AQ dialogue and messages through social

---

[61] Kepel, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, 117.
[62] Ibrahim, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, 144-145.

movement framing theory, we now have a batter understand of the core movement, and the thinking of its leaders.

How does this AQ frame apply specifically to AQIM?

In December 2006, the newly aligned GSPC, a month before officially changing their name to AQIM, attacked a US company for the first time. This attack is significant for a number of reasons, and in many ways is symbolic of the GSPC's frame alignment shift to that of AQAM. During the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s, the GIA and later the GSPC had never perpetrated attacks directly against the US or US based companies. They had attacked foreigners, but this had been focused almost exclusively on forcing French colonizers out of Algeria and attacking French establishments and sympathizers. The attack on employees of BRC, a well known American subcontractor working in Iraq as well as Algeria, was proof of a shift from focusing on a local, Algerian jihad to the international jihad propagated by Azzam and adopted by AQ. Additionally, this was the first attack against the Algerian oil industry, suggesting further that the perpetrators had shifter their targets to align with the AQ international jihad frame.

Second, this attack was accompanied by a video similar to those previously distributed by al Qa'ida and associated movements elsewhere. According to jihad and terrorism expert Jean-Luc Marret, "This diffusion of Web videos is a media practice imported from the transnational *jihadi* networks" into Algeria, with a distinctly AQ mark. As customary of AQ, al Zawahiri gave the introductory speech for the video, which was followed by shots of the planning phase, making of the

bomb and execution of the attack.[63] Through 2007 and after AQIM began

perpetrating 'Iraqi-style' attacks, the most important element of which was the

appearance of suicide martyrdom similar to those of AQAM elsewhere. Suicide

bombings became increasingly common, with attacks on police and military

installations and an attempted assassination of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.[64]

Andrew Black agrees that these attacks are a visible shift and "major departure from

the norm in Algeria and are indicative of how AQIM's emir, Abu Musab Abd al-

Wadoud (also known as Abdelmalek Droukdel), has altered the group's ideology

and strategy" after formally joining AQ.[65]

The AQIM leader was also committed from the beginning to Azzam and al

Zawahiri's call for martyrdom. In May 2007 Droukdel began recruiting participates

for suicide attacks by issuing a call for those "committed to die."[66] This call

resonated with young Algerians in the same way that earlier challenges had. AQIM is

calling on only the most committed young Muslim men, prompting those who are

not 'willing' or not 'strong' enough to continue holding the tails of cows.

The UN Attacks

Since the 2006 alignment Algerian jihadists began focusing attacks on the

United Nation offices and buildings in the Algerian capital as a symbol of Western

influence and hegemony. 2007 was a particularly bloody and violent year for AQIM,

---

[63] Marret, Jean-Luc. "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: A 'Glocal' Organization. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism.* Vol. 31, Issue 6, (June 2008), 547-548.
[64] John Rollins, "Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, February 5, 2010, 2, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070
[65] Black, Andrew, "AQIM employs martyrdom operations in Algeria" *Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Focus,* Vol. 4, Issue 20, 20 (September 2007).
[66] Ibid.

as they shifted their frame of attack outward to encompass an international agenda. Two points are most important regarding the attacks perpetrated through 2007. First, it is significant that the most deadly attacks occurred on April 11, July 11 and December 11, a day of the month symbolic for al Qa'ida and their jihad against the West. For AQ's branch in the Islamic Maghreb, this is also a particularly important day, as in 2006 al Zawahiri chose the 5th anniversary, September 11 2006, to welcome the GSPC into the AQ global movement.

Second, many of the targets attacks that year (and after) were associated with UN and Western involvement in Algeria. Drawing on the 2003 attack in Iraq that killed Chief of Mission Sergio Vieira de Mello, AQIM used the same rhetoric and message in the December 11 Algiers attack.[67] Labeling the UN headquarters in Algeria a "Den of international infidels," the attack was intended for "the Crusaders who are occupying our lands and plundering our treasures." 2007 also saw the first appearance and increasing use AQAM style suicide attacks in Algeria, particularly those involving VBIED (Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device). All the December 11 attacks used VBIED, a trend which continued into the next years as we continue to see suicide attacks using both vehicles-borne and human-borne explosives.[68]

On the same day as the December 11 UN attacks, AQIM also exploded bombs in front of the Algerian Constitutional Courts, combining both national and international targets in one bloody day. The Court attacks are evidence that the

---

[67] Jebnoun, Noureddine, What is Behind the December 11th Bomb Attacks in Algiers?, Accessed March 1, 2012 http://ccas.georgetown.edu/88443.html
[68] Isaacs, Russell J. "The North African Franchise: AQIM's Threat to U.S. Security", *Working Paper*, 90.

former nationalist GSPC was still concerned with jihad against the Algerian government.[69]

In conclusion, with the creation of al-Qa'ida, its leaders began popularizing jihad and martyrdom for scores of young, disenfranchised and impoverished youth. Social movement's framing theory shows that is was not a simple 'frame lifting' and adoption by AQIM, but a more complex process that both adopted and rejected aspects of the parent organization's philosophy. AQ's leaders prorogated their message in countless video-tapes, interviews and letters, where they "relentlessly interpreted every event (or nonevent) on the jihad front-- attacks, wars, and even Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake in Kashmir, both in 2005-- as plot lines in a grand narrative leading to the apotheosis of Islam and the defeat of infidels."[70] In Algeria, because of its long history of violence and severe religious ideologues, AQ has found a willing partner and ally in the global jihad. AQ's jihad frame, their battle against the West, the fight against secular governments in Islamic lands and their desire to reestablish the Caliphate ruled by Sharia law, has resonated with the Islamists in North/West Africa. Through the application of framing theory, aspects of AQIM and AQ become apparent and elucidated. The core leadership has manipulated and altered much of the traditional understanding and interpretations of jihad, takfir and martyrdom, selling it to Islamic youth around the world and a forgone responsibility and duty to those 'man enough.'

---

[69] Filiu, Jean-Pierre "The Local and Global Jihad of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," 223.
[70] Kepel, *Beyond Terrorism and Martyrdom,* 116.

Mobilizing Resources in the Name of al-Qa'ida

As the analysis of al Qa'ida framing techniques and issues suggests, the way that

AQAM mobilize multiple resources presents a similarly difficult project, given their

clandestine nature. In the case of resource mobilization, it is exceptionally difficult

given the fact that members, donors and other types of 'human resources' tend not

to acknowledge their involvement in AQ. It seems logical that any financial

contributions to AQ or work done on its behalf would best be accomplished quietly

and with as little publicity as possible until its purpose was accomplished. As

Edwards and McCarthy point out, "Human time and effort along with money are the

most widely appreciated kinds of resources that are more or less available to

collective actors."[71] However, resources are not limited to human and financial, as

Marwan Khawaja points out: "A diverse list of resources such as income and savings,

communication networks, trust and 'moral commitment' and legitimacy and

labor"[72] are all pertinent to a movement's success. For a clandestine and hunted

organization like AQ, trust and commitment are two of the most important

resources, along with legitimacy. Authors who work on AQ or similar violent jihadi

groups have neglected to examine the ways in which AQAM and its leaders have

been successful at immobilizing resources, and the mechanisms through which they

accomplish this. This chapter offers a new and unique examination of al Qa'ida and

---

[71] Edwards, Bob and John D. McCarthy, 116.
[72] Khawaja, Marwan, "Resource Mobilization, Hardship, and Popular Collective Action in the West Bank," *Social Forces,* Vol. 73, No. 1 (September, 1994), 195.

the ways it has reproduced itself in the Islamic Maghreb through resource mobilization theory.

Much of the available literature on social movements and resource mobilization pertains to state controlled distribution of funds, such at the feminist movements in the US. Through receipt of state funds, it is obvious that such movements are in many ways beholden to the state and the constraints it imposes.[73] AQ, of course, had not received state funding, at least not publically from the US, and indeed other states have been particularly active in identifying and freezing what funding it does possess. What AQ does have to offer its branches and franchises is a name well established in both jihadi lore and international cognizance. As will be seen, AQIM was encouraged to align itself with and fully articulate the AQ creed both before and after formally joining the movement and enjoying the benefits that come with it.

Historically, fundraising has occupied much of AQ leadership's time and effort, which they are able to accomplish in large part due to their celebrity. This chapter examines both the resources AQ is able to garner, as well as the ways in which they acquire them. It examines the unique funding activities of AQIM that deviate from other AQAMs. For example, has AQIM's continued smuggling of drug and other contraband hindered their moral resources? What can this comparison teach us about the way AQ operates?

Moral Resources

Moral resources are perhaps the most important component to AQ's

---

[73] Edwards and McCarthy, 121.

resource mobilization endeavors. These resources include legitimacy, solidary

support, sympathetic support and celebrity, all of which are vital to the function and

survival of AQAM. Additionally, these resources can overlap or complement each

other in many ways. For example, AQ has continued to use the celebrity of famous

religious personalities to lend legitimacy to their campaign, something that is

examined in detail below. Moral resources, often external to the movement, are

bestowed by the source upon the movement. Other movements create their moral

resources internally.[74] AQ has done both.

This chapter first examines the successful ways in which AQ has used big

names, both internal and external personalities, to further solidify their moral

resources. AQAM have been concerned from the beginning with the religious

legitimacy of the movement, and indeed as discussed above, this is how they frame

and sell the organization's initiatives. Many people today, and all those involved in

the study of terrorism, violent religions groups or AQ, know the names, if not the

positions and purposes of Osama ben Laden, Aymen al- Zawahiri, Mullah Omar,

Omar Adbel-Rahman, known as the Blind Sheik, Abdullah Azzam, Hassan Hattab,

Mokhtar Belmokhtar and Abdelmalek Droukdel. AQAM continuously strives to

garner moral resources in the people who lead, and lend legitimacy to the

organization. There are many layers of moral resources within AQ, with the

leadership being an important one that brings with it both moral resources and

helps to mobilize further resources such as human and financial.

---

[74]Ibid, 125-126.

This is a particularly salient concept today after the death of Ben Laden and the somewhat confused transition of power that took place in the following months. Many experts concluded that without the celebrated founder and leader, AQ would dissolve and cease to be an international threat. In his article on leadership and mobilization, Ronald A. Francisco examines movements and their famous leaders, pointing out a number of interesting aspects that can be applied to AQ. The first is the importance of high levels of education in the leadership of movements, and the added legitimacy that it brings. For example, Fidel Castro, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela were all lawyers while Che Guevara attended medical school.[75] Dr. Marten Luther King deceived his PhD from Boston University. It might be difficult to conceptually compare these organizations to al Qa'ida, for indeed Gandhi is famous for his non-violent approach to social reform, but don't forget that Mandela remained on the US terrorist watch list for many years even after he had been elected to the presidency of South Africa due to the violent history of his African National Congress party which he controlled.

Within the context of the Middle East and Africa, too, high levels of education play predominately in the leadership circles of social movements. In Sudan, Hassan al-Turabi led the National Islamic Front movement, which gained considerable power before the downfall of its leader. Turabi himself held high degrees from Khartoum, London and Paris, the last being a doctorate from the Sorbonne. Giles Kepel points out that: "At the age of 32, Turabi was a polyglot intellectual with

---

[75] Francisco, Ronald A, 14.

double claim to legitimacy, both traditional and modern."[76] In the AQAM organization, the same rule seems to apply.

The top leadership and ideologues of the al Qa'ida movement have disproportionate levels of education to the men who follow them. Tracing the educational histories of some of AQ's main personalities, and examining the ways in which their educations have lent moral legitimacy to the movement revels much about the way AQ works as a movement. Ayman al Zawahiri became famous in Islamist circles after the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 when he was imprisoned, along with thousands of suspected conspirers, by a vengeful Egyptian government. Because of his language skills and higher education, he became the spokesperson for those being tried for Sadat's death. However, he could not be directly linked to the assassination, and was released after three years of imprisonment and torture.

Maadi, a leafy, upper class Cairo neighborhood, was home to the al Zawahiri family after emigrating from the Arabian Peninsula some generations before Ayman was born there in 1951. Both his mother and father come from highly educated, distinguished families and he grew up in a politicized and academic family. Like al Zawahiri, his father was a trained physician who taught pharmacology at a local Cairo university. The prestigious religious institution al Azhar also features prominently in his history: his grandfather and great-grandfather were scholars at al Azhar University, and his great uncle had been a rector there. On his mother's side, too, there were prominent academics, as her father was the founder of King

[76] Kepel, *Jihad*, 178.

Saud University in Saudi Arabia and ambassador to many Islamic countries in the region. Moreover, his maternal uncle was founder and first secretary general of the Arab League based in Cairo. Al Zawahiri himself attended medical school, graduating in 1974 and practicing in clinics supported by the Muslim Brotherhood before making his way to Pakistan and becoming one of the first Arabs to experience the Afghan-Soviet war. It was this plight of the Afghan mujahedeen that would later inspire Ben Laden to form al-Qa'ida.[77] AQAM's most important ideologue, therefore, is not only a highly educated intellectual, he also beings with him generations of moral resources.

Abdullah Azzam, mentioned earlier as the father of modern jihad, was one of the most highly educated ideologues of AQ and continues to lend the movement moral resources years after his death. Azzam began his higher education studying agriculture at college close to his family home in then Transjordan and went on to teach at a local school. In 1964 he seems to have changed his mind, and he enrolled in Damascus University where he wrote a thesis on marriage in Islamic law and jurisprudence in Syria and Jordan and received a diploma in sharia studies. After graduating with highest honors in 1966, he went back to teaching elementary school in the West Bank while traveling to local villages preaching and discussing religion. In 1971 Azzam began a doctoral program at al Azhar University, the same prestigious Cairo institution where al Zawahiri boasted generations of relatives. In the three years that Azzam spent in Cairo, he immersed himself in the Islamist and political scene, still in upheaval after President Gamal Abdel Nasser's severe

---

[77] Riedel, 16-18.

52

crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. Azzam befriended the family of Sayyid Qutb and probably met the Blind Sheik, Omar Abdel Rahman, currently imprisoned in the US for his involvement in the New York World Trace Center bombings in 1993. He might have also met al Zawahiri, though there is no real evidence for this. When Azzam left Cairo in 1973, under pressure from the Egyptian government, "holding a doctorate in Islamic law, he had not only the immense religious prestige of a graduate of Al Azhar, but also a network of relations" which would later serve both him and Ben Laden in creating a global jihad network.[78]

The celebrity of Osama Ben Laden is separate from those associated with high levels of education and learning, but it still continues to factor predominantly in the myths and aura of AQAM. Ben Laden spent some time at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah studying economics and management, and reports differ widely as to whether or not he graduated. A generally accepted answer to this question seems to be that he quit school to work in construction in his father's empire. Though he does not hold the prestigious degrees from the famous al Azhar University as Azzam and others do, Ben Laden did contribute a vast personal fortune to the movement. Despite not having high degrees, Ben Laden was concerned with being viewed as a religious pillar within Islamist circles. By the end of his life, many followers had begun to call him by the honorific title sheik, or religious leader.

Of central importance to Ben Laden acquisition of support and resources was his ability (or not) to pronounce *fatwas*. As a moral resource, the ability of the leader

---

[78] Kepel, 83-88.

53

of an Islamist organization or movement to give legitimate *fatwas* is of huge importance, and Ben Laden sought after the religious legitimacy and celebrity that comes with it for many years. One does not become a sheik and have the ability to create *fatwas* through self-titlement, but rather must be accepted into group through years of seeking religious knowledge and though the acknowledgement of both students and the community of sheiks. As early as 1996 Ben Laden began to issue *fatwas*, including the "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places." This famous *fatwa* had several accompanying signatures, including that of Azzam, which helped to lend it religious legitimacy.

In order to claim legitimacy and mobilize supporters, Ben Laden was acutely aware of his image. He worked hard to create a pious and devout image of himself, always appearing in interviews and videos wearing white robes with a scarf around his head. In many ways he was masterful at self-advancement:

> [Ben Laden] built his own legend, modeling himself after the Prophet Muhammad, who in the seventh century led the Muslim people to rout the infidels, or nonbelievers, from North Africa and the Middle East. Just as Muhammad saw the Koran revealed to him amid intense persecution, Ben Laden regarded his expulsions from Saudi Arabia and then Sudan in the 1990s as signs that he was a chosen one.[79]

For Ben Laden, the expulsion was a modern day *hijra*, a journey mirroring that of Prophet Muhammad, taken under threat and duress, and followed by the flowering of a new world order. As the chosen one, Ben Laden perceived (and advanced) himself to be the emir of the new Islamic order he hoped to create. Indeed,

---

[79] Zernike, Kate and Michael T. Kaufman, The Most Wanted Face of Terrorism, Obituary of Osama Ben Laden, 1957-2011, New York Times, (May 2, 2011).

especially with the context of the highly educated al Zawahiri, Azzam and other religious scholars who supported Ben Laden's movement, he was almost illiterate, just as the Prophet had been. He was the prince and AQ was the vehicle that would propel his dream forward. Despite what later analysis said about his time on the battlefield,[80] Ben Laden was a masterful storyteller in the way he created the cult of personality around himself. Young Muslim men were enthralled: "His own descriptions of the battles he had seen, how he had lost the fear of death and slept in the face of artillery fire, were brushstrokes of an almost divine figure."[81] Ben Laden fancied himself, sold himself, as superhuman, a mystical figure above the battle against the West.

He encouraged this larger-than-life persona, in part granted to him by the US when it labeled him Public Enemy Number One after the East African embassy bombing in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. In a 1999 interview with a prominent Pakistani reporter, then working for TIME magazine, the AQ leader answered a question by referring to himself in the third person, saying, "Osama Ben Laden is confident that the Islamic nation will carry out its duty."[82] He continued by changing the label to suit his persona as Emir, equating himself with AQ: "To call us Enemy Number One or Two does not hurt us."

In the same interview Ben Laden presented himself as cryptic and mysterious, as possessing knowledge that he refuses to share. As the mythic,

---

[80] Reports suggest that Ben Laden never engaged in combat.
[81] New York Times Obituary.
[82] "Conversation with Terror", Ben Laden interview in TIME Magazine, (republished September 14, 2001).

superhuman leader who refers to himself with the 'royal we,' he is also the keeper of secrets. In this instance, the reporter inquires about chemical weapons, to which Ben Laden responds, "Acquiring weapons for the defense of Muslims is a religious duty. If I have indeed acquired these weapons, then I thank God for enabling me to do so. And if I seek to acquire these weapons, I am carrying out a duty."[83] His celebrity, and the moral weight of those around him, did more that anything else to propel al Qa'ida forward and mobilize resources worldwide.

Though Ben Laden was not a widely accepted sheikh holding the ability to pronounce *fatwas*, he did spend years studying religion in pursuit of moral legitimacy. Likewise, several religious pillars of the Islamic world provided support of the jihad, providing legitimacy and morally 'backing up' Ben Laden's religious opinions. While these religious pronouncements did not give AQ a free hand to commit global and unchecked jihad against perceived unbelievers, and were considerably backtracked after September 11, 2001,[84] they did provide a moral legitimacy and backing. Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi, the Grand Sheikh at al Azhar Mosque and University as well as the charismatic preacher Sheikh Yousef Abdullah Qaradawi spoke in favor of jihad and martyrdom in order to defend one's religion. Applied specifically to Israel, but easily adapted by AQ, the *fatwas* included reference to civilian causalities as collateral damage and a differentiation between suicide and martyrdom.[85]

The Resources of AQIM

---

[83] Ibid.

[84] After 9/11 both of these famous sheikhs condemned the attack, and substantially tempered their support for international jihad.

[85] Kepel, *Al-Qaeda in its own Words,* 92-94

How can this understanding of the educated and celebrated leadership of the AQ core be applied to, and aid in a better understanding of, AQIM? In what ways has AQ reproduced itself in the Islamic Maghreb, and how have the jihad organization continued despite this alignment? The moral resources and religious legitimacy, as well as the ways in which the movement is funded, AQIM seem to differ somewhat from AQ branches elsewhere. Leaders of AQIM are not an urbanized elite, but more in tune with the harsh nomadic lifestyle associated with North/West African Berbers and Tuaregs. Due to a lack of media outlets and expertise, the GSPC suffered from both a lack of legitimacy and, perhaps worse of all, obsoleteness. It continued to lack sufficient religious resources, in the form of religious leaders who could provide religious justification and legitimacy for its continuing jihad against the Algerian State. Moreover, Islamic scholars, dismayed by the bloodshed of fellow Muslims perpetrated by Muslims, condemned the GSPC's tactics. Even pro-jihad religious leaders such as Qaradawi, the same sheikh who advocated and provided justification for martyrdom operations elsewhere, along with several religious leaders in Saudi Arabia, issued *fatwas* outlining and explaining the reasons why the conflict perpetrated by the GSPC in Algeria was in fact not a jihad. More concerned with the US led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, religious leaders rejected the internal struggle in Algeria. The GSPC therefore approached AQ, hoping to gain from the legitimacy and moral resources already cultivated by the movement. In other words, "The desire to anchor the fight against the Algerian government firmly within the global Jihad against 'crusaders and Jews' partly explains its strategic alliance with Al Qaeda, as well as some if its forays into the complex area of political

and religious discourse."[86] The organizational and ideological re-alignment of the GSPC into AQIM under the umbrella of the AQ core, was, therefore, a mutually beneficial move. Movement loyalty and solidarity, two of the most important additional forms of moral resources between two aligned organizations, was created while the celebrity of both was enhanced. AQ could claim a farther reach than before, expanding all the way to North Africa, while the new AQIM had instant access to the historical weight of AQ *fatwas* and the celebrities who issued them.

The moral resources already present in the GSPC were different from those of the AQ core. Leaders of AQIM brought lower levels of education and religious scholarship, but more practical and regional expertise. One of the most well known AQIM leaders, due in part to his longevity as a fighter and jihadi, is Abdelmalek Droukdel, also known by the nom de guerre Abu Musab, which he shared with AQI's leader al Zarqawi. Much less is known about AQIM leaders that other associated movements, due in part to their clandestine nature and the fact they do not self-promote to the extent that others do. Part of Droukdel's allure and the moral resources that come with it is the remarkably long time he has been associated with the Algerian jihad. AQIM's longtime emir was born southwest of Algiers in Meftah, Algeria in 1967 and later trained either as an engineer, where he would learn the skills necessary for bomb making.[87] In a 2005 interview, Droukdel discusses his alignment and involvement with the Algerian jihad:

> In 1992, I managed to make contact with Shaykh Said Makhloufi—one of

[86] Soriano, Manuel R. Torres "The Road to Media Jihad: The Propaganda Actions of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb", *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Vol. 23 No. 1, (2010), 79.
[87] Botha, Anneli. *Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalism of Domestic Terrorism.* ISS Monograph Serious, No 144, June 2008, 41

the commanders of the Algerian jihad—and I was honored to join the mujahedeen

brothers in December 1993. I was assigned to fabricate explosives...because of

my previous university education··Afterwards, I commanded the Al-Quds

Brigade (nowadays known as the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Brigade) and then I was busy

manufacturing, teaching, and assembling materiel for the mujahedeen brothers.[88]

According to the UN, while involved with the GIA Droukdel was responsible

for building explosives that killed hundreds of civilians in attacks on public places

and later for introducing suicide bombing into Algeria. [89] The recourses provided by

Droukdel are, therefore, a very specific set of skills that allows the organization to

operate more effectively and efficiently. For his decades of involvement with jihad

oriented Islamists groups, he received a life term in March 2007[90] and a death

sentence in March 2012, both in absentia.[91]

Droukdel's jihad history is long and bloody, having worked with the GIA at

the height of its *takfiri* war against the Algerian state and its citizens. After the

dissolution of the GIA and the formation of the GSPC, Droukdel would follow Hassan

Hattab, emir of the GSPC, before forcing him out and taking over in. Under the new

leader, the GSPC returned to targeting civilians, one of the main reasons for Hattab's

breakaway from the GIA. Droukdel began reaching out to AQ, a major break from

the previously Algerian-centric focus of Islamist activity there, and by 2006 was

---

[88] Kohlmann, 15.
[89] UN Security Council Committee, Abdemmalek Droukdel, Accessed on 15 March 2012,
www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQI23207E.shtml
[90] Ibid.
[91] Algerian al-Qaeda chief Droukdel Sentenced in Absentia, 12 March, 2012,
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17359310

successful in gaining full alignment with the organization.[92] In a video message issued in 2007, the new emir of AQIM was enthusiastic has he gushed praise for Ben Laden along with promises of allegiance: "Oh Sheikh . . . launch us wherever you wish, and you will [never] find us anything but attentive and obedient...Our announcement that we have joined [Al-Qaeda] and our oath of allegiance to you are a thorn in the side of the Alliance of Evil . . . We eagerly await your orders."[93]

Like Droukdel, Mokhtar Belmokhtar has a long and bloody history of jihad in Algeria. Belmokhtar is known as one of the 'Afghan Arabs,' who traveled to Afghanistan between 1992 and 1993. Like Droukdel, he was involved with the GIA and the GSPC, before turning his jihad regional and attacking the Paris-Dakar rally in 1999 and a Mauritanian military barracks in 2005, killing 15 soldiers and wounding 17 more.[94] In 2002 he was christened 'uncatchable' by French intelligence, and has "operated as a critical facilitator and emir of the Sahara and Sahel regions for Algerian groups including the Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA), the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC), and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)".[95] In exchange for the legitimacy and notoriety of the AQ name, the regional knowledge and connections that Belmokhtar brings to AQ are valuable resources for the organization, including multiple marriages to local Tuareg and Arab women in Southern Algeria/Northern Mali.[96] The extent of his loyalty to AQIM is not known, but he continues to be an import supplier to their armed jihad organization. It was

---

[92] Cristiani, Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Implications for Algeria's Regional and International Relations, Isituto Affari Internazionali, Working Papers, April 2011.
[93] Soriano, 82.
[94] Black, Andrew, "Mokhtar Bekmokhtar: The Algerian Jihad's Southern Amir." Jamestown Terrorism Monitor, Volume VII, Issue 12, May 8, 2009, 9.
[95] Ibid, 8.
[96] Ibid 10.

reported in March 2012 that Belmokhtar had spent several weeks in Libya shopping

for weapons according to the AFP.[97]

These two AQIM emirs, therefore, offer resources to AQAM that dramatically

improve the operation of the movements. Regional knowledge, solidarity though

local marriages, and the ability to teach bomb-making skills are all important

resources needed by AQAM. As with all the movement leaders noted earlier in the

chapter, from Dr. Martin Luther King to Che Guevara to the local AQIM leaders in

North/West Africa, "In all these cases, opportunities in mainstream life were not

nearly as enticing as the lure of fame, adventure, and even potential wealth"[98] that

comes with being associated with large movements.

Resource mobilization theory, particularly those aspects pertaining to moral

resources, celebrity and the skills that members can bring to an organization, can

help in better understanding the relationship between AQ and AQIM. By

disseminating speeches, videos and other propaganda through the Internet, AQ has

been successful in reaching out to unlimited numbers of potential supporters. The

media department of AQ, set up in 1988 by Ben Laden, has been used to spread the

word, teach would-be jihadist and mobilize resources. Always concerned with his

image and that of his organization, he constantly reminded his deputies "a huge part

of the battle is in the media."[99] Operating under many names, such as al-Sahab, the

Clouds, or Global Islamic Media Front, the AQ media continues to "Devote some of

---

[97] AFP report, accessed 15 March, 2012, available at
http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ibUWS1Mdnm6r4HvI39ojjiehMLRw?docId=CNG.0364d16e875cd14d92cc0565a5dcd5fc.6d1
[98] Francisco, 15.
[99] Bergen, Peter, "Ben Laden's final days -- big plans, deep fears" March 16, 2012,
http://edition.cnn.com/2012/03/16/opinion/bergen-bin-laden-final-writings/index.html?hpt=hp_c1

their content to ideological and cultural issues that are at the heart of efforts to win support of young Muslims."[100] Ever concerned with the image that AQ presents, Ben Laden may have stipulated that the GSPC must focus on developing a media wing before formally joining AQ in 2006. As Cress and Snow argue in their work on resource mobilization, external patronage often leads to control over the original goals and tactics of one organization as it aligns with another.[101]

The 2006 attack on US-based oil production in Algeria, discussed in Chapter 3 as the first such attack on external, non-domestic targets by the aspiring GSPC, was taped, edited and distributed in a strikingly similar way as those of other AQ branches. The fact that the first evidence of the GSPC's knowledge and production capability to manufacture better quality videos "falls roughly at the same time as the start of negotiations between the GSPC and al-Qaeda… is indicative of its steady alignment with the media outlets of [AQ]."[102] This combination of both internal and external expertise in attacks is indicative of the Algerian Islamists "mixing historical or cultural (bombings) and global imported practices (coordinated suicide bombings, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, videos and web sites propaganda)."[103]

AQIM expert Andrew Black has argued that this increased capacity to produce videos similar to other jihad organizations and AQ branches, which have

---

[100] Seib, Philip, "The Al-Qaeda Media Machine*.*"*Military Review, (*May/Jun 2008) Vol. 88. 77.

[101] Cress, Daniel and David Snow, "Mobilization at the Margins: Resources, Benefactors, and the Viability of Homeless Social Movement Organizations," American Sociological Review, Vol. 61, No. 6 (Dec., 1996), 1091.

[102] Black, Andrew. "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's Burgeoning Media Apparatus." Terrorism Focus May 15, 2007, Volume: 4 Issue: 14.

[103]Marret, Jean-Luc, "The GSPC/Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb: a mix of low and high-tech capabilities," *Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University* – SAIS, Working Paper (April 25, 2007), 2.

refined their understanding of the militant jihad message and the images that will

attract viewers will help in both AQIM public presence and its ability to recruit

members and mobilize resources.[104] While it is therefore apparent that this

acquired knowledge benefited AQIM, it was nonetheless imposed, as part of the

alignment process, from above. Torres Soriano agrees, arguing that to ensure a

smooth and successful integration and alignment of the GSPC, AQ core may have

stipulated that the propaganda machine in Algeria be improved prior to the

merger.[105]

> *Kidnapping and Drug Smuggling as Resource Mobilization*

In addition to what social movement theory can tell us about the ways in

which the existing framework of the GSPC has moved closer to AQAM over the years

since its 2006 alignment, this thesis looks as the more complicated factors in place

that differentiate the two movements. Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb continues to

fund its operations though kidnapping for ransom and drug smuggling; resource

mobilization strategies that makes AQIM one of the better funded branches of the

parent organization.

In the areas of Mali, Niger, Algeria and Tunisia, AQIM has had a particularly

successful career in taking hostages and negotiating ransoms. This practice has an

established history in the GSPC, evidenced by the 2003 kidnapping of 32 European

tourists visiting the South of Algeria.[106] In addition to the funds, AQIM is also able to

gain publicity in the international press and make statements as to its goals and

---

[104] Ibid.

[105] Soriano, 82.

[106] "German plea over Sahara tourists" Last updated 12, May 2003, Accessed 20 April, 2012, ww. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3020131.stm

ideologies. One marked difference between the AQ core and its branch in the Islamic

Maghreb is, as noted earlier, the reluctance of AQIM to focus its attacks exclusively

on US-based targets or the US military personal and installations. Historically, AWIM

has taken more European than American hostages, and is making political

statements through the selective choice of nationality among its victims. Part of this,

of course, may be due to the fact that the majority of Western individuals in

North/West Africa are European, however the mechanism through which AQIM

acquires hostages[107] suggests a far reach.[108] Yet AQIM is also making political

statements with the hostages they take, specifically with Spanish and French

nationals. AQIM feels that by kidnapping Spanish citizens it is avenging, or at least

articulating feelings of loss, the ancient Islamic kingdom of al-Andalus, in present

day Andalucía. The French case is more apparent, that AQIM disagrees with both

current French policies and older colonial practices.[109] Both attacks and kidnapping

attributed to AQIM in North/West Africa have predominantly focused on Europeans

and their work.[110]

A second resource mobilization tactic of AQIM is the part that they play in the

smuggling of drugs from South and Central America to Europe. Before his death, Ben

Laden rejected the idea of illicit smuggling to mobilize funds for AQ on the grounds

that it was dangerous and opened AQ up to dealing with criminal and untrustworthy

---

[107] Typically, many of the hostages that AQIM holds are sold to them by third parties. See "Mali factions fight over Swiss hostage"
ww.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/04/24/feature-03
[108] Cristiani, Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, 6-7.
[109] Ibid, 6.
[110] START database provides information on these attacks.

people.[111] AQIM has, however, become deeply entrenched in the practice, and in January 2011, the US Drug Enforcement Agency claimed AQIM is working in collusion with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as a transit point between drug production in South America and consumption points in Europe.[112] There have been at least two reports of downed planes carrying tons of cocaine to Europe that crashed and was abandoned outside of Gao, in Northern Mali. One report claims that the downed plane probably held 10 tones of cocaine, but no traces had been found and the plane had been stripped and burned before officials arrived.[113] The current situation, expanded on in Chapter 5, may open the area to further drug trafficking as AQIM gains a stronger foothold.

The unique resource mobilization of AQIM is, therefore, elucidated though the social movement theory framework. Reports produced by the Algerian government have noted that though drug smuggling and ransom payments between 2007-2010, AQIM made $130 million. This huge number could finance jihad in North/West Africa for years. Alarmingly, with the enormous stores of weapons now apparently on the open market in Libya, AQIM has both the resources and opportunity to stockpile military grade weapons.[114] These activities also prove not

[111] Thornberry, William and Jaclyn Levy, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, Case Study 4, (September 2011), 6.
[112] Ehrenfeld, Rachel, "Drug trafficking, kidnapping fund al Qaeda" May 2011, Accessed 25 May, 2012, ww.articles.cnn.com/2011-05-03/opinion/ehrenfeld.al.qaeda.funding_1_islamic-maghreb-drug-trafficking-al-qaeda-central?_s=PM:OPINION
[113] "Sahara cocaine plane crash probed" 17 November 2009, Accessed May 1, 2012, ww.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8364383.st
[114] Yapp, Robin, "South American drug gangs funding al-Qaeda terrorists" 29 December, 2010, Accessed 21 April, 2012, ww.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/colombia/8230134/South-American-drug-gangs-funding-al-Qaeda-terrorists.html

only the ideological and operational differences between AQ and AQIM, but also the

continuity within the North/West African jihad trajectory from GSPC to AQIM.

Chapter 5

Tuareg Rebellion and Implications

Since the Tuareg uprising in Northern Mali and the subsequent Military coup in that country in early 2012 the political, economic and security situation in the Sahel region of North/West Africa has been rapidly deteriorating. A number of factors, one of the most important of which is the influence of al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, have contributed to the situation, a solution to which has yet to be found or implemented. The successful anti-terrorism operations undertaken by the Algerian government, with support and funding from the West, pushed AQIM south to the border regions with Mali and Niger where its leaders such as Mokhtar Belmokhtar speak the language, can operate smoothly and discretely, and expect support from his many contacts there. In addition to AQIM, a number of other groups and movements have appeared on the scene with varying degrees of support, extremism and dedication. This chapter will examine the Tuareg rebellion, the military coup and subsequent empowerment of conservative Islamic movements in the North of Mali. Due to the newness of these events, there has yet to be academic analysis done, and therefore much of the information in this chapter will come from news sources and data collected by international aid organizations operating in the area. I have chosen the most trustworthy sources available, and when possible, incorporated articles written by experts and academics, such as Jeremy Keenan, an anthropologist and author on the Tuareg. This chapter takes a snapshot of the current situation though the end of April, yet as the future is

unknown and the crisis rapidly progressing, future editions of this thesis will reflect those changes.

Within the conceptual framework of this thesis, this chapter offers both an exceptional and a fresh opportunity to identify and examine new means through which AQIM and its regional affiliates are framing issues and creating solidarities. It appears in the first months of the newly created Azawad state, to be discussed below, the movements operating in the North/West Africa have been meet with civic resistance and international condemnation. In past rebellions and the current one, the Tuaregs have presented their issues within a frame that includes autonomy and greater representation; something that they perhaps thought would resonate in an international community. Movements operating along the rebels have attempted community outreach, though food distributions and paying school fees, though they also continue to desecrate the ancient Islamic tombs of Timbuktu in an attempt to impose strict interpretation of Islam.[115]

Contextualizing Rebellion

The nomadic Tuareg people have a long and beautiful history in the Sahara and Sahel areas of North/West Africa. Their stark, vanishing lifestyle, the caravans of camels laden with salt from mines deep in the desert and the deep blue robes and turbans with which the men cover their eyes have made their story the subject of countless National Geographic articles, adventure travel books and ethnographic research. Calculating exact numbers of Tuareg, or Tuareg speaking, population is

---

[115] "Schools reopen in Mali's Islamist-held Timbuktu, with separate hours for girls" 7 May, 2012, ww.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/schools-reopen-in-malis-islamist-held-timbuktu-with-separate-hours-for-girls/2012/05/07/gIQAp1Yx7T_story.html

impossible given the geographic locations in which they live and the relatively fluid

notions of ethnicity in which they operate.[116] Large numbers of enslaved, or

formally enslaved, black Africans are considered to be Tuareg because they have

often forgotten the language of their ancestors and have completely adopted that of

their patrons. There is thought to be upwards of three million Tuareg, though this

number includes both 'white' and 'back' speakers, around half of whom live in the

Northern areas of Mali and Niger. In recent decades, movements for greater

autonomy and independence of their historical homelands, encompassing areas

from Mauritania to Chad as well as Northern Mali and Niger, have materialized and

subsequent rebellions took place in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and today.

There are central and fundamental differences between the unsuccessful

rebellion which took place between 2007-2009, a time frame simultaneous to my

own experience living in Northern Mali, and the current rebellion and take over of

much of the country which began in January, 2012. These differences, which will be

examined closely below, include the Arab Spring of 2011, the Military coup in Mali

in March 2012 and the opportunities these upheavals provide to clandestine

organizations such as AQ who thrive in ungoverned and unsecured areas. Yet the

larger context of this current rebellion is both important and complicated, and is not

solely dependent on the Tuareg but involves multiple external factors which will be

examined before proceeding to the current situation an the role AQIM plays.

The religion of Islam, as practiced by the various ethnic groups who live in

this area is juxtaposed against the harsh, extreme and often violent religion used as

---

[116] Keenan, Jeremy, "Lesser Gods of the Sahara", (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004), 1-2.

a framework and platform for the movements and groups currently operating in Northern Mali. The understanding of Malian Islam held by Dr. Brian Peterson, an expert on Islam in the Sahel, is in many ways precisely correct. Life in the dry Sahel continues to be governed by ancient traditions:

> "Even in the north, which has been posited as the more 'radical' region, a Sufi and animist substratum among the Songhay, Tuareg, Bella and other groups has deeply influenced Muslim religious life. This has led to women having more extensive roles in public life than in other Muslim majority countries, and the persistence of customs such as ritual music and dance – and even a gender reversal in veiling practices among the Tuareg – that do not usually conform to the normative traditions of Islam being enforced by Salafi literalists."[117]

Most Northern Malians, as well as those in Niger and others areas where AQIM and similar groups are operating today, practice a traditional and peaceful religion. The variety of ethnicities, languages and traditional ways of life is accompanied by a plurality of religious beliefs and practices within Islam there. As Peterson notes, this is evident in the example he gives of gender roles and veiling practices associated with a number of ethnic groups. The colorful robes and veils worn by men and women are not strictly associated with religion, though today they do hold religious significance, but are used to protect the body from the harsh Sahara sun and overwhelming sandstorms that appear without notice. The practical and traditional purposes therefore outweigh the religious. Additionally, it is true that mosques and madressas funded largely by ultra conservative groups in the Arabian Gulf states are

---

[117] Peterson, Brian, Religious Peace and Tolerance in Mali: The Other Ansar Dine, (25 April 2012) ww.thinkafricapress.com/mali/religious-peace-and-tolerance-mali-other-ansar-dine Accessed 27 April, 2012.

spreading throughout this region,[118] but even as these religion institutions are built

is rural Sahelian villages, traditional dancing, music and intermingling of the sexes

continues in ways that would appall those financing their construction from afar.

This juxtaposing of conflicting ideologies, therefore, dramatically complicates the

realities for the conservative movements operating in areas where their belief

structures do not coalesce with the population they hope to either rule or lead.

Poverty, too, plays a huge role here and will continue to factor predominately

in whatever direction the crisis takes in future months and years. Tens of thousands

have fled to camps in Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso with little food or money

to buy provisions upon arrival. Interviews with people now living in impoverished

refugee camps and villages show the desperate situation and severe shortages

affecting both the newcomers and their hosts.[119] For weeks factions seeking power

and influence have been distributing food and medical supplies, an effort that

Peterson downplays in effectiveness. He, and perhaps others, do not understand

that years of drought and poor harvests have created dependencies there to foreign

(or at least non-local) aid. While the groups may not to trying to mobilize the

population though this charity, it is clear that the moral capital of the chartable

entities will be enhanced. Additionally, though my own observations while in the

area, food distributions have historically been a mobilizing practice, as evidenced

during past elections in Mali when tucks of rice and other foodstuffs were delivered

to towns and villages ahead of balloting. As a result of this goodwill during

[118] Ibid.
[119] UNHCR 2012 Regional Operations Profile, Video Interviews, Accessed April 27, 2012ww.unhcr.org/pages/49e484e66.html

presidential and regional elections, political parties and individuals were successful

in mobilizing human resources in the form of voters. Precedence has, therefore,

been set and religious movements may be successful in their attempts to create

similar solidarities and sympathies within local populations despite ideological

dissimilarities.

The food crisis is compounded by the fact that international aid relief

agencies have had little access to the North of Mali since the rebellion began, and

distributions made by the insurgents could be the only food available to those

reluctant or unable to flee.[120] A recent interview with one Timbuktu resident, the

city that appears to be the epicenter of new government in the north, argued that

the outreach programs of at least one group has been successful. Paraphrased by a

VOA reporter, "He said someone with an empty stomach cannot analyze the

situation. In the current conditions, he said, people can't resist the manipulation

being perpetrated by the occupiers."[121] The complexities of this region and its

people are therefore vast, nebulous and constantly changing, particularly with the

announcement of the creation of Azawad and the power vacuum that has resulted in

a power grab that continues.

Current Situation

A central catalyst to the Tuareg rebellion and the spreading influence of al

Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb is found in the Libyan revolution and the arms that

---

[120] For further information, see Amnesty International's report "Violence in northern Mali causing a human rights crisis" ww.amnesty.org/en/news/violence-northern-mali-causing-human-rights-crisis-2012-02-16 Accessed April 27, 2012

[121] Palus, Nancy, "Mali Youth Group Warns Against Inaction Against Rebels in North" April 27, 2012, ww.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Mali-Youth-Group-Warns-Against-Inaction-Against-Rebels-in-North-149325255.html Accessed April 29, 2012.

have since flooded the region. Before the overthrow of his government and his death at the hands of rebels, Coronal Muammar al-Qaddafi was an ardent pan-Africanist who had spent years attempting to unify Africa. Since the 1970s, the Libyan military has recruited, trained and armed Sub-Saharan African troops, including thousands of Tuareg men. When Qaddafi's Islamic Legion was disbanded in the late 1980s, the returning Tuaregs staged an uprising in Mali's neighboring country of Niger with similar demands to those of the current revolt. During the uprising that overthrew the Qaddafi government in 2011, his army is reported to have reached out to regional populations and recruited thousands of Tuareg from across the Sahel, funneling huge amounts of money through the Libyan embassy in Mali to pay the mercenaries.[122]

Similar to the events of Niger, the return of thousands of trained and armed men from the fierce and bloody conflict in Libya led to the creation of National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA)[123] and rebellion. The MNLA appears to be a coalition of these fighters and their tribal leaders, organized around regional strongmen who participated in past rebellions. Jeremy Keenan, an expert and author on the Tuareg notes that on their return to Mali from Libya many of the fighters stopped in the mountainous area in the northern regional capital of Kidal and linked with the existing Tuareg Movement of North Mali (MTNM). After the

---

[122] Koops, Ruban, "Libya: Tuaregs Lend Gaddafi a Hand" 7 September, 2011, ww.allafrica.com/stories/201109071329.html Accessed April 28, 2012
[123] This is the traditional name of the Tuareg homeland, as noted earlier encompassing much of the Sahel and Sahara.

death of the long time MTNM leader in August 2011, a number of various groups

merged and announced the creation of the MNLA in October 2011.[124]

Beginning on 16 January 2012 the MNLA began an armed resistance against

the Malian military, and in rapid succession took several regional capitals and

commercial centers, expelling both the army and foreign nationals. The movement's

first press release included statements on the independence and autonomy of the

Azawad nation, as well at military threats:

> The important military operations of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
> will continue so long as Bamako does not recognize this territory as a separate entity. These
> military actions are also an appeal to the international community: as long as it does not
> engage effectively to seek a long lasting resolution of this conflict, which has gone on for too
> long, the same causes will produce the same effects.[125]

Ultimately, the Tuaregs fighting in the MNLA want "to win Peace and Justice for the

community of Azawad and stability for our region,"[126] and thus far have refused to

negotiate anything with the government in Bamako that does not include the

freedom of their new republic of Azawad.

A second catalyst, one that allowed a relatively unhindered MNLA takeover,

was the Military coup that ousted Malian President Amadou Toure from office on

March 21, 2012. Formally a shining example of African democracy, the coup leaders

claim that Toure had disregarded the Malian people, ignored the growth of AQIM in

the north and had neglected to give proper attention to the Tuareg rebellion and

---

[124] Keenan, Jeremy, "Mali's Tuareg rebellion: What next?" March 20, 2012
ww.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/03/20123208133276463.html Accessed April 29, 12
[125] MNLA statement, "The Renewal of Armed Struggle in Azawad, 17 January, 2012
ww.mnlamov.net/english/93-the-renewal-of-armed-struggle-in-azawad.html Accessed February 7,
2012.
[126] Ibid.

effectively arm Malian soldiers fighting in the north.[127] Unfortunately, the coup gave

the MNLA the opportunity and opening to solidify both their claim and effective

control over much of the North. On April 6, the movement formally announced that

the three northern states of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal were under its formal control

and declared the independence of Azawad.[128] Whether or not this could have been

possible without the coup in Bamako is not known, but it is apparent that the

subsequent withdrawal of troops from the north during the confused aftermath of

the Military takeover substantially aided the Tuareg declaration of independence. It

has also allowed for the growing influence of AQIM in the area. Despite its presence

in North Mali being listed as a grievance against the President Toure's government,

they have continued to be involved in the creation of Azawad, a fact that enhances

AQ's international prestige and notoriety. As a social movement, this situation may

provide AQ and AQIM with new framing and resource mobilization opportunities.

Though Tuareg fighters fundamentally accomplished the rebellion and

announced the creation of Azawad, a number of factors put its future in doubt. Most

important are the emergence and growing impact of a number of additional

movements and groups. Among these the most active is Ansar al-Din, led by former

diplomat Iyad Ag Ghaly, known as "the lion of the desert." The moral resources and

legitimacy, as well as contacts with AQIM, which Ag Ghaly brings with him into the

organization are extensive. According to news reports since the deceleration of

Azawad's independence, Ag Ghaly lead the Tuareg attack in 1990 that began a five-

---

[127] Wing, Susanna, "The Coup in Mali Is Only the Beginning" 11 April 2012,
ww.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137398/susanna-wing/the-coup-in-mali-is-only-the-
beginning?page=show Accessed 15 April, 2012.
[128] Ibid

year rebellion and later was one of the first to ender peace mediations to end the struggle. During the 2007-2009 rebellion he played a role in ending the insurgency from his diplomatic posting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Most importantly, Ag Ghaly traveled to Pakistan at some time in the 2000s and, according to members of his party there, he became increasingly religious as well as radicalized. Since returning home, he has called for the implementation of Sharia Law in Mali, and in late 2011 formed his movement, Ansar al-Din, meaning protectors of the faith.[129]

After fighting alongside the MNLA to take control of the north, rifts between the two movements have surfaced and ideological differences are beginning to cause issues in the new country.[130] Most importantly, Ansar al-Din has stated that they are less interested in an independent and autonomous Azawad, but want more development and investment in the North of Mali. Additionally, they have introduced a strict interpretation of Sharia law in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, a fact that goes against the MNLA's promise of secularism.[131] Rumors of extreme violence and human rights abuses are flooding out of the region and include sinister stories of hands being severed, bars that served alcohol being torn down and their owners being chased out of town. Women are now forced to cover completely, and many are choosing instead to remain indoors.

The New Role of al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb

---

[129] Daniel, Serge "Mali rebel Iyad Ag Ghaly: inscrutable master of the desert" April 5, 2012, AFP article, found at ww.news.yahoo.com/mali-rebel-iyad-ag-ghaly-inscrutable-master-desert-200952713.html Accessed 27 April 2012.
[130] Azawad has not been recognized by any country, and has been condemned by the US, AU, UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
[131] Wing, Susanna.

The Ansar al-Din leader has a long history of contact with al Qa'ida operating in the region, another point of contention between Ag Ghaly and the MNLA. For much of April, since Timbuktu fell to the rebel forces, it appears that Ansar al-Din has been in control of the city. This is most evident in two important factors for the future of the region and an international decision to intervene in the situation. The first is the reported sighting of many of the AQIM leaders in the ancient city, including senior AQIM figure Mokhtar Belmokhtar[132], Abou Zeid and Yahya Abou al-Hammam.[133] Discussed in Chapter 4 as an important component to AQIM's resources, Belmokhtar may have come directly from Libya, where he was reportedly shopping for arms and military equipment left over after the fall of the Gadhafi regime. This meeting suggests the closeness of ties between AQIM and the conservative leaders of Ansar al-Din. Additionally, if the leaders arrived in the beginning to middle of April, it would mean that they were possibly in the immediate region and conforms reports of AQIM's substantial presence in northern Mali.

The second important factor is the report that al-Hammam, an AQIM emir who has been leading AQIM activity in the areas around Timbuktu for several years, is be appointed *wali*, or governor.[134] Neither international conformation nor reaction has yet to be announced, but many Malians in the North have staged public demonstrations against this appointment. Demonstrations took place on April 20th

[132] Lewis, David, "ANALYSIS-Mali's north feared new "rogue state" in Sahara" 4 April 2012, ww.af.reuters.com/article/maliNews/idAFL6E8F4AFO20120404?sp=true Accessed April 30, 2012.
[133] Al Jazeera, "Explainer: Tuareg-led rebellion in north Mali" 3 April, 2012 ww.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/03/201232211614369240.html Accessed 20 April, 2012
[134] Guèye, Bakari, "AQIM leader named Timbuktu governor", 16 April, 2012, ww.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/04/16/feature-02, Accessed 25 April, 2012.

to reject the appointment of the *wali* without elections consultations with locals.

Ham Ag Mahmoud, a Tuareg member of the MNLA argued, "We alone have the right

to appoint a *wali* in town, not al-Qaeda and not Ansar al-Din" and concludes that the

demonstrations were "the peak of rejection, as the residents could no longer accept

the reality which was imposed on them."[135] If this news is conformed and al-

Hammam becomes a political appointee, it would signal al Qa'ida in the Islamic

Maghreb's shift into the formal and pubic political arena and present both AQ and

AQIM with new opportunities to publicize the movement, create new frameworks

and possible reinvigorate resource mobilization.

AQIM may also feel emboldened by these resent events, feeling that as a

movement it has both more independence from the AQ core and greater bargaining

power. In past negotiations, AQIM has publically deferred to its core leadership in

Central Asia, emphatically stating that Ben Laden or al Zawahiri made decisions and

credit must be given to those leaders. Today however, AQIM is apparently acting

alone, and using hostages, discussed in Chapter 4 as a unique way in which the

movement mobilizes resources, not only for funding opportunities but in

negotiations with foreign governments. In the last week of April, 2012 AQIM

communicated directly with the British government, offering to release hostage

Stephen Malcolm, who it has held since November 2011, in exchange for AQ

spiritual leader Omar Mahmoud Othman, also known as Abu Qatada.[136]

---

[135] Oumar, Jemal, "Timbuktu rejects al-Qaeda" 27 April 2012,
ww.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/reportage/2012/04/27/reportage-
01 Accessed April 29, 2012.
[136] Norton-Taylor, Richard, Al-Qaida affiliate offers to free British hostage in exchange for Abu
Qatada, April 30, 2012 Accessed April 30, 2012, ww.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/apr/30/british-
hostage-abu-qatada?newsfeed=true

Interestingly, AQIM requested that he be sent to one of the Arab Spring countries, including Egypt. Having returned from Libya, perhaps segments of the MNLA and AQIM feel the creation of Azawad is a natural continuation of the Arab revolutions of 2011-2012.

A decision by the international community to either become involved or to remain outside the Malian crisis has been slow in coming. France said it will provide "logistical, material and intelligence" support to ECOWAS[137] troops, but says there is "no question" of French troops being deployed on the ground in Mali.[138] But Malian coup leaders have rejected proposals to allow ECOWAS soldiers to enter Mali, demanding instead international support though material, and not personal, support.[139] It seems that the coup leaders in Bamako are waiting to see what will happen first, as they have given no indication that Malian troops will enter the Azawad area but reject international intervention.

The current situation in Mali is rapidly changing on an almost daily basis. AQIM, Ansar al-Din and the MNLA continue to coalesce and become divided on a number of issues, including the role of religion and the extent of autonomy or independence that Azawad will receive. The local populations reject the extremisms of AQIM but are happy to receive food and medical attention from its affiliate Ansar

[137] Economic Community of West African States
[138] FRI, "France to support Ecowas troops in Mali, Guinea Bissau", 27 April, 2012 ww.english.rfi.fr/africa/20120427-france-support-ecowas-troops-mali-guinea-bissau Accessed 30 April, 2012.
[139] Al Jazeera, "Mali coup leader rejects ECOWAS terms" 28 April, 2012, ww.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/2012428232457376399.html

al-Din. In Azawad religious hardliners have taken control of a population whose

long history of Sufism and tolerance do not blend with that that of AQIM.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

What, then should the world make of al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, the most publicized and active violent Islamic organization operating in the Maghreb and Sahel today? This movement was not the first to align itself with AQ, and will most likely not be the last. To various degrees Muslims around the world today continue to identify with key AQ ideologies and beliefs, perpetuating the movement's ideals if not creating additional branches. Furthermore, violent extremists who espouse non-Islamic and even anti-Islamic rhetoric and actions have taken queues and inspiration from Ben Laden and his movement. Abdullah Azzam has successfully romanticized martyrdom for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, glorifying violent death for many with extreme views of religion, society and xenophobia.[140] Yet its parent movement, the al Qa'ida that Azzam, Ben Laden, al Zawahiri and others envisioned as a vanguard of *mujahedeen* who would inspire and lead the global community of Muslims to victory over external occupying armies, crush the nonbelievers and reinstitute the Islamic Caliphate, has changed dramatically since its conception in the late 1980s. What is now the longest war ever fought by the US military continues to drag slowly on in Afghanistan, successful at keeping the AQ leadership in hiding but with not enough support to eradicate the movement or its

---

[140] For example the Norway massacres of 2011, where the perpetrator acknowledged finding inspiration in Ben Laden, yet committed the massacres to protect Muslims in Europe. See Magnay, Diana, "Admitted Norway killer boasts of 'spectacular political attack' accessed 17 April, 2012 http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/17/world/europe/norway-breivik-trial/index.html?hpt=ieu_c1

supporters. In Iraq, AQ incited a civil, sectarian war, the remnants of which still linger as bombs continue to detonate almost daily in markets, Mosques and at Shia holy pilgrimage sites. In the Arabian Peninsula, AQ has successfully targeted government and military infrastructure, and holds responsibility for the successful boarding, though failed detonation attempt, of the notorious 'underwear bomber' over Detroit, Michigan in 2009.

In other areas around Africa, the Middle East and Asia, movements and organizations continue to grow ideologically closer to AQ, attempting to align themselves with the vanguard group, or are sought out by AQ for their resources, reach and publicity. Two of the most notorious, *Boko Haram* in Nigeria and al *Shabab* in Somalia have publically stated their admiration for AQ. With *al Shabab* in particular, the formal alignment process has already begun and pledges of allegiance have been made. This case is an interesting example of an organization actively seeking alliance with AQ, promising unsolicited support and allegiance to Ben Laden merely to be ignored and rebuffed for years. Only in February 2012, after three years of courtship and the death of Ben Laden did al Zawahiri accept the East African group of *mujahedeen*, releasing a video announcing *al Shabab's* incorporation and praising God for the continued growth of jihadist movements.[141] There is yet to be information released as to whether or not a name change will occur, but it is possible that a formal al Qa'ida in Somalia will appear soon.

---

[141] Lahoud, Nelly, "The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa`idat al-Jihad," CTC Centinel, Vol 5. Issue 2 (Feb 2012), 2

The alignment and renaming of the GSPC to AQIM in 2007 was a unique example of the process through which a movement becomes AQAM. Both AQ and AQIM were born out of special conditions and bipolar circumstances, and parallels can be drawn between the foundations of both. AQ is in part the result of the Cold War, composed of non-Afghani, Arab men who were heavy invested in the *mujahedeen* fight against the Soviet invasion. It is possible that the Afghan Service Bureau, created by Azzam and Ben Laden and a direct precursor to al Qa'ida, benefited financially from the billions of US dollars that funded the insurgency. Through misappropriation of funds by the Pakistan government, charged with supplying weapons and support for the *mujahedeen*, CIA money and supplies could easily have made their way to the Bureau. Yet even if this did not take place, the Bureau, its leaders and the thousands of young Muslim men who flooded to Afghanistan in the hope of fighting the communist threat certainly benefitted from the international attention and spotlight that the Cold War put on the Afghan-Soviet war.

Similarly, as noted in the introduction, al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb is also the product of contradicting factions and the bipolar tug between divisions within the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat. In 1998, dismayed by increasing violence of the Armed Islamic Group against civilians, a group of its members intent on regaining popular support and legitimacy by limiting its fight to the security services broke away and formed the GSPC. Even as the leadership tried to focus on more narrow targets, others in the GSPC succeeded in sidelining these objectives and soon the GSPC was employing a severe interpretation of *takfir* ideology and

returned to indiscriminate killings of Algerians. In 2001 the more violent faction

within the movement won when Abdelmalek Droukdal took over leadership and

began pushing the GSPC closer to the AQ core ideology. Therefore, in the

organizational trajectory from GIA to GSPC to AQIM, there has been a continued and

binary struggle between more and less violent factions pulling the organization in

opposite ways.

Both AQ and AQIM are also varied and diverse movements, conglomerations

of distinct and at times competing factions. The creation of World Islamic Front for

the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders included signatories from Egypt,

Pakistan and Bangladesh along with Ben Laden who represented his international

vanguard. Both the Front and al Qa'ida are intended to be umbrella organizations,

incorporating movements with similar goals and aspirations. This fluidity of AQAM

is exemplified in the AQ in Mesopotamia jihad in Iraq and the flow of *mujahedeen*

across the border to fight in the conflict. By many estimates, thousands of Algerian

fighters traveled to Iraq to fight alongside AQ there, many of whom became martyrs

through suicide bombing. Along with the 'Afghan Arab' experiences brought home

from the jihad in Central Asia, the *mujahedeen* who managed to return home from

Iraq took their experiences, skills and new ideas with them.

Combining these foreign ideas with the situation in Algeria, those returning

home merged with those who never left to create the al Qa'ida in the Islamic

Maghreb currently operating in North/West Africa. This new generation of jihadi

minded youth were pan-Arab in their thinking, and the repeated influx of Algerians

who had traveled abroad to train in al Qa'ida camps and participate in international jihad, replaced the Algerian-centric thinking of the GIA.

AQAM has also been particularly successful at employing heavily representative religious terms and symbols in efforts to sell its ideology, goals and to encourage membership. The specific use of Quranic verses and hadith to define and employ and sell jihad ideology by violent religious based groups in Algeria developed independently but at roughly the same time at AQ. For the al Qa'ida core movement, its understanding of jihad and the ways it employs this term stem from the writings of its most important ideologues. Social movement framing theory helped in understanding this process and the ways that AQAM selectively employs or disregards symbolic terms and activities. For al Qa'ida and the movements that are associated with it, the term jihad in particular has come to symbolize a "shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change." This of course is the international influences that permeate the states, economies and militaries of Islamic countries. Thus, AQ makes "attributions regarding who or what is to blame," with particular attention on the US and its Western allies, and "articulate an alternative set of arrangements and urge others to act in concert to affect change." [142] The alternative, envisioned by AQAM is the removal of these corrupt governments and the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate.

Using specific texts, AQ and its affiliate in the Islamic Maghreb pushed the jihad from a struggle against the internal problems of Islamic states to an external, Western antagonist. The core AQ movement and those inspired by its message

---

[142] Benford and Snow, 615.

began targeting symbolic Western installations, such as the East Africa Embassy bombings in 1998 and the USS Cole off the coast of Yemen in 2000. In the Maghreb, violent jihadists continued focusing on the Algerian state long after AQ had become international known for its anti-Western philosophy and tactics. Only in 2006 did Algerian jihadists adopt the AQ frame and align with the movement, symbolized by an attack on US oil drilling company and later AQIM attacks against the UN. Furthermore, AQIM adopted a core AQ dogma and perpetrated these attacks using suicide bombers. AQ's relentless propagating of the need for true and worthy men to advance the cause through martyrdom had taken hold in the Maghreb as it had elsewhere. Though framing AQAM's central purpose as 'jihad,' the movement continues to motivate and inspire, successfully selling of the ideologies.

A central contribution of this thesis is the examination of the similarities and differences between AQ and AQIM. These unique mobilization tactics and frame articulation are most apparent when examining the ways in which AQ and AQIM mobilizes men and financial support from current or potential supports. The most important resources garnered by AQAM are moral, and play an important part in all aspects of the movement from secretly planning attacks to financing and recruitment. AQ carefully guards its legitimacy and celebrity in order to encourage the feelings of solidarity and sympathy from supporters. The top leadership in both AQ core and AQIM enjoy high levels of education which helps project a since of elite and learned superiority. In many movements around the world people prefer to follow and pledge allegiance to educated men, and violent extremist organizations appear to be no different.

Furthermore, and perhaps more important, AQ has cultivated a wide range of religious experts and leaders to lend legitimacy and moral rightness to its actions and issues. As a Muslim not widely recognized as possessing the ability to make religious pronouncements, Ben Laden was cleaver to issue fatwas in conjunction with ideologically similar Imams and religious scholars. The movement also sought to attract graduates and supports from the most important Sunni institution, the prestigious al Azhar University in Cairo.

In the deserts of North/West Africa, very different and yet specific resources are needed. These include the skills and knowledge needed to exist and operate in the harsh climate along with an understanding of the smuggling routes which trace through the Sahara from Algeria to Mali and Niger. It is no surprise, therefore, that the top leaders of al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb have been cultivated to be men such as Abdelmalek Droukdel and Mokhtar Belmokhtar. These *mujahedeen* supply AQ the necessary contacts and resources to operate in the region, including not only knowledge of the area but sympathetic support and solidarity though language, familiar associations and marriage into important families.

The current situation in North/West Africa will continue to present both opportunities and setbacks for AQIM and similar organizations and movements operating in the region. Since its incorporation into al Qa'ida, AQIM has continued to operate somewhat autonomously from its parent organization, incorporating much of the key ideologies and tactics of AQ but at the same time retaining the GSPC leadership and motivations. Yet of all the associated movements aligned with AQ, AQIM currently has to greatest prospect of geographical expansion and is garnering

the most international attention. This thesis has attempted to articulate these differences, and create a picture of AQIM that has never before been articulated. The core AQ has indeed changed dramatically since the 1990s, fluctuating in the number of followers it encourages, fighters ready for martyrdom and financial resources immediately available. But above all the others, AQIM is proof that if nothing else, the name of al Qa'ida still commands attention and prestige among patrons and targets around the world.

Bibliography

Al Jazeera, "Mali coup leader rejects ECOWAS terms" 28 April, 2012, ww.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/04/2012428232457376399.html

Al Jazeera, "Explainer: Tuareg-led rebellion in north Mali" 3 April, 2012 Accessed 20 April, 2012
ww.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/03/201232211614369240.html

AFP report Accessed 15 March, 2012,
ww.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ibUWS1Mdnm6r4HvI39ojjiehML
Rw?docId=CNG.0364d16e875cd14d92cc0565a5dcd5fc.6d1

Algerian al-Qaeda chief Droukdel Sentenced in Absentia, BBC, Accessed 12 March, 2012ww.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17359310

Benford, Robert D and Snow, David A, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 26, Issue 1, (January, 2000).

Bergen, Peter, "Ben Laden's final days -- big plans, deep fears" March 16, 2012, ww.edition.cnn.com/2012/03/16/opinion/bergen-bin-laden-final-writings/index.html?hpt=hp_c1

"Conversation with Terror," Ben Laden interview in TIME Magazine, (republished September 14, 2001).

Black, Andrew, "AQIM employs martyrdom operations in Algeria" *Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Focus,* Vol. 4, Issue 20, (September 2007).

Black, Andrew, "Mokhtar Bekmokhtar: The Algerian Jihad's Southern Amir." *Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 7, Issue 12, (May 2009).

Black, Andrew, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's Burgeoning Media Apparatus," *Jamestown Foundation's Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 4 Issue 14, (May 2007).

Bodansky, Yossef "Nigeria's Boko Haram Links with al-Qaida," *Defense & Foreign Affairs' Strategic Policy, (*August 2010).

Botha, Anneli, "Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalism of Domestic Terrorism," ISS Monograph Serious, No 144, (June 2008).

Boubekeur, Amel "Salafism and Radical Politics in Postconflict Algeria," *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Middle East Center,* no. 11 (September 2008).

Colburn, Patrick, "Al-Zarqawi: A life drenched in blood" ww.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/alzarqawi-a-life-drenched-in-blood-481636.html Accessed March 15, 2012.

Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory*," Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 10, (2007).

Cress, Daniel and David Snow, "Mobilization at the Margins: Resources, Benefactors, and the Viability of Homeless Social Movement Organizations," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 6 (Dec., 1996).

"Sahara cocaine plane crash probed" 17 November 2009, Accessed May 1, 2012, ww.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8364383.stm

Cristiani, Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, "AQIM Funds Terrorist Operations with Thriving Sahel-Based Kidnapping Industry," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor,* Vol. 8, Is. 4 (January, 2010).

Cristiani, Dario and Riccardo Fabiani, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Implications for Algeria's Regional and International Relations," *Isituto Affari Internazionali*, Working Papers, (April 2011).

Daniel, Serge "Mali rebel Iyad Ag Ghaly: inscrutable master of the desert" April 5, 2012, Accessed 27 April 2012, AFP article, found at ww.news.yahoo.com/mali-rebel-iyad-ag-ghaly-inscrutable-master-desert-200952713.html

Droukdal, Abdelmalek interview with The New York Times, Published: (July 1, 2008).

Edwards, Bob and John D. McCarthy, "Resources and Social Movement Mobilization" in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements,* David A. Snow, et al., (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

Ehrenfeld, Rachel, "Drug trafficking, kidnapping fund al Qaeda" May 2011, Accessed 25 May, 2012, ww.articles.cnn.com/2011-05-03/opinion/ehrenfeld.al.qaeda.funding_1_islamic-maghreb-drug-trafficking-al-qaeda-central?_s=PM:OPINION

Filiu, Jean-Pierre "The Local and Global Jihad of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 63, no. 2 (Spring 2009).

Filiu, Jean-Pierre, "AQIM- Algerian Challenge or Global Threat," *Carnegie Papers: Carnegie Middle East Center*, No. 5.

Francisco, Ronald A., *Collective Action Theory and Empirical Evidence,* (New York: Springer, 2010).

Fuller, Graham, *Algeria: the Next Fundamentalist State?,* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1996).

"German plea over Sahara tourists" Last updated 12, May 2003, Accessed 20 April, 2012, ww. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3020131.stm

Gohel, M.J. quoted in Raufer, Xavier. "Al Qaeda: A Different Diagnosis." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Vol.* 26 (2003).

Guèye, Bakari, "AQIM leader named Timbuktu governor", 16 April, 2012, Accessed 25 April, 2012, ww.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/04/16/feature-02

Gunaratna, Rohan, "What the Experts Say", *CTC Sentinel*, (May 2011).

Gunaratna, Rohan. *Inside AL Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Ibrahim, Raymond, *The Al Qaeda Reader, (*New York: Random House, 2007).

Isaacs, Russell J. The North African Franchise: AQIM's Threat to U.S. Security, *Working Paper.*

Jebnoun, Noureddine, *"*What is Behind the December 11th Bomb Attacks in Algiers?," Accessed March 1, 2012 http://ccas.georgetown.edu/88443.html

Jenkins, J. Craig, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 9 (1983).

Kepel, Gilles and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words,* (USA: Harvard College, 2008).

Kepel, Gilles, *Jihad: the Trail of Political Islam,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

Kepel, Gilles, *The Roots of Radical Islam,* (London: The Prophet and Pharaoh, 2005).

Kepel, Giles, *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom*, (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2008).

Keenan, Jeremy, "Mali's Tuareg rebellion: What next?" March 20, 2012 Accessed
April 29, 2012,
ww.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/03/20123208133276463.html

Keenan, Jeremy, "Lesser Gods of the Sahara," (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004).

Khawaja, Marwan, "Resource Mobilization, Hardship, and Popular Collective Action
in the West Bank," *Social Forces,* Vol. 73, No. 1 (September, 1994).

Kohlmann, Evan "Two decades of jihad in Algeria", *The Nefa Foundation,* (May
2007).

Koops, Ruban, "Libya: Tuaregs Lend Gaddafi a Hand" 7 September 2011, Accessed
April 28, 2012 ww.allafrica.com/stories/201109071329.html

Lahoud, Nelly, "The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa`idat al-Jihad," *CTC Centinel*, Vol 5.
Issue. 2 (Feb 2012).

Lewis, David, "Analysis-Mali's north feared new 'rogue state' in Sahara" 4 April 2012,
Accessed April 30, 2012
ww.af.reuters.com/article/maliNews/idAFL6E8F4AFO20120404?sp=true

Marret, Jean-Luc, "The GSPC/Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb: a mix of low and high-
tech capabilities," *Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University* –
SAIS, Working Paper (April 25, 2007).

Magnay, Diana, "Admitted Norway killer boasts of 'spectacular political attack,'"
accessed 17 April, 2012
http://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/17/world/europe/norway-breivik-
trial/index.html?hpt=ieu_c1

Matter, Philip ed., Jihad, *Encyclopedia of Modern Middle East and North Africa*, Vol. 2,
Edition 2, (New York: Macmillian Reference, 2011).

Marret, Jean-Luc, "Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb: A 'Glocal' Organization," *Studies in
Conflict & Terrorism,* Vol. 31 No. 6 (2008).

McAdam, Doug and W. Richard Scott, "Movements and Organizations", in *Social
Movements and Organizational Theory,* ed. Gerald F. Davis et al, (New York:
Cambridge Press, 2005).

MNLA statement, "The Renewal of Armed Struggle in Azawad," 17 January, 2012
ww.mnlamov.net/english/93-the-renewal-of-armed-struggle-in-azawad.html
Accessed February 7, 2012.

Oumar, Jemal, "Timbuktu rejects al-Qaeda," 27 April 2012, Accessed April 29, 2012ww.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/reportage/2012/04/27/reportage-01

Peterson, Brian, "Religious Peace and Tolerance in Mali: The Other Ansar Dine," 25 April 2012, Accessed 27 April, 2012, ww.thinkafricapress.com/mali/religious-peace-and-tolerance-mali-other-ansar-dine

Palus, Nancy, "Mali Youth Group Warns Against Inaction Against Rebels in North" April 27, 2012, Accessed April 29, 2012 ww.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Mali-Youth-Group-Warns-Against-Inaction-Against-Rebels-in-North-149325255.html

Nelson, Rick and Thomas M. Sanderson, "A Threat Transformed: al Qaeda and associated movements in 2011", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, (February 2011).

Norton-Taylor, Richard, "Al-Qaida affiliate offers to free British hostage in exchange for Abu Qatada", April 30, 2012 Accessed April 30, 2012, ww.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/apr/30/british-hostage-abu-qatada?newsfeed=true

Rollins, John, "Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, February 5, 2010, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070

Riedel, Bruce, *The Search of Al Qaeda,* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute, 2008).

FRI, "France to support Ecowas troops in Mali, Guinea Bissau," 27 April, 2012 Accessed 30 April, 2012 ww.english.rfi.fr/africa/20120427-france-support-ecowas-troops-mali-guinea-bissau

"Schools reopen in Mali's Islamist-held Timbuktu, with separate hours for girls" 7 May, 2012,ww.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/schools-reopen-in-malis-islamist-held-timbuktu-with-separate-hours-for-girls/2012/05/07/gIQAp1Yx7T_story.html

Seib, Philip "The Al-Qaeda Media Machine, "*Military Review;* Vol. 88, *(*May/June 2008).

Soriano, Manuel R. Torres "The Road to Media Jihad: The Propaganda Actions of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Vol. 23 No. 1, (2010).

Tilly, Charles, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorist" *Sociological Theory Theories of Terrorism: A Symposium*, Vol. 22, No 1, (Mar., 2004).

Thornberry, William and Jaclyn Levy, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," Center for Strategic & International Studies, Case Study 4, (September 2011).

UNHCR 2012 Regional Operations Profile, Video Interviews, accessed April 27, 2012 ww.unhcr.org/pages/49e484e66.html

UN Security Council Committee, Abdemmalek Droukdel, Accessed on 15 March 2012, ww.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQI23207E.shtml

Webb, James L.A. Jr, *Desert frontier: ecological and economic change along the Western Sahel,* 1600-1850, (Madison, Wis. : University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

Wing, Susanna, "The Coup in Mali Is Only the Beginning" 11 April 2012, Accessed 15 April, 2012 ww.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137398/susanna-wing/the-coup-in-mali-is-only-the-beginning?page=show

Yapp, Robin, "South American drug gangs funding al-Qaeda terrorists" 29 December, 2010, Accessed 21 April, 2012, ww.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/colombia/8230134/South-American-drug-gangs-funding-al-Qaeda-terrorists.html

Zakr Online, Quran Sura 8, verse 39, translated by www.zakr.org

Zernike, Kate and Michael T. Kaufman, "The Most Wanted Face of Terrorism, Obituary of Osama Ben Laden, 1957-2011," New York Times, (May 2, 2011).