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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**COUNTERMOBILIZATION: UNCONVENTIONAL  
SOCIAL WARFARE**

by

Santino M. Torres

June 2014

Thesis Co-Advisors:

Michael Freeman  
Doowan Lee

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**COUNTERMOBILIZATION: UNCONVENTIONAL SOCIAL WARFARE**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and understand the factors associated with effective social countermobilization against violent extremism. Understanding such factors can help a state develop a sponsored countermovement to protect its national interests against violent extremist movements. This thesis attempts to provide a strategy and framework by which to defeat violent extremist movements through the use of unconventional warfare techniques.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AD	armored division
AQ-Central	Al-Qa'ida Central Command
AQI	Al-Qa'ida in Iraq
ARI	Arab Reform Initiative
CNC	National Peasant Confederation
COCOPA	Commission of Concord and Pacification
COL	colonel
DOP	Declaration of Principles (Oslo Accords)
EU	European Union
CONAI	National Commission of Inter-mediation
EZLN	Zapatista Army of National Liberation
Fatah	Palestinian National Liberation Movement
GOI	Government of Iraq
Hamas	Islamic Resistance Movement
ICPVTR	International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research
IED	improvised explosive device
IGO	inter-governmental organizations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAFTA	North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement
NGO	non-governmental organizations
NOW	National Organization for Women
NRA	National Rifle Association
OP	outpost
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution

PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party
SOF	special operations forces
SOI	Sons of Iraq
TAA	Thawar Al Anbar
UN	United Nations
UW	unconventional warfare
VEM	violent extremist movement
WWI	World War I

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# I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and understand the factors associated with effective countermobilization. Understanding such factors can help a state develop a sponsored countermovement to protect its national interests against violent extremist movements (VEMs). In addition, this thesis will cover whether countermobilization is a viable strategy for countering VEMs. It will address defining traits of a countermovement that can disrupt, destabilize, deteriorate or invalidate a targeted movement. The utility of countermobilization stems in part from the need to adopt strategies that limit a state's vulnerabilities in a complex warfare environment. Furthermore, the study of countermobilization may highlight a more efficient way to militarily intervene against VEMs by utilizing a smaller special operations forces (SOF) footprint, within certain parameters, rather than a larger conventional force.

## A. LITERATURE

This thesis will synthesize three major bodies of work from theory and doctrine: unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, and social movement theory. Literature exists on how social movements come into existence and how they succeed or fail based upon how they initially mobilize or how they gain and maintain popular support, but very little information exists on incorporating this theoretical analysis with unconventional warfare and counterterrorism techniques.

The first major body of thought that informs the concept of countermobilization is social movement theory. This area of study is pertinent, because my research works under the theory that terrorism and insurgencies are just forms or different levels of violent movements.<sup>1</sup> Social movements can be defined as “‘collective challenges’ by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities.”<sup>2</sup> Social movements can encompass broad objectives such as

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Byman, “*Understanding Proto-insurgencies*” (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2007), vii.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4.

regional control, regime change, or global dominance, or they may represent narrow-based movements that may not even seek regime change. In either instance these movements must deal with elites, opponents, and/or authorities in order to reach their respective objectives, but in order to reach a level where a movement can interact with elites and authorities it must first mobilize into collective action.

According to contemporary social movement theory, in particular the political process model, collective action for social movements is dependent upon four distinct variables: socioeconomic processes, political/social opportunity, narrative or interpretive framing, and extant mobilizing structures and/or organization.<sup>3</sup> A movement is more likely to fail in its initial mobilization, or in sustained mobilization, without one or more of these factors in place. However, these variables pertain to the success of social movements, not countermovements. Although a countermovement is just another form of a social movement, a countermovement varies because of its target. Whereas a social movement generally targets political authorities, countermovements target other social movements. Therefore, a slight modification to the political process model is required. Countermobilization is a tailored version of the political process model, and because it derives from the political process model, it is important to understand the basics of the political process model in order to fully appreciate the mechanics of countermobilization.

According to the political process model, the first variable for collective action is the socio-economic process, which is the ongoing process of engagement between movement groups and the larger sociopolitical environment they seek to reform.<sup>4</sup> This can be brought about by conditions created by a war or the perceived disparity of economic value between the elites and an aggrieved populace. Examples of the process include “wars, industrialization, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widespread demographic changes.”<sup>5</sup> This process is very fluid and can change at any time based on the ebb and flow of political or economic arrangements.

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<sup>3</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Kindle Location 1545.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 1625–1628.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 1650–1653.

Therefore, depending on the time and environment, the process affords various segments of the populace factors to exploit and gain leverage toward the achievement of goals and interests. The shifts in the broad socio-economic process have the potential to create a conducive political environment that can aid in the emergence of a movement and subsequently making them less vulnerable to reprisals and claims of illegitimacy. This potential is based on how well a movement does in regards to the second variable of the political process model, expanding its political opportunities.

When a socio-economic process presents itself in a manner that is advantageous to a movement, a movement must exploit those conditions to expand its political opportunities, which thereby increases a movement's political strength, bargaining position, and ability to execute a combine pursuit of its objectives.<sup>6</sup> Political opportunities can be divided into two categories: stable and volatile. Stable opportunity structures refer to institutions or organizations that serve as the foundations of a specified system, such as strength of political institutions or strength of social cleavages. This form is in contrast to volatile opportunity structures that encompasses attributes susceptible to "shifts in political alliances, divided elites, or capacity for social control."<sup>7</sup>

However, a conducive political environment and additional political opportunities only affords the aggrieved population the opportunity for a successful movement. It is the resources of the minority community and the movement's infrastructure that enable it to exploit these opportunities.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, an aggrieved populace requires an organized community that draws from indigenous social infrastructures in order to form into a collective "voice" against the opposition. These initial organizations give a movement an existing pool of resources such as members, solidary incentives, communicative networks, and leaders,<sup>9</sup> and from these indigenous organizations a movement should form into a formal movement organization in order to apply sustained political challenge.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Kindle Locations 1694–95.

<sup>7</sup> Eitan Y. Alimi, "Mobilizing Under the Gun: Theorizing Political Opportunity Structure in a Highly Repressive Setting," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 14, no. 2 (2009): 221.

<sup>8</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*, Kindle Locations 1704–1706.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Kindle Locations 1711–1790.

The last variable in developing a movement is the narrative and its interpretive framing. This process is essential to collective action, because without it the other factors only produce a “structural potential” for collective political action. The narrative and the strategic framing produces the subjective meaning or “consciousness” of the movement that mediates between the opportunity and the action.<sup>10</sup> The framing process “assigns meaning to and interprets relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists.”<sup>11</sup> A narrative should be general enough to account for various shifts in the socio-political environment. The movement’s consciousness is built upon the foundation of grievances and should be the compass from which the movement’s identity and will to mobilize is fostered. If the narrative is too narrowly focused, it will only attract a narrow amount of elites and followers. A narrative should seek to not only appeal to the initial supporters, but should be constructed to attract fence-sitters, international groups, and even oppositional supporters. This effect is created by constructing a narrative that addresses the central threat to the whole system from which a multitude can identify with.

In essence, the political process model suggests that both internal and external factors attribute to the success of a social movement. Specifically, it is the confluence of the aforementioned factors that facilitate the emergence of a social movement in its attempt towards achieving a political or social objective.<sup>12</sup>

The term “countermobilization” has been taken from an article by James M. Jasper and Jane Poulsen entitled “Fighting Back: Vulnerabilities, Blunders, and Countermobilization by the Targets in Three Animal Rights Campaigns,” which suggests that success or failure of a social movement is not only due to the tactics and characteristics of protest groups or the responses of the state, but also from the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Kindle Location 1797.

<sup>11</sup> David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 198.

<sup>12</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*, Kindle Location 2004–2008.

characteristics and responses of oppositional organizations.<sup>13</sup> For this thesis, countermobilization is a state-driven response to engage a targeted movement that may be operating directly against the state or indirectly against the state by threatening allies or neutrals tied to the state's interests. This is where the doctrine of unconventional warfare becomes relevant.<sup>14</sup> When a state supports an insurgency it can offer groups respite from oppositional security forces and introduce some of the benefits of state infrastructure to the sponsored group.<sup>15</sup> I argue that the same benefits apply to the state sponsorship of a countermovement. A countermovement can benefit from the support and resources attributed by the alignment with a state sponsor.

Countermobilization, however, suggests a transition from the traditional concept of UW, which suggests a more violent or armed resistance. It underlines approaches that employ non-violent methods or a mixture of non-violent and violent resistance movements to achieve political objectives. Furthermore, countermobilization suggests a focus on identifying and locating movements, groups, organizations, and brokers that can achieve desired objectives through these various approaches. Coupled with social movement theory, UW can focus on a process that involves understanding and infiltrating existing social networks and movements in an attempt to organize appropriate communities, groups, and institutions into one "complex" organizational structure. Furthermore, social movement theory not only provides UW planners with a better understanding of leveraging these existing social infrastructures, it provides another

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<sup>13</sup> James M. Jasper and Jane Poulsen, "Fighting Back: Vulnerabilities, Blunders, and Countermobilization by the Targets in Three Animal Rights Campaigns," *Sociological Forum* 8, no. 4 (1993): 640.

<sup>14</sup> Unconventional warfare is activities conducted to enable resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow an occupying power or government by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and force in a denied area; Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations* (Joint Publication 3-05) (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Byman, *Understanding Proto-insurgencies*, 16–17.

outlook on the importance of developing narratives, how to organize an infrastructure, and the type of brokers a movement needs to exploit in order increase its effectiveness against VEMs that threaten the sponsor states' interests.<sup>16</sup>

Countermobilization can also be an important element of counterterrorism. Andrew Phillips, in his work "How Al Qaeda Lost Iraq," analyzes the conflict in Iraq and illustrates the strength of alternative methods that focuses on empowering local allies to weaken VEMs. In particular, he noted that VEMs tend to rely on propaganda, patronage, and terror in an attempt to impose their agenda on the local populace. This tendency for VEMs to rely on the use of terror results in a higher potential for the exploitation of a schism between the VEM and the local populace.<sup>17</sup> By distancing the VEM from the local populace, this creates an opportunity to empower the local community, thereby denying a potential pool for resources (e.g., safe havens, recruits, food). Daniel Byman summarizes this concept of strengthening local communities in his *Understanding Proto-Insurgencies*:

...opposing proto-insurgencies must recognize the proto-insurgents' many weaknesses and avoid an overreaction that may inadvertently strengthen the group. Perhaps the best and most efficient way to prevent proto-insurgents from gaining ground is through 'in-group' policing. Individual communities know their own members, particularly in tight-knit societies in the developing world. These communities thus make intelligence-gathering easier and enable the use of arrests or other forms of pressure with far greater discrimination. In-group policing, of course, requires a government to make political concessions to them.<sup>18</sup>

Andrew Phillips' work also suggests that by separating the populace from the VEM, it creates an opportunity to take brokers from the targeted movement. This is important for counterterrorism, because it highlights the importance of competition for popular support. Many or all actors involved directly compete for popular support

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<sup>16</sup> Dowan Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 3 (2013): 31–33.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Phillips, "How al Qaeda Lost Iraq," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63, no. 1 (2009): 64–84.

<sup>18</sup> Byman, *Understanding Proto-Insurgencies*, ix.

whether through actions, strategic communications, or other mechanics.<sup>19</sup> Most, if not all, movements begin as informal networks, and these informal networks must organize effectively and gain popular support in order to gain momentum.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, if a state or, in this instance, a countermovement can attract more brokers and popular support while creating a division and denying the oppositional movement a popular support base, it has a greater potential to overcome and render the targeted movement ineffective.

These two key lessons learned from counterterrorism studies are the benchmark for the UW teams' sponsored countermovement. In order to successfully counter a VEM, the countermovement must not only begin with an indigenous popular base, but it must pull brokers from the competing movement in order to become the prominent "ideal." This is achievable by infiltrating key organizations and informal connective structures in order to gain intelligence on the oppositional movement. The information gained can be used to identify key leaders and/or power brokers that are instrumental in the targeted movement's processes. The information gained will also assist in determining what key topics and themes motivate a particular community or society. Additionally, through infiltration of the social and political systems the countermovement gains access, tools and influence that allow it to flourish into a robust organization.

## **B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

While there is a lot of research on counterterrorism, social movements, and revolutions, little systemic research exists towards explaining how to successfully counter social movements with a countermovement. The proposed model is a modified version of McAdam's political process model. It is tailored to explain the variables for countering social movements: expanding political opportunities, "complex" organizational structure, and the counter-narrative and framing process. Although this is an adaptation from the political process model, it stays true to the core aspect that both internal and external

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<sup>19</sup> Paul K. Davis et al., *Understanding and Influencing Public Support for Insurgency and Terrorism*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2012)

<sup>20</sup> David Martin Jones, Ann Lane, and Paul Schulte, *Terrorism, Security and the Power of Informal Networks* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2010), 31.



factors attribute to the success of a movement, whether it is a social movement or a countermovement. My first hypothesis is that a countermovement must identify and exploit positive shifts in the socio-political environment to steal and align with more powerful political groups and brokers from oppositional and neutral parties than the targeted movement.

### **1. Expanding Political Opportunity**

An increased presence of protesters and/or social movements is an indication that the opportunity structure in a particular political environment is flexible and vulnerable to the political assaults of discounted groups.<sup>21</sup> By exploiting the favorable shifts in the structure of political opportunities, a social movement has the potential to garner additional political support and increase the likelihood of successful mobilization.<sup>22</sup> However if a countermovement can counteract the process in which a social movement can expand its political opportunities, a countermovement can exploit conditions to expand its own political opportunities and support. By garnering additional political support, a countermovement inherits increased political strength and bargaining position that the targeted social movement would have achieved while in pursuit of its group objectives.<sup>23</sup> This development makes it less likely that the countermovement will suffer from political reprisals or open attacks due to risks associated with engaging the countermovement. While operating within the ebb of contention, a countermovement can be targeted with relative latitude, but increased political leverage makes the countermovement less vulnerable to overt attacks.<sup>24</sup>

The countermovement must either wait for a favorable political shift or influence conditions that place the countermovement in a desirable position. A countermovement can influence contention and mold political conditions in three ways:

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<sup>21</sup> Peter K. Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *American Political Science Review* 67 (1973): 11–28.

<sup>22</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*, Kindle Locations 1694–95.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 1694–95.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 1696–1703.

- by choosing specific frames for attaching meaning to events
- by tactically embracing specific modes of contention in order to maximize political leverage
- through organizational structures that link the center to the base of the movement and assure its interaction with power holders.<sup>25</sup>

Once favorable conditions are met, a countermovement's associated institutions and organizations can protect it more effectively against reprisals and mitigate preexisting vulnerabilities and blunders from being exploited by the opposition.<sup>26</sup>

Vulnerabilities is a term that refers to preexisting conditions such as general characteristics or practices of an organization that can influence public opinion, regulators, and elected officials, whereas the term blunders is reserved for misguided reactions to criticism, attacks, or protests. Both vulnerabilities and blunders can occur at the organizational level, such as in its official stance towards a policy or controversy, or at the sublevel of a specific development under attack, such as a particular tactic or facility used while engaging in contention.<sup>27</sup> These vulnerabilities and blunders are conditions and actions open for interpretation, and depending on the audience, the interpretation may have positive or negative effects for a countermovement. Therefore the sponsoring state must ensure that the countermovement addresses expanding political opportunities in regards to domestic support and international support.

## **2. “Complex” Organizational Strength**

My second hypothesis suggests that a countermovement must not rely solely on indigenous organizations, it must steal influential brokers from oppositional and neutral parties. The addition of more influential brokers into a “complex” organizational structure that relies on the integration of formal and informal networks will facilitate the

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<sup>25</sup> Alimi, “Mobilizing Under the Gun,” 221.

<sup>26</sup> Jasper and Poulsen, “Fighting Back,” 643.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 642.

mobilization and sustainment of a countermovement. Because countermovements are focused against social movements, it is important to first look at how organizational structures affect social movements.

It is imperative to stress the importance of the statement expressed by McAdam in *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* that eloquently states, “A conducive political environment only affords the aggrieved population the opportunity for successful insurgent action. It is the resources of the minority community that enable insurgent groups to exploit these opportunities.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the establishment of political conditions is all for naught, if a movement is not organized to capitalize on the presented events and conditions of increased leverage and support. For example, following events that began on January 25, 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood were able to capitalize on the dissolution of the Mubarak regime and rise to power due to its organizational structure.<sup>29</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood was reluctant to join the protests until the protests progressed into a massive mobilization, and even throughout the uprising the Muslim Brotherhood was content on limiting its role to participatory efforts rather than taking the lead.<sup>30</sup> However, due to the Muslim Brotherhood’s organizational composition and strength, the brotherhood was able to align itself with key political figures and posture itself in a position that won the organization 47 percent of the legislative votes and over 50 percent of the presidential vote that put Mohammed Morsi in the Egyptian presidency.<sup>31</sup>

Tarrow offers three different aspects of movement organization that facilitate the construction of a robust model:<sup>32</sup> (1) formal hierarchical organization: “a complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or

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<sup>28</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*, Kindle Locations 1704–1709.

<sup>29</sup> “The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt: A Victim of its Own Success,” Middle East Policy Council, accessed May 21, 2014, <http://www.mepec.org/articles-commentary/commentary/muslim-brotherhood-egypt-victim-its-own-success>

<sup>30</sup> Ferry de Kerckhove, “Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab Spring” (SW Calgary, Alberta: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2012), 1–2.

<sup>31</sup> Kerckhove, “Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab Spring,” 1–2.

<sup>32</sup> Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 123.

a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals;”<sup>33</sup> (2) the organization of collective action at the point of contact with opponents: organizations that consist of informal networks, clubs, and fraternities that are social networks intertwined within the base of society; (3) connective structures: links that bring the different parts of the movement’s structure together even in the event there is a lack of a formal organization or a non-representative formal organization. Although, these three aspects of organizational structure pertain to social movements, countermovements can use this as a frame for establishing an organizational structure and more. For countermobilization, the three aspects of movement organization offers a glimpse into how a countermovement should target an oppositional social movement.

Countermovements should focus on identifying and exploiting the connective tissues that act as brokers and bridges between networks and organizations. Connective structures of a social movement are an essential feature, because of their role at facilitating the coexistence of movements and organizations as a single organization.<sup>34</sup> Without connective structures that connect formal organizations with grass-root movements, an organizational structure would be disjointed into different factions incapable of sufficient communication.<sup>35</sup> Connective structures like brokers are important, because brokers are in a position to control the flow of resources within an organizational structure.<sup>36</sup> Brokers also serve as critical constituents that have the access and placement to attract support from various social movements with different world-views.<sup>37</sup> The removal of key sets of actors acting as brokers is likely to disrupt the flow of resources of a targeted movement.<sup>38</sup> The process of removing brokers can be executed

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<sup>33</sup> Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), 20.

<sup>34</sup> Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 124.

<sup>35</sup> Mario Diani, “Leaders’ or Brokers? Positions and Influence in Social Movement Networks,” in *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*, ed. Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 118.

<sup>36</sup> Sean F. Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 253.

<sup>37</sup> Diani, “Leaders’ or Brokers? Positions and Influence in Social Movement Networks,” 118.

<sup>38</sup> Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks*, 253.

by violent means (e.g., capture, kill) or by non-violent means. Rather than assassinating an influential broker, the exploitation of dissention within a targeted movement to compel a broker to join the countermovement could prove to be more beneficial. This type of process leads to my third hypothesis.

### **3. Counter-narrative and Framing**

My third hypothesis claims that in order for a countermovement to steal brokers, it must establish an effective counter-narrative and framing process. Although related, the counter-narrative is different from the framing process. The counter-narrative focuses more on the consciousness or grievances per se, whereas the framing process takes into account that grievances can take on multiple disparities based on the interpretation by an individual, group, or culture.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the framing process is the method utilized to “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 antagonists.”<sup>40</sup>

In the process of developing a counter-narrative, a countermovement needs to focus on its own ideology while weakening the targeted movement’s support base. This is accomplished by developing an effective framing process that supports the counter-narrative. A social movement’s framing process relies on motivational, diagnostic, prognostic frames to provide meaning and motivation to its narrative.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, a successful counter-narrative should aim at engaging a social movement’s attempt to provide meaning and motivation. A successful counter-narrative should be aimed at two distinctive frames of a social movement: motivational and diagnostic.<sup>42</sup> A countermovement needs to attack the targeted movement’s motivational frame, because a

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<sup>39</sup> David A. Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51(1986): 464–481.

<sup>40</sup> David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 198.

<sup>41</sup> Snow and Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” 198.

<sup>42</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Framing Jihad: Intramovement Framing Contests and al-Qaeda’s struggle for Sacred Authority,” *International Review of Social History* 49, no. 12 (2004):164–166.

social movement's motivational frame serves as the moral call to action for the movement.<sup>43</sup> The incentives social movements tend to use to prod for action rely on material, solidary, and moral inducements.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, a countermovement should create a framing process that counters this approach. It must not only convince the populace that there is a moral imperative to join, it must articulate that its moral justification is more valid than the targeted movement's justification. Classic examples of contention among motivational frames pit religion against nationalism (e.g., Hamas and PLO) or nationalism against tribalism (e.g., GIROA and Afghan tribes).

Whereas, a diagnostic frame focuses more on who to blame for existing conditions. Therefore, actions such as blunders committed by a targeted movement can be used to vilify a targeted movement's actions and organization.<sup>45</sup> For example, a diagnostic frame would counter a targeted movement's appeal to the people that it is a pious organization by highlighting the targeted movement's consistent associations with corrupt government officials, money embezzlement, and human trafficking. While in contrast, the countermovement will elevate its position by highlighting its credibility as a true vanguard organization.<sup>46</sup> In this form of contention, popular intellectuals, political affiliates, and leadership structures become vulnerable targets of vilification and exaltation. By attacking the credibility of a movement's ideological representative, a countermovement can weaken the integrity of the targeted movement.<sup>47</sup>

To summarize the purpose of the counter-narrative and framing process, it is to portray the target movement's ideology as illegitimate and irrelevant. The strategy of the framing process must remain flexible as the interaction between the countermovement, target movement, and state creates vulnerabilities to be exploited in an attempt to garner additional support. The cases associated with the success or failure of a countermovement

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<sup>43</sup> Snow and Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," 202.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>45</sup> Wiktorowicz, "Framing Jihad," 164–166.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

have the potential to enlighten factors that answer why some mobilize countermovements while others never manifest, why some have more longevity than others, and why some achieve no success and others achieve long-term societal success. From the issues brought to light in this discussion, it is apparent that both internal and external factors attribute to the success of a countermovement. Not only does a countermovement rely on the construction of a complex and connective organizational structure, the expansion of political opportunities, and requisition of societal resources, but the success or failure of a countermovement also remains with whether the counter-narrative and framing process are aligned and resonate in order to produce an effective and sustained effort. Therefore these must remain under extreme consideration in the execution of countermobilization.

### **C. CASE STUDIES**

I will look at three cases with different outcomes. Sons of Iraq (SOI) is an example of success, the anti-Zapatista movement of failure, and Hamas as a mixed outcome.

#### **1. Case Study: Iraq (Sons of Iraq—AQI)**

This case is a successful model of countermobilization. On September 14, 2006, Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha announced with 40 other sheiks from the Ramadi area the beginning of the Awakening.<sup>48</sup> In the midst of the Awakening was a Sunni movement that became to be known as the Sons of Iraq. The Sons of Iraq were formed by Sunni tribesman to counter another Sunni-led organization, the Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). AQI was led by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and was gaining power and delivering crushing blows to surrounding villages in Al-Anbar and undermining U.S. forces efforts to stabilize and secure the region. However, the Sons of Iraq gained popular support and established a movement that successfully neutralized al-Zarqawi's AQI cell.

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<sup>48</sup> William Knarr, "Al-Sahawa: An Awakening in Al Qaim," *Combating Terrorism Exchange* 3, no. 2 (2013): 5.

## **2. Case Study: Mexico (Zapatista—Anti-Zapatistas)**

This case was a failure of countermobilization, because the state and the sponsored countermovement chose to focus on violent methods of engaging a targeted movement rather than developing a counter-narrative and framing process that allows the counter movement the opportunity to attract and/or pilfer elites and brokers from neutral and oppositional parties. This case is a cycle of contention between a state-sponsored countermovement characterized with protests, violence, and paramilitary activities against the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Zapatista/EZLN) that occurred predominantly in Chiapas, Mexico. The Zapatistas are considered to be a leftist group with a Marxist-Leninists ideology. Although there has always been a sense of contention between Mexico and the Zapatistas, they reached a new level of contention and declared war on the state of Mexico in 1994 in response towards the Mexican government's political stance on indigenous rights, economic globalization, women's rights, and perception of democracy.<sup>49</sup> The anti-Zapatistas protesters were comprised of concerned cattle ranchers, coffee producers, businessmen, and civilians that would be affected by the economic or social impacts of a violent armed conflict. The anti-Zapatista movement also included rural communities and peasant organizations that supported the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the ruling party in Mexico. The anti-Zapatistas and PRI were also linked to sponsored paramilitary groups that conducted violent attacks against Zapatista sympathizers.<sup>50</sup> In the end, paramilitary groups like Paz y Justicia were disbanded while the Zapatista movement is still a current and growing movement deeply engrained within societal networks in Chiapas.

## **3. Case Study: Israel ( Hamas—Palestinian Liberation Organization)**

This case illustrates the potential negative effect when a sponsor loses control of or influence over the countermovement. The political competition between Hamas and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is an example of a failed attempt to position

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<sup>49</sup> James F. Rochlin, *Vanguard Revolutionaries in Latin America: Peru, Colombia, Mexico* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 215–216.

<sup>50</sup> Rochlin, *Vanguard Revolutionaries in Latin America*, 231–232.



two movements against each other by a third party nation-state. Although the creation of Hamas was not directly constructed by Israel, the political competition between Hamas and the PLO was orchestrated by Israel's efforts as it played more of a passive role towards Hamas. Israel tacitly allowed Hamas' early activities and financial networking, which allowed Hamas to flourish.<sup>51</sup> It was not until the late 80s, during the time of the Intifada,<sup>52</sup> that Israel began to target Hamas as a potential threat, but by then, Hamas was deeply embedded into the Palestinian community and positioned to execute numerous violent attacks against Israel.

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<sup>51</sup> Mitchell Bard, "Myth or Fact: The Creation of Hamas," The Jewish Foundations of North America, accessed January 31, 2014, <http://www.jewishfederations.org/page.aspx?id=64336>.

<sup>52</sup> Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), vii.

## **II. CASE STUDY 1: IRAQ (SONS OF IRAQ—AL-QA’IDA)**

In the previous chapter, a range of variables were identified as facilitating the success or failure of countermobilization through influencing not only the opportunities for successful counteractions by methods of framing but also through the organizational capacity to manipulate those opportunities. Therefore, the focus of analysis for the following case studies is clearly on the processes that determines the prospect of establishing a successful countermovement to include the interaction between the sponsor and the countermovement.

The purpose of this case study is to compare factors associated with this particular empirical phenomenon to countermobilization: expanding political opportunities, “complex” organizational structure, and the counter-narrative and framing process. Moreover, the analysis of this case will illustrate the use of unconventional-style warfare and the execution of counterterrorism (i.e., focused on the local fight) with the desired effects of ascertaining positive and negative factors to either retain or circumvent in the execution of successful countermobilization.

In this particular case study, I discuss the contention between SOI and AQI. This case study looks into how the U.S. military took advantage of a shift in the socio-political environment that led to U.S. forces’ sponsorship of the SOI Sunni movement, which consisted of individuals, groups, and tribes that were previously in armed conflict with U.S. and Coalition forces, to develop a countermovement that eventually achieved success by dismantling the targeted AQI movement. Specifically, I will discuss the conditions that shifted favor from AQI to the U.S. and Coalition forces, the organizational structure of SOI, the counter-narrative and framing process, and finally the sponsor-countermovement relationship that in discord began to pilfer brokers from the targeted AQI movement to the United States and the Government of Iraq (GOI).

### **A. BACKGROUND**

On March 20, 2003, U.S. forces began the liberation of Iraq from Saddam Hussein’s regime with a bombardment of airstrikes termed the “shock and awe”

campaign.<sup>53</sup> However, after initial successes, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM soon turned from what seemed to be an overwhelming U.S. victory into a protracted war characterized by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mounting U.S. casualties, and intense insurgent activities. The bloody insurgency that encapsulated Iraq was the result of multiple ill-fated policies implemented by Paul Bremmer and his staff: 1) Order No. 1 “De-Ba’athification of Iraqi Society,” which forbade the former top-level Ba’athist personnel, who were also the most experienced personnel in Iraq, from occupying any position in the new Iraqi government.<sup>54</sup> Many Sunni perceived this as an open attempt to promote Shi’a dominance in Iraq.<sup>55</sup> 2) Order No. 2 “Dissolution of Entities,” which dissolved any formal existing security structures within Iraq and left many Iraqis jobless and searching for a means to live and/or survive.<sup>56</sup>

The implemented policies created a consequential environment that was ripe for al-Qa’ida to exploit, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian and known “jihadist,” took advantage and merged his VEM known as Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn with al-Qa’ida in 2004 to form AQI.<sup>57</sup> Many Sunnis aligned themselves with AQI under the condition of fear fashioned by a Shi’a-dominated government, which appeared to have the full support of U.S. forces.<sup>58</sup> Regardless of whether tribal villages wanted to join AQI or not, the environment created conditions that drew the two entities towards a partnership. The jihadists needed a home, local intelligence, and resources provided by their hosts, while the tribes needed protection, finances, and influence.<sup>59</sup> Even the

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<sup>53</sup> “Last U.S. Troops Leave Iraq, Ending War,” *USA Today*, December 17, 2011, accessed January 28, 2014, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2011-12-17/iraq-us-troops/52032854/>.

<sup>54</sup> Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 549–550.

<sup>55</sup> W. Andrew Terrill, *Lessons of the Iraqi De-Ba’athification Program for Iraq’s Future and the Arab Revolutions* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 16.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 554–555.

<sup>57</sup> Craig Whitlock, “Al Zarqawi’s Biography,” *Washington Post*, accessed January 28, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/08/AR2006060800299.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Najim Abed Al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, “The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening,” *Prism* 2, no. 1 (2010): 8.

<sup>59</sup> Ahmed Hashim, “Foreign Involvement in the Insurgency,” in Ramzy Mardini, ed., *Volatile Landscape: Iraq and Its Insurgent Movements* (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2010), 15.

nationalist and Ba'athist insurgent organizations worked together with AQI amid the aim of expanding logistical, economic, and labor support.<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps more troubling than this partnership to form an insurgency, was the U.S. strategy against the insurgency, which seemed to be vague and politically focused rather than in touch with realities on the ground. After years of fighting a bloody protracted war, U.S. and Coalition forces were in the process of transferring the command and control of the environment to untrained and ill-prepared Iraqi security forces and local police, while the police and government officials were still being assassinated at a devastating pace. Additionally, Iraqi soldiers had little influence and were still socially isolated from the populace, and the government was still littered with corrupt officials.<sup>61</sup> In essence, the situation on the ground seemed to be unwinnable for U.S. forces and not in a position to transfer responsibilities to a government and military in its infancy.

The grim situation soon saw a glimmer of hope as Iraq began to experience an era of "Awakening." In an attempt to safeguard wide-spread collaboration, AQI conducted numerous atrocities and assassinations on those who resisted, to include prominent villagers and tribal leaders.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, in an effort to fund its activities, AQI committed theft and violent crimes to the extent that the organization earned a monthly revenue of more than \$400,000 a month.<sup>63</sup> These activities began to weigh heavily on the relationship between Sunni tribesmen and AQI, and even before the more recognizable Al-Anbar Awakening took place, sparks of contention between Sunni tribesmen and AQI arose in a small village located on a prominent position on the Iraq-Syria border, called Al Qaim. In an attempt to force AQI out of their village tribal militias in Al Qaim soon began to team up with Coalition forces. This unlikely union came to fruition after a series of violent acts culminated with the assassination of Major Ahmed Adiya Asaf, who was

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>61</sup> Bill Ardolino, *Fallujah Awakens: Marines, Sheiks, and the Battle Against Al Qaeda* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>62</sup> Neil Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* 88, no. 2 (2008): 42.

<sup>63</sup> Benjamin Bahney et al., *An Economic Analysis of the Financial Records of al-Qa'ida in Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010), 34–39.

the Chief of Police in Al Qaim.<sup>64</sup> The AQI assaults were aimed at the villagers in Al Qaim in an attempt to ensure cooperation, however it had the opposite effect and incited tribes like Albu Mahal to actively resist AQI in armed contention. Although this early attempt at an “awakening” failed, it precluded and influenced subsequent actions of Sunni tribes in Al Anbar that led to the Al Anbar Awakening and the Iraq Awakening.<sup>65</sup>

The AQI assaults and atrocities aimed at both Shi’a and Sunni individuals and groups that resisted AQI’s presence and ideology were not isolated actions, and Iraqis in general finally awoke to the situation and began to mobilize numerous localized militias to put a stop to the atrocities. On September 14, 2006, Sheik Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha went one step further and announced the Sahawa—the Awakening, which initially involved 40 other sheiks from the Ramadi area whom gathered together to discuss the crisis. Their purpose of the meeting was to sign a proclamation to work with Coalition forces led by the United States in a campaign to expel AQI from the Al-Anbar province.<sup>66</sup> What started as the Al-Anbar Awakening soon spread to other villages, municipal cities, and provinces in Iraq. In 2007, Fallujah, which became infamous as an insurgent stronghold east of the Ramadi area in 2004, also experienced an Awakening as major tribes in Fallujah’s suburban and rural southern peninsula areas allied with U.S. and Iraqi forces to secure the city proper.<sup>67</sup> Coupled with the subsequent U.S. “surge” of troops, the Awakening shaped conditions in Iraq that allowed for the United States to hand over control of Iraq to the new Iraqi government.

## **B. EXPANDING POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The conclusion of U.S. forces’ role in the Iraq war did not come to fruition at the behest of some random acts. There were a series of events that created conditions to allow for a countermovement to take place followed by appropriate decisions and actions

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<sup>64</sup> William Knarr, “Al-Sahawa: An Awakening in Al Qaim,” *Combating Terrorism Exchange* 3, no. 2 (2013): 5.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–7.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Ardolino, *Fallujah Awakens*, 1–3.

that took advantage of the existing conditions. The first conditional variable is how SOI exploited shifts in the socio-political environment to expand political opportunities in order to defeat AQI.

In 2005, the United States' diplomatic policy in Iraq shifted to encouraging Sunni participation in Iraqi governance. This was in contrast to its earlier policy that took a "de-Ba'athafication" approach, which led to a January 2005 Sunni-boycott of Iraqi elections.<sup>68</sup> This change of policy was a spark of hope for the Sunnis in Iraq, as they now had increased political influence in the governance of Iraq. Furthermore, AQI gave the Coalition forces, to include GOI, an opportunity to change the balance of power towards the Coalition's favor and under terms Coalition forces would enjoy.<sup>69</sup> Tension developed between the Sunni population and AQI, which created dissention and an opportunity for the U.S. forces to capitalize on, but the opportunity was not enough. The identification of the shift was essential for the United States in establishing a relationship with the potential AQI-counter movement. U.S. forces in Al Qaim received plenty of corroborated intelligence from multiple sources that described the situation on the ground that depicted a shift in the socio-political process. Sunni tribesmen were beginning to shift their perception from AQI being the source of protection to U.S. forces, as described by a Marine Captain in Al Qaim:

We were getting frantic phone calls: 'We're getting run over.' And then perhaps the most surreal moments...we saw in the hundreds, Iraqis come out of the north end of the city towards our OP [outpost]...with their hands up. They are now coming in full daylight out of the city towards our OP with their hands up. Ali, our contact, was calling us saying, 'These are my people; please help them. We're getting killed.'<sup>70</sup>

As far as the anti-AQI movement was concerned, once they realized that they could not defeat AQI on their own, they reached out to the U.S. military for support. This was the political expansion the anti-AQI movement required to increase its likelihood of defeating AQI. Once the anti-AQI movement formally joined with U.S. and Coalition

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<sup>68</sup> Toby Dodge, *Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism* (New York: Rutledge, 2012), 90–91.

<sup>69</sup> Knarr, "Al-Sahawa," 12.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

forces to rid AQI from their villages, they gained valuable support and protections. The U.S. forces, who were the benefactors of SOI, also experienced positive effects from this union. U.S. forces increased its level of influence in the region from one purely reliant on the Iraqi central government to one augmented with the local tribes of Iraq.

In terms of countermobilization, this case is a prime example of how important it is to understand the environment in order identify advantageous shifts in the ebb and flow of contention. For SOI, the change in the de-Ba'athification policy illustrated that U.S. forces were not in Iraq to suppress the Sunnis. Additionally, the situation on the ground made AQI a bigger threat than the U.S. forces. When Sunni leaders saw U.S. policies and actions shift towards Sunni involvement, the Sunni leadership went to U.S. forces to aid them in a fight against AQI. The Sunni tribesmen understood their position was worse under AQI's authority and decided to align U.S. forces and GOI. The expanded political opportunity that SOI was granted provided the countermovement with top-cover, legitimacy, and material support that eventually led to its success against AQI. For U.S. forces, identification of dissention between AQI and the Sunni tribal leadership led towards the United States' expansion of regional political strength that included the Iraqi tribal leaders. This afforded the U.S. military local protections and securities that the local militias and tribes could provide the Coalition forces.

### **C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The expansion of political opportunity was not the only factor that facilitated in the success of SOI as a countermovement. In this section, I discuss how the organizational structure of the SOI helped itself and the United States achieve their aims. In particular, I examine how Coalition forces and SOI's ability to compel key brokers to join the countermovement facilitated towards the neutralization of AQI.

As described earlier, the Marines were able to exploit the friction on the ground, because of sources that were embedded within the local networks. This allowed the U.S. forces to act appropriately and support the Sunni tribesmen who eventually became the anti-AQI countermovement. Units such as the U.S. Army Special Forces Operational Detachments began to redeploy into the area with the purpose of operating by, with and

through indigenous Iraqis in order to help them secure their local villages.<sup>71</sup> 1-1 AD also began to work with Thawar Al Anbar (TAA), a local anti-AQI countermovement operating within the Ramadi area.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, U.S. forces understood who the power brokers were in the area, and were able to identify the brokers who had the most influential presence to assist in the mobilization of a countermovement. This was evident in COL MacFarland's relationship with Sheik Sittar abu Risha. After a series of attacks and atrocities committed by AQI, COL MacFarland met with Sheik Sittar in order to discuss the developing situation. After multiple talks with COL MacFarland, Sheik Sittar eventually met with a sizeable amount of sheiks from the region. The sheiks were all leaders who united under Sheik Sittar's prose. "If we don't stand up together, Al-Qaeda is going to pick us apart one by one, like they did last time," is the language Sheik Sittar used to motivate the power brokers after the murder of fellow sheik, Sheik Khaled.<sup>73</sup> From under the brokerage potential of Sheik Sittar, the Awakening emerged in the Ramadi area, and U.S. forces had additional resources in the war against AQI.

Sheik Sittar served did not serve as a prominent leader in AQI's network, however he was a powerful broker that was able to attract and link multiple tribal networks together. Exploiting the dissention between the AQI network and Sunni tribes did not afford Coalition forces access into AQI's network, but it did isolate the link the two dissenting faction from each other. By taking a non-violent approach and compelling Sheik Sittar into joining a countermovement against AQI, it linked the GOI and U.S. forces in with the local informal networks associated with Sheik Sittar. More than 4,000 local volunteers joined in support of local Iraqi security forces, in only a six-month period.<sup>74</sup> The establishment of a countermovement embedded within the social fabric of

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<sup>71</sup> Brent Lindeman, "Better Lucky Than Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of 'Who'" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), [http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2009/Dec/09Dec\\_Lindeman.pdf](http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2009/Dec/09Dec_Lindeman.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Anthony E. Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," *Military Review* 90, no. 1 (2010): 85.

<sup>73</sup> William Doyle, *A Soldier's Dream: Captain Travis Patriquin and the Awakening of Iraq* (New York: New American Library, 2011), 145.

<sup>74</sup> Neil Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* 88, no. 2 (2008): 44-45.



the local Iraqi culture and society, benefitted U.S. and Coalition forces to a new range of information and intelligence that led to increased freedom of movement. By December 2006, U.S. forces' casualties and the number and quality of IEDs in Anbar province dropped a considerable amount while the amount of cache exploitations increased in the area.<sup>75</sup> The level of success gained from the integration of local militia forces with powerful hierarchical organizations emphasizes the importance of stealing powerful brokers will serve as the connective tissues between networks in a countermovement. When conducting countermobilization it is essential to identify and exploit powerful brokers. As in the case with Coalition forces, the United States and GOI definitely had the manpower and support to defeat AQI, but they lacked the information required to destroy a sufficient amount of caches, operating cells, and AQI leaders. In contrast, the local informal networks had the information necessary to target AQI, but it lacked the resources and support needed to directly engage AQI. Once Coalition forces gained the connective structures that allowed for the development of a "complex" organizational structure, the countermovement could successfully engage AQI.

#### **D. COUNTER-NARRATIVE AND FRAMING PROCESS**

But how did the United States pilfer brokers from AQI? This was achievable by the establishment of an effective counter-narrative and framing process. The establishment of a counter-narrative was inevitable under the conditions afforded in Iraq. One of the main reasons the relationship between AQI and the Iraqi population in Al Anbar were at risk of divorce was due to a major variance in ideology.

The ambition of al-Qaeda itself forced a large section of Anbar's population to reject it. As the ideological zeal of its leaders became more intense, the organization tried to enforce its own austere version of Salafist Islam on the wider society of Anbar. This quickly alienated al-Qaeda

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<sup>75</sup> "Charts to Accompany the Testimony of General David H. Petraeus," Multi-National Force-Iraq, September 2007, accessed January 28, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Petraeus-Testimony-Slides20070910.pdf>

members religiously and culturally from their hosts. Anbar's own Islamic traditions are diverse, with a substantial number of Anbaris following Sufi approaches to Islam...<sup>76</sup>

As stated, AQI's forceful approach isolated the Anbaris from its organization. This forceful approach created an environment of in-fighting amongst the insurgents, which created an opportunity for a countermovement to mobilize. What followed was the development of a framework that would further expose the disenfranchised and pilfer additional support in favor of U.S. and Coalition forces.

The framing process during the "awakening" was two-fold, which both initially relied on pre-existing vulnerabilities, then on blunders when AQI attempted to regain control. First, the Iraqis enacted a motivational frame to rally a call to arms. The motivational frame involved tribal legitimacy and survival to motivate tribal leaders into forming a movement. This ploy associated "tribal" values and organization with the Anbar Awakening Council and drew distinction between the Anbari movement and the foreign Al-Qa'ida operatives.<sup>77</sup> The U.S. forces also continued to drive wedges between AQI and the Sunni tribesmen through increased verbiage and support of the "tribal revolt." Since the Anbaris were militarily weaker and less organized than AQI, the U.S. forces worked out a deal that allowed tribes to establish local militia in exchange for intelligence. U.S. and Iraqi security forces would carry out the majority of military actions that the local militias could not carry out, while the local militias provided the necessary intelligence for the execution of effective raids.<sup>78</sup>

The appeal to tribalism was not a new strategy in Iraq. Saddam Hussein recognized the influential nature of tribes and used them to supplement his regime. Tribalism was also a motivational factor Saddam used to mobilize Shi'as, Sunnis, and Kurds during the Iran-Iraq war,<sup>79</sup> and after the casualties his regime suffered in the

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<sup>76</sup> Dodge, *Iraq*, 91.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 94-95

<sup>79</sup> Ariel I. Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Press, 2011), 86.

Persian Gulf War, he took on tribal leadership to maintain his influence over the Iraqi population.<sup>80</sup> In some locations, the economic conditions of Iraq forced Saddam to treat tribal entities as the local authority or security force, because the Iraqi regime did not have the available resources to extend securities to remote areas. Therefore, Saddam created organizations like the Office of Tribal Affairs and a High Council of Tribal Chiefs to serve as links to his regime and tribal leadership.<sup>81</sup>

The importance of a motivational frame was influential in the mobilization of SOI. “Tribalism” was, and is still today, a culturally historic network that is familiar to the people of Iraq. Saddam used this historical context to motivate the masses and strengthen his regime. Even though the presence of tribes has the potential to weaken the influence of the state, because locals adhere to the tribal leaderships’ standards, the appropriate use, integration, and control of tribes can protect the state as well. In this case, the dynamics of tribal influence proved to be a valuable asset in establishing security and resistance against Al-Qa’ida in Iraq.

This lesson should be conceptualized in the execution of countermobilization. While mobilizing the population, it is essential to look towards historic mobilization efforts as they may be a way to motivate the population. It is important to leave some historical context in forming a new structure, because it can cause less of a culture shock and be viewed as more palatable than a drastic change. As was in the case with the Anbaris and tribalism. Furthermore, it is not only suffice to drive a wedge between the countermovement and the target movement. The sponsor must mold the relationship between itself and the countermovement in order to ensure that the sponsor has influence and can constantly frame the direction the movement is going. This will assist in the objective of ensuring that the countermovement continues to gain influence over the population, but the sponsor continues to gain influence over the countermovement.

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<sup>80</sup> Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 239.

<sup>81</sup> Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 162–163; Kimberly Marten, *Warlords: Strong-Arm Brokers in Weak States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 154.

## **E. UNITED STATES AND SOI**

In light of the effects achieved by the organizational structure that included SOI throughout Iraq, U.S. forces maintained a level of scrutiny and control in order to ensure SOI did not become more powerful than GOI and that SOI stay aligned with U.S. objectives. U.S. forces were instructed to locally screen all personnel associated with SOI. Additionally, SOI personnel took oaths and were recorded into biometric databases to mitigate the risk of infiltration and prevent reoccurrences of misfortunes from recruiting local personnel with AQI ties. SOI was deliberately limited, and U.S. forces were instructed not to provide ammunition or ordnance to SOI personnel.<sup>82</sup> This allowed for the United States, being the sponsor, to maintain a level of influence over the countermovement, which is critical in countermobilization. The need to understand motivations, limitations, and strengths allows for the sponsor to control the movement's level of attainable power. If the sponsor does not want to limit the size or influence of the countermovement, then it must be able to control the direction or objectives of the countermovement, which can be achieved through the manipulation or maintenance of a countermovement's ideology and framing process.

The Iraqi case study is a good example of how to sponsor a countermovement against a targeted movement. It emphasizes the need to not only drive a wedge between factions from within a movement, but it points towards the need to also maintain a relationship and control between the sponsor and beneficiary countermovement. The aforementioned qualities involved with the conduct of a sponsored countermovement are qualities that are important to incorporate in the execution of countermobilization. If these characteristics were not adhered to, it could cause either the countermovement to gain unnecessary powers and influence or lose direction from which the sponsor wants the countermovement to go.

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<sup>82</sup> Glenn D. Furbish, ed., "Sons of Iraq Program: Results Were Uncertain and Financial Controls Were Weak" (SIGAR 11-010) (Arlington, VA: Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Construction, 2011), 3.

## **F. FINDINGS**

To summarize the lessons learned from the U.S. interaction with SOI, I have highlighted key factors that pertain to the operation of conducting a sponsored countermovement: 1) The ability to react quickly when socio-political shifts present an advantageous environment that enables the sponsorship and mobilization of a countermovement against a targeted movement more likely to succeed. As in the case when Coalition forces saw a widening gap between the relationship of AQI and Sunni tribesmen. 2) The judgment to establish influential brokers who can serve as connective tissues between informal and formal networks and organizations. 3) The need to establish motivational and diagnostic frames that support the counter-narrative and attract key brokers to the countermovement and away from the targeted movement. 4) The insight for the sponsor to maintain continuing influence and control of the countermovement. It is essential for the sponsor to ensure the countermovement's frame alignment is consistent with the sponsor's objectives and that the countermovement does not become so powerful that it becomes unmanageable. 5) In contention against another movement, it is essential to focus on efforts at the local level. Whether a countermovement has local, regional, or transnational objectives the epicenter of the fight should be at the local level. Once local success is achieved it raises the likelihood that the countermovement will transcend into other levels of contention. In the end, a government is in competition for the support of the populace just as much as a movement is, so why solely entrust the government's ability to win the populace over rather than earning the populace first.

### **III. CASE STUDY 2: MEXICO (ZAPATISTAS—ANTI-ZAPATISTAS MOVEMENT)**

This case study examines the cycle of contention between the EZLN and the broader Zapatista movement in Chiapas against the counteractions that against them, which involved the Mexican government, military, and local landowners and paramilitaries. This case differs from the previous case, in that it analyzes a case where a state and a state-sponsored countermovement are unable to neutralize a targeted movement based on the strategy and tactics used.

The purpose of this case study is to compare this case study with the factors associated with countermobilization: expanding political opportunities, “complex” organizational structure, and the counter-narrative and framing process. Moreover, the inductive analysis of this case facilitates in ascertaining negative factors to avoid in the execution of successful countermobilization.

In particular, the highlights from this case study will illustrate that the response and focus of the government and its sponsored countermovement relied too heavily on violence and conducting counter-protests in areas already dominated by anti-Zapatista supporters, rather than developing a successful framing process that aimed at pilfering support from external brokers. Furthermore, this case study will also examine how the state and its sponsored countermovement failed to effectively address the portrayal of their ideology at all levels of contention., and how these failures effected the final outcome with Zapatista “autonomy” and the Mexican government’s inability to force the Zapatistas back into political alignment due to a certain level of protection gained by the Zapatistas.

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

On January 1, 1994, the same day as the official commencement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* (EZLN) launched a rebellion in the southern state of Mexico, known as Chiapas. The EZLN assaulted and captured four cities in the Los Altos region of Chiapas,

Mexico. Although, direct military confrontation between the EZLN and Mexican Army ended only after 12 days with the EZLN suffering a large amount of casualties, the Zapatista movement exploded onto the domestic and international stage.<sup>83</sup> The purpose of the movement is to address the poor conditions associated with “jobs, land, housing, food, health, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace.”<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the Zapatista movement does not seek to overthrow the state or the regime, but seeks to shift “the balance of forces in favor of popular and democratic movements, thereby isolating and ultimately defeating anti-democratic tendencies within the ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), the state and the rest of society.”<sup>85</sup> Prominent Mexican figures, like Emiliano Zapata, resonate through the ideology and historical base of the EZLN. Zapata directed what he entitled a “popular army,” the *Ejercito Libertador del Centro y Sur*—the Liberating Army of the Center and the South, and succeeded in mobilizing an oppressed agricultural population in southern and central parts of Mexico, and he had a rallying call of “Land and Liberty.”<sup>86</sup> The EZLN’s association to Zapata also made his Plan de Ayala a cornerstone of EZLN ideology. Plan de Ayala envisioned the nationalization of land controlled by big landowners and the redistribution of these lands to the workers of the big landowners and other small farmers.<sup>87</sup>

The actual core issues of EZLN reside in neoliberalism and indigenous rights. It is extremely unfavorable of neoliberal economic policies and the poor distribution practices of income.<sup>88</sup> The EZLN view the consequences of neoliberalism as the principal global

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<sup>83</sup> María Inclán, “Zapatista and Counter-Zapatista Protests A Test of Movement–Counter-movement Dynamics,” *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 3 (2012): 460.

<sup>84</sup> Stephen J. Wager and Donald E. Schulz, “The Awakening: The Zapatista Revolt and Its Implications for Civil-Military Relations and the Future of Mexico” (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1994), 1.

<sup>85</sup> Neil Harvey, “Rebellion in Chiapas: Rural Reforms, Campesino Radicalism, and the Limits to Salinismo,” in *Transformation of Rural Mexico* (La Jolla, CA: University of California at San Diego, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1994), 1–2.

<sup>86</sup> James F. Rochlin, *Vanguard Revolutionaries in Latin America: Peru, Colombia, Mexico* (Boulder, CA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 174.

<sup>87</sup> John Womack, *Zapata y la Revolucion Mexicana* (Mexico D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1999), 308.

<sup>88</sup> Subcomandante Marcos, “Chiapas: The Southeast in Two Winds—A Storm and a Prophecy,” August 1992, translated by the EZLN. [www.ezln.org](http://www.ezln.org).

threat confronting Mexicans. An example of such consequences was the amendment to Article 27 of the constitution, which codified the end of land reform in Mexico as it permitted the privatization of ejido plots and removed the guarantee that indigenous groups would receive land reparations.<sup>89</sup> The result of the policy created a sense that the dream of possessing sufficient land for subsistence seemed further out of reach than ever for many residents of the Chiapas highlands and jungle.”<sup>90</sup> Additionally, the passage of NAFTA, which initiated the spark for the rebellion, makes it virtually impossible for Indian peasants to compete with the high-tech productivity of U.S. companies, which all but spelled catastrophe for Indian peasant lives.<sup>91</sup>

As the Zapatista cause and inherently the movement gained favor among sympathizers, it also gained opponents that began to start a counter-Zapatista movement. Initially, the Mexican government and military countered the Zapatista movement with military force, however the images of a disproportionate war between the Mexican army and the poorly-armed EZLN guerrillas that circulated through various media outlets generated a strong backlash of social protests and concerns. The perceived over-aggressive nature of the response began to generate favorable attention towards the Zapatsita movement.<sup>92</sup> A multitude of foreign activists associated with human-rights organizations, indigenous-rights groups, and other nongovernmental organization (NGOs) began to descend into Mexico to express sympathy and support for the movement and to push for a cease-fire, a military withdrawal, and negotiations between the EZLN and the Mexican government.<sup>93</sup> This favorable momentum caused a mobilization of a counter-Zapatista movement that initially involved less violent methods of protests and demonstrations. These counter-Zapatista protesters were formed by concerned cattle ranchers, coffee producers, businessmen, and civilians that would be

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<sup>89</sup> Ejido plots are Mexican farms that are managed and owned by the community. The inhabitants of the village usually cooperate to keep the farm meant to support the community operational.

<sup>90</sup> Rochlin, *Vanguard Revolutionaries in Latin America*, 187.

<sup>91</sup> Tom Hayden, *The Zapatista Reader* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002), 20.

<sup>92</sup> Inclán, “Zapatista and Counter-Zapatista,” 462.

<sup>93</sup> David Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1998), 3.



affected by the economic or social impacts of a violent armed conflict. The counter-Zapatista movement also included rural communities and peasant organizations that supported the PRI.<sup>94</sup> The counter-Zapatista movements took a dramatic turn when some began to form locally armed pro-government paramilitary groups like Paz y Justicia. These paramilitary groups formed alliances with the PRI and conducted violent operations like the one in the village of Acteal in December of 1997, which targeted and killed numerous Zapatista sympathizers. Pro-Zapatistas took advantage of these atrocities that were the consequence of increased anti-Zapatista organizing that was permitted by local PRI authorities in an effort to spark a remobilization of the movement and its partisans and sympathizers.<sup>95</sup>

Although, the Zapatista movement has entered into a type of a stalemate with the Mexican government, EZLN is still active in its attempts to garner additional brokers for its cause. The government has tried to generate partial or water-downed concessions in an attempt to pacify the movement, but EZLN continues to push for substantial changes. With the first form of concessions, the federal government suspended arrest warrants against rebel leaders, created autonomous Zapatista controlled areas (*zonas francas*), freed political prisoners, removed military checkpoints around pro-Zapatista communities, and created two mediation commissions. [One with representatives from all political parties in the legislature (*Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación* or COCOPA) and the other was formed by the Bishop of San Critobal de las Casas (*Comisión Nacional de Inter-mediación* or CONAI). In addition to the federal government's concessions, local governments increased expenditure of public works and social programs.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, in 2001, EZLN rejected ineffective agreements, constructed by former-President Vicente Fox (first non-PRI president of Mexico in 70 years), to end the

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<sup>94</sup> Inclán, "Zapatista and Counter-Zapatista," 460.

<sup>95</sup> Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico*, 4; Inclán, "Zapatista and Counter-Zapatista," 463.

<sup>96</sup> Inclán, "Zapatista and Counter-Zapatista," 464–465.

conflict.<sup>97</sup> This led towards EZLN's creation of 32 "autonomous" municipalities in Chiapas. In essence, the Zapatistas have abandoned talks, politics, and all further contact with the state, and as an alternative, they have elected to concentrate on building their own autonomous, horizontal forms of self-government within their declared territories void of the Mexican government's support.<sup>98</sup>

Along with the declaration of autonomy from the Mexican government, the Zapatistas continue to disseminate their message of consciousness and contention aimed at domestic and international communities. On June 28, 2005, the EZLN released its Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle. In this declaration, the EZLN puts emphasis on its strategy to change in order to continue its struggle. In particular, the EZLN communicated its desires to create the "Other Campaign," which is a campaign by Subcomandante Marcos that attempts to unite EZLN with existing Mexican resistance groups and social movements. EZLN also proposed support and aid to other international organizations that are resisting neoliberalism in their respective regions, and in return asks for a united front all over the world.<sup>99</sup> This statement along with other recent messages and events sponsored by EZLN and the Zapatistas demonstrate that this movement is far from extinguished and continues to play its part in Mexican politics and culture.

## **B. EXPANDING POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

As expressed in the above synopsis of the contention involving pro-Zapatista and counter-Zapatista movements, there was clearly a continuing ebb and flow of momentum for each side to capitalize on. For the Mexican government and the counter-Zapatista movement, the 1994 EZLN assault into the Los Altos region of Chiapas should have been a gateway for garnering domestic and international support. In terms of expanding its

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<sup>97</sup> Patrick H. O'Neil, Karl Fields, and Don Share, *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 378.

<sup>98</sup> Leonidas Oikonomakis, "Zapatistas celebrate 10 Years of Autonomy with 'Escuelita,'" accessed May 1, 2014, <http://roarmag.org/2013/08/escuelita-zapatista-10-year-autonomy/>.

<sup>99</sup> EZLN, "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle (as Translated by Narco News)," accessed May 1, 2014, <http://www.narconews.com/Issue38/article1371.html>.

political opportunity, the counter-Zapatista movements aligned its organization with the ruling Mexican Party, which gave it top-cover from a domestic perspective. However, the top-cover received by the countermovements was not utilized properly. At the beginning of the conflict, the Mexican government and military responded with a disproportionate amount of military force, which definitely squashed the EZLN and pro-Zapatista supporters, but also gave them ammunition to change the shift towards their favor. Although this was perpetrated by the military and not the countermovement, the countermovement replicated these effects from 1997–1999 with increased armed conflicts and killings.<sup>100</sup> These actions hurt the counter-Zapatista movement in garnering additional brokers from the international sphere of influence. These actions allowed for the Zapatistas to draw back on the past actions of the military and relate them to the actions of the countermovement. These violent counteractions facilitated the emergence of effects opposite from the desired purpose of the countermovement. Rather than “hurting” the Zapatista movement by reducing its influence and relevancy, the disproportionate amount of attacks against the Zapatistas revitalized pro-Zapatista protests, as illustrated in Figure 1.

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<sup>100</sup> Hayden, *The Zapatista Reader*, 13-14; “1997 Acteal Massacre,” accessed March 24, 2014, [http://acteal97.com/?page\\_id=65](http://acteal97.com/?page_id=65).

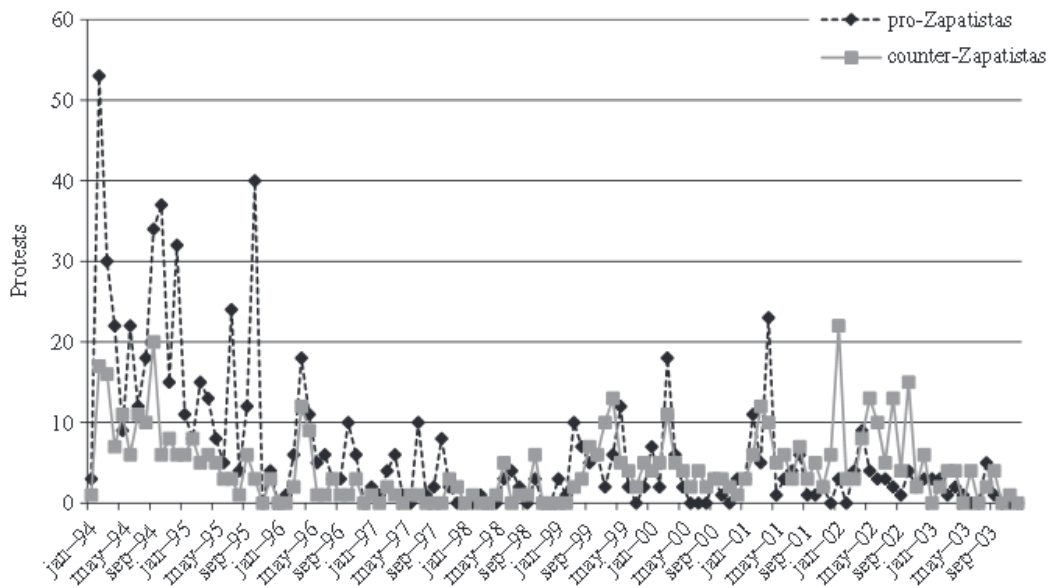


Figure 1. Pro- and counter-Zapatista protests, 1994–2003.<sup>101</sup>

The pattern of increased protests continues throughout the time of increased conflict from 1997-1999. With the disproportionate amount of force laying siege on the Zapatistas at the start of contention and from 1997-99, the Zapatistas were able to appeal to the international communities and garner a level of protections supported by aligning itself with international NGOs.

The interaction of these movements emphasizes the need to expand political opportunities throughout the all levels of contention. Although domestic affiliates provide a substantial amount of top-cover, leverage, and a position for bargaining, the international level of contention can significantly disrupt a countermovement’s freedom of movement. The protections afforded to the Zapatistas by linking its organization with prominent international NGOs may have been avoided if the countermovement had identified more than the potential to broker support in the domestic arena. The countermovement never effectively appealed to the international community as the victim of a series of armed conflicts instigated by the Zapatistas. On the contrary, the countermovement took advantage of its domestic top-cover to conduct raids against

<sup>101</sup> Inclán, “Zapatista and Counter-Zapatista,” 461.

Zapatista sympathizers and fell into the same association as the state's characterized response of unnecessary violence. The results of this lapse in judgment fed the Zapatistas counter, which was put into effect via a robust information war against the Mexican government and its affiliates.

### **C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

In terms of organizational structure, the counter-Zapatista movement established an efficient organizational structure that supported initial mobilization and the ability to sustain mobilization throughout the ebb and flow of contention. The resiliency of the counter-movement is evidenced in its ability to maintain activities despite the PRI's electoral defeat in 2000. This resiliency was due to its ability to preserve its strong ties to the landowning elites and peasant organizations aligned with the PRI, such as the National Confederation of Peasants (Confederación Nacional Campesina or CNC).<sup>102</sup>

Although the countermovement's organizational infrastructure incorporated local communities linked with overarching political institutions and formal organizations, the countermovement made a critical error. The countermovement was not able to steal and integrate key brokers from the EZLN/Zapatista movement. Unfortunate for the countermovement, it was linked to PRI-affiliated paramilitary groups like Paz y Justicia (Peace and Justice) and Mascara Roja (Red Mask). The actions associated with Paz y Justicia and other paramilitary forces did more damage towards the desired effects of the countermovement than good. Paramilitary forces were the main perpetrators of numerous attacks like the one that resulted in 45 deaths of Zapatista sympathizers in the Acteal massacre.<sup>103</sup> These type of attacks made it impossible for the countermovement to steal brokers from the targeted movement.

In regards to the construction of a complex organizational structure, it is not only vital to build strong ties with the local communities and elites, but the countermovement

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 463.

<sup>103</sup> "1997 Acteal Massacre," [http://acteal97.com/?page\\_id=65](http://acteal97.com/?page_id=65); "Chiapas: Masoja Shucja, Commemoration of the Victims of the conflict of '95 and '96," SIPAZ Blog, accessed May 24, 2014, <http://sipazen.wordpress.com/tag/paz-y-justicia/>.

must filter out the individuals, groups, and/or organizations that can deter from appropriating oppositional and neutral brokers. This must be understood in the context of all levels of contention. The violent response may be acceptable or even invited at the domestic level, however this type of response may summon unwanted pressures from the international arena in the form of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs. As was the case in this study, a massive amount of pressure from NGOs granted increased legitimacy and a certain amount of protections to the Zapatistas. In order to understand how the countermovement failed to successfully advertise its ideology, actions, and interests, I move to the next variable.

#### **D. COUNTER-NARRATIVE AND FRAMING PROCESS**

So how did the Zapatistas exploit its initial political leverage and why was it that the countermovement could not win the information war against the Zapatistas? I argue that the countermovement made little effort to combat the Zapatista movement's narrative and failed to construct an effective framing process that detracted the mobilization of the Zapatista movement. Again the actions that continue to haunt the Mexican government are the ones that were conducted by the Mexican military in 1994, and the subsequent actions by violent local citizens and paramilitaries impaired any means to construct a *counternetwar* that could position the counter-Zapatista organizations as the victims of the conflict or the "good guy."<sup>104</sup>

The EZLN/Zapatista movement significantly changed the parameters of conflict in Mexico with the adaptation towards information operations. The movement's information operations agitated the Mexican political system to the point that the government was prompted to reform and restructure its agenda to answer the problems of marginalization and poverty.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> This term is derived from the term *netwar*, which refers to "an emerging mode of conflict (and crime) at societal levels, involving measures short of traditional war, in which the protagonists use network forms of organization and related doctrines, strategies, and technologies attuned to the information age." Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico*, 5, 8–9.

<sup>105</sup> Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico*, 98–100.

...the Zapatista netwar...had profound effects, and not just in Mexico. It has shaken the foundations of the Mexican political system, by creating extraordinary pressure for democratic reforms and raising the specter of instability in America's next-door neighbor...it is inspiring radical activists around the world to begin thinking that old models of struggle—ones that call for building 'parties' and 'fronts' and 'focos to crush the state' and 'seize power'—are not the way to go in the information age. A new concept...aims to draw on the power of 'networks' and strengthen global civil society in order to counterbalance state and market actors.<sup>106</sup>

The EZLN also established an effective strategy that focused on the blunders carried out by the countermovement during the interplay of contention. In particular, EZLN focused on the violent responses exercised by the military and the local paramilitaries. In contrast to that of EZLN's techniques, the Mexican government and its affiliated countermovement never developed any effective countermeasure to the EZLN's strategy, which perpetuated the Zapatistas' domination of the information campaign.

Instead of constructing an elaborate motivational frame that centered on patriotism, nationalism, or freedom to entice domestic and international support. The Mexican government's first move was that of violence. This was opposite of the United States' response to terrorist attacks. George Bush and his advisors went to NATO for acceptance and support to before entering a conflict against a force that was less technologically advanced and equipped.<sup>107</sup>

Whichever side understands the dynamics of the network first and more effectively will gain a major foothold in securing a prominent position in the cycle of contention.<sup>108</sup> The Zapatista movement illustrates this statement clearly, as a small force of indigenous people were able to force reform on the Mexican political system as a result from pressures that was achieved by networking in order to achieve a greater relative amount of power.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>107</sup> "Statement by the North Atlantic Council," NATO, accessed May 24, 2014, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-124e.htm>

<sup>108</sup> Ronfeldt et al., *The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico*, 18.

## E. FINDINGS

To some up the findings related to this case study, I analyzed what conditions allowed for the Zapatista movement to establish a sustained movement that still exists today in Mexico. As this study has illustrated, conditions were present that could have presented the Zapatista movement as a VEM, however the opposite perspective emerged with the help of various international organizations. The dominance of the information campaign or framing process led to the Zapatistas acquirement of certain levels of protection. The Zapatistas' campaign led towards the contention being viewed as an indigenous struggle against an oppressive PRI regime who controlled crony paramilitary forces to do its dirty work.

The lessons learned from the interaction of these actors establishes the importance of developing a framing process or information campaign to engage a social movement in a *netwar*. Arquilla and Ronfeldt add that a skillful blend of government's hierarchy with networks will aid in the process of creating a hybrid entity that is prepared to face new threats and challenges in the information age.<sup>109</sup> Hierarchies alone, as represented by the Mexican government in this case, usually have a hard time in confronting networks.<sup>110</sup> Examples of this are evident in Colombia's difficulties against drug cartels, Algeria's continued contention with religious movements, and more recently the United States protracted conflict in Afghanistan.<sup>111</sup> This is due to governments relying on age old solutions of force to take down networks, but it takes a network to bring down a network.<sup>112</sup> Therein lies the reason for countermobilization. Unlike the aforementioned events associated with the Mexican government's strategy, the government should rely on the countermovement's organizational design and structure to take the "fight" to the targeted movement. Whether conducting a countermovement that focuses on non-

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.



violence, violence, or a healthy mix of the two, a framing process or a robust information campaign is needed to assist in the interpretation of events on all levels of contention.

Moreover to the conclusion of this study, the execution of countermobilization should not only focus on interactions with the targeted movement, a framing strategy should be aimed at winning brokers from all levels of contention. Actions that are acceptable at one level of contention may be viewed as a deterrent in another level of contention. Therefore, the need to understand the full spectrum of contention, from local to international, is required. Every action leads to another action and those reactions can be interpreted differently at different levels. A fully developed framing or interpretive process should not rely on internal or external brokers to draw their own conclusions about key events. Their conclusions must be framed in a manner that portrays the countermovement as taken necessary means that are neither too overwhelming or can be perceived as being too lenient. As both of these conclusions have the potential to lead to a loss of credibility and subsequently a loss elites, brokers, and alliances. Further consideration must also be given to the individuals, groups, and organizations that are associated with the countermovement, as they have the potential to present vulnerabilities in establishing a credible portrayal of the countermovement. The key output in this study determines that an effective effort must be given towards the construction of a framing process, and a countermovement must avoid presenting the oppositional movement ammunition that gives a targeted movement any form of an advantage via vulnerabilities and blunders. However, if blunders or preexisting conditions are inevitable or unavoidable, measures must be taken to address these issues and a meanings must be interpreted for the local, national, and international communities to mitigate the extent of backlash from such actions or conditions. Therefore, the countermovement must focus on establishing a framing process that draws power from networks and interprets the meaning of events and circumstances that puts the countermovement in an advantageous position.

#### **IV. CASE STUDY 3: ISRAEL (HAMAS—PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION)**

In the previous two cases, one illustrated the proper methods of developing a countermovement against a target movement, while the other demonstrated that a lack of attention to developing the essential factors associated with countermobilization increases the likelihood of failure. In this case study, I discuss the contention between Hamas and the PLO. This case study illustrates how the “Israeli-supported” countermovement achieved short-term success by greatly weakening the targeted movement within the PLO, but in the long-term failed to support Israeli interests due to the divergence of interests and ideology between sponsor and beneficiary. The basis of this study will examine the social and political competition between Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya; Islamic resistance movement) and the PLO through the scope of countermobilization: expanding political opportunities, “complex” organizational structure, and the counter-narrative and framing process. Additionally, I examine the interactions between the sponsor and the countermovement and how the dynamics between the two actors affect outcomes. Hamas will serve as the countermovement against the existing nationalist movement of the PLO, which consisted predominantly of Yasser Arafat’s violent extremist organization known as Fatah.

The analysis of this case sets forth conditions and/or actions that should be adopted or avoided while conducting countermobilization and illustrate that even if a countermovement is conducted “properly,” the sponsor needs to exercise long-term control in order to prevent negative consequences. The third party sponsor in this case study is Israel, While Hamas was not directly constructed by Israel, the political competition between Hamas and the PLO was indirectly influenced by Israel’s efforts as

it played more of a passive role in favor of Hamas. Israel shied away from Hamas' early activities and financial networking in an attempt to weaken the PLO, which allowed Hamas to flourish.<sup>113</sup>

## A. BACKGROUND

In the 1880s, the both state of Israel and the nation of Palestine did not exist. The area that would soon fuel tensions between Arabs and Israelis was comprised of two administrative districts of the Ottoman Empire, the Sanjak of Jerusalem and the Vilayet of Beirut.<sup>114</sup> Much of the territory was under rule of landlords, and the other half was controlled under the *mesha'a* system, which loaned out land to individuals for a period of two to three years.<sup>115</sup>

It was during the First World War (WWI) that the foundation for future conflicts was laid. In 1915, the British High Commissioner in Cairo, Sir Henry McMahon, began to negotiate with the Sharif Hussein of Mecca, head of the Hashemite family, to discuss what Arabs believed to be important promises of their future independence in exchange for their services to the British against the Turks in WWI. These pledges contained a specific exclusion:

The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded.<sup>116</sup>

The Arabs believed that this referred to portions of what was soon to become Syria and Lebanon. However, the British claimed it was in reference to the land of Palestine, despite neither "Palestine" nor "Jerusalem" appearing in the documents.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Mitchell Bard, "Myth or Fact: The Creation of Hamas," The Jewish Foundations of North, accessed January 31, 2014, America, <http://www.jewishfederations.org/page.aspx?id=64336>.

<sup>114</sup> T.G. Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

These differences soon intensified when the British were given mandated control of the region on both sides of the Jordan River by the League of Nations with specific guidelines:<sup>118</sup>

Responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative, and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.<sup>119</sup>

This policy showed early signs of trouble as evidenced by the Arab riots in the 1920s.<sup>120</sup> These riots soon returned to a relative silence between the years of 1922 through 1928 until violence broke out once again against Arabs and Jews at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The context of the violence was over an increase in Jewish immigration and land purchases in the contested territory. Some in the British government recommended that only 20,000 more Jews would be allowed to migrate into Palestine, but this did not bode well for the Zionist community.<sup>121</sup> The conflict eventually stabilized on its own until events in 1933 changed the Arab-Israeli conflict altogether.

In 1933, Hitler became German Chancellor and subsequently secured his position as dictator of the Third Reich. Under Hitler's rule, Nazi Germany conducted a massive assault against the Jewish people, killing millions in the Holocaust. The Jewish people began to emigrate from Europe in massive numbers in an attempt to escape violent anti-Semitism, but there was nowhere to turn to except Palestine. Events eventually led up to the United Nations Partition of Palestine on November 29, 1947, which almost simultaneously sparked a new level of violence in the Holy Land. Since the partition of Palestine there has been constant violence marked by a series of major conflicts: Israeli War of Independence (1948-49), Suez-Sinai Campaign (1956), Six-Day War (1967), The

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<sup>118</sup> Jacqueline Shields, "Pre-State Israel: Arab Riots of the 1920s," Arab Riots of the 1920s, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed May 9, 2014, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/riots29.html>.

<sup>119</sup> Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 9.

<sup>120</sup> Shields, "Pre-State Israel: Arab Riots of the 1920s;" Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 9.

<sup>121</sup> Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 11.

War of Attrition (1967–1970), Yom Kippur War (1973), First Lebanon War (1982–1985), First Intifada (1988–1992), Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000–2005), and the Second Lebanon War (2006).

The results of the early wars were extremely disheartening for the Arab people, in particular the Palestinians. However, from under these disheartening conditions emerged a Palestinian revival, which saw the rise of leaders and organizations like Yasser Arafat, Fatah, and the PLO.<sup>122</sup> Despite Arafat’s early attempts at inciting violence that concluded with some 200 guerrillas killed and 1000 arrested in the winter of 1967-68, his actions sealed him as a leader among the Palestinians. Yasser Arafat’s Fatah organization also increased its influence and prestige among the Palestinians.<sup>123</sup> This was evidenced in the PLO’s reorganization in the summer of 1968, which revised the 1964 National Charter to reflect Fatah’s leadership and strategy of armed resistance and insurgent tactics.<sup>124</sup>

The events of the 1973 Yom Kippur War also boosted the general Arab population and their pride, however the Palestinians had a different take on the results of the war. Although the Yom Kippur war seemingly restored Arab pride and the revealed the Gulf States’ leverage over western economies via the “oil weapon,” the Palestinians realized that Sadat did not fight the war on Palestinian’s behalf. The Palestinians viewed the events of the war as an attempt for Sadat to produce a settlement with Israel, which would leave Israel invulnerable to future attacks.<sup>125</sup> The results of the 1973 war also led to the realization that the state of Israel was not leaving, much to the dismay of the Palestinians. However, this realization led to a change in strategy for the PLO. The Twelfth Palestine National Council in July 1974 adopted a formula that allowed Palestinians to establish a “mini state” solution that represented the base from which future liberation of the entire Palestine could be achieved.<sup>126</sup> The formation of the “mini

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 112–113.

state” solution led to the Arab states’ acceptance of the PLO as a government in exile. The acceptance was validated with the results of the Arab Summit at Rabat in Morocco on 28 October 1974.<sup>127</sup> Soon, Arafat would find himself conducting speeches and presenting the Palestinians’ grievances in front of the UN Assembly.

Despite the PLO’s attempts at developing a Palestinian state, the results were only more peace talks and negotiations. The Palestinians watched and saw as the Camp David Summit, under Pres. Carter, and Pres. Reagan’s Peace plan failed to not only establish a Palestinian state, but it also failed to effectively restrain Israel from expanding its borders and settlements. Soon tensions would grow to the point that the First Intifada between Palestinians and Israel would come into existence. The First Intifada was particularly important, because it demonstrated the PLO’s growing influence among the Palestinians. The newer generation of Palestinians looked towards the PLO rather than towards Jordan for leadership and rule. This was a result of PLO’s bottom-up approach towards building its organization from within community groups, cultural associations, women organizations, etc. In essence the First Intifada displayed the new movement of Palestinians that not only wanted to govern themselves, but did not fear Israel to achieve their aspirations.<sup>128</sup> The First Intifada also brought drawbacks for the PLO. Before the First Intifada, the PLO was the sole representative for the Palestinian struggle against Israel, however this changed with the emergence of Hamas. Hamas was established as a branch from the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) that was founded specifically to participate in the armed struggle against Israel in an effort to expel all Israelis from the former-British Mandatory Palestine (West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Israel) and to establish an Islamist state in its place.<sup>129</sup> Soon Hamas and the PLO were in contention for the support of the Palestinian as the primary representative for the struggle.

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<sup>127</sup> “October 1974 Rabat Arab Summit Conference,” Palestine Facts, accessed May 24, 2014, [http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1967to1991\\_rabat\\_1974.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1967to1991_rabat_1974.php).

<sup>128</sup> Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 136.

<sup>129</sup> Matthew Levitt and Dennis Ross, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 8.

In an attempt to bring the Intifada to a close, PLO leadership and American diplomats conducted discussions, which led to the PLO's declaration of an independent Palestine on the West Bank and Gaza. This was significant, because it also meant that the PLO recognized the state of Israel, which brought discontent among sections of Palestinians who wanted all of Palestine or nothing. Groups like Hamas saw the negotiations between the PLO, Israel, and the United States as an opportunity to gain influence among the new generation of Palestinians.

## **B. EXPANDING POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY**

From this point, I examine the conditions and action taken by both parties that split the Palestinian resistance into two primary factions: the Fatah-supported West Bank, which continue to hold the presidency with Mahmoud Abbas, and the Hamas-supported Gaza Strip, which controls the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). In particular, this section analysis how Hamas managed the ebb and flow of contention and capitalized on advantageous shifts to garner political support in order to mobilize an effective countermovement.

As discussed in Chapter I, shifts within the socio-economic processes gives rise to political opportunities. In this case, there are a number of factors that allowed Hamas to take advantage of the socio-economic process and expand its political opportunity, but there were also times that Hamas could have lost its identity and overall struggle during the cycle of contention. First, as tensions and armed clashes increased Hamas was able to find legitimacy in its claim for a defensive jihad as Israel's retaliatory strikes and raids against Palestinians were viewed as disproportionate against the Palestinian's composition for resistance, and as evidenced with the First and Second (Al Aqsa) Intifada, Hams increased its attacks to garner more support and popularity, which enticed Israel to continue assaults against the Palestinian people.

Between February 1989 and March 2000 Hamas carried out at least twenty-seven attack, including twelve suicide bombings and three failed bombings. These attacks caused approximately 185 deaths and left over 1,200 people wounded.

...From September 29, 2000, through March 24, 2004, Hamas executed 52 suicide attacks, killing 288 people and wounding 1,646 more. In total Hamas conducted 425 terrorist attacks during this period, killing 377 people and wounding 2,076.

Hamas attacks increased throughout this period. In 2003 alone, Hamas was responsible for 218 acts of violence. That figure more than doubled in 2004, in which Hamas carried out 555 terrorist attacks. Also in 2004 Hamas mortar attacks increased 500 percent and its Qassam rocket attacks increased by 40 percent compared to the previous year.<sup>130</sup>

Although the years of the Intifadas were “kind” to Hamas in terms of gaining popularity and support,<sup>131</sup> the years following the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993, which ended the First Intifada, represented a major threat to Hamas as an organization. Since Hamas was founded on the ideals of defensive jihad, a peace agreement would hurt the legitimacy of Hamas.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, the peace process swung in favor towards the PLO, since at the time of the negotiations Palestinian popular opinion was in favor of the peace process, which was being conducted by the PLO.<sup>133</sup> However, Hamas adapted to the conditions at hand and conducted a strategy of limited violence against Israel. First, Hamas declared the Oslo negotiations were a farce and not an attempt for peace, but an attempt to prolong oppression against the Palestinians.<sup>134</sup> Second, Hamas capitalized on events like the Hebron massacre to allow for continued defensive jihad, which would entice an Israeli response and keep the cycle of violence alive.

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<sup>130</sup> Levitt, *Hamas*, 12; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Hamas Terrorist Attacks,” Terror Background, accessed April 24, 2014, <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terror+Groups/Hamas+terror+attacks+22-Mar-2004.htm>.; MFA, “Summary of Terrorist Activity 2004,” MFA Library 2005, accessed April 24, 2014, [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2005/Summary%20of%20Terrorist%20Activity%202004](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2005/Summary%20of%20Terrorist%20Activity%202004).

<sup>131</sup> Shaul Mishal, Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 67.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>133</sup> “Public Opinion Poll #16: Armed Attacks, Negotiations, Jenin Proposal, Elections, Economic Situation, and the Palestinian-Jordanian Relations, March 16–18, 1995,” CPRS Polls, accessed April 26, 2014, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll16a.html>.

<sup>134</sup> Jeroen Gunning, *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 208.



Hamas' slump during the Oslo peace process soon came to an end, when the Oslo accords reached a stalemate and the Al Aqsa Intifada followed. Hamas' opposition to the peace process soon paid off as public opinion swayed against the PLO and the peace process. Many Palestinians viewed the Oslo accords essentially as a plan on how to conduct future talks rather than a plan that would suffice Palestinian aspirations for statehood.<sup>135</sup> The Oslo accords stated:

The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations [is]...to establish a Palestinian Self-Government Authority...for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338...Permanent status negotiations will commence...not later than the beginning of the third year...and will cover remaining issues including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, border, relations and cooperation with other neighbors.<sup>136</sup>

This act was one of the main occurrences that presented Hamas with the opportunity to strike a wedge between the Palestinian people and the PLO. The Oslo agreements represented the terms of defeat by the Palestinians.<sup>137</sup> These agreements would also ensure that the hardships on the Palestinian people would not only continue but become worse. The Oslo accords allowed for the activities that would lead to more severe economic deprivation and restrictions on Palestinian movement while more land and natural resources would be acquired for additional settlement expansion by the Israelis.<sup>138</sup>

This agreement [i.e., the DOP], which permits the Palestinians to run their affairs, safeguards the following issues for Israel: Unified Jerusalem remains under Israel's rule, and the body that will run the lives of the Palestinians in the territories will have no authority over it...There are no differences of opinion in this House over the eternalness of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. United and unified Jerusalem is not negotiable....The Israeli settlements in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will remain under Israel's

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<sup>135</sup> Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *The Palestinians: In Search of a Just Peace* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), 57.

<sup>136</sup> Rubenberg, *The Palestinians*, 57.

<sup>137</sup> George Giacaman, Dag Jorund Lonning, *After Oslo: New Realities, Old Problems* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>138</sup> Giacaman, *After Oslo*, ix.

rule without any change whatsoever in their status....The IDF will continue to bear overall responsibility for the security of the Israeli staying in the territories, and for the external security—namely for the defense of the current confrontation lines along the Jordan River and for the Egyptian border....The Israeli government’s freedom to determine its positions [on all final status issues is preserved by the DOP] leaving all the options open....The might of the IDF—the best army in the world—is available for our use if, God forbid, we are faced with such challenge [from the Palestinians].... Above all, I want to tell you that this is a great victory for Zionism.<sup>139</sup>

These conditions dramatically worsened near the end of the al-Aqsa Intifada when the PLO also accepted Israel as a formal state within its 1967 boundaries in an attempt to achieve a two-state partition of Palestine, which was a controversial decision among the Palestinian people.<sup>140</sup>

While Israel achieved desired ends through the accords, Israeli restrictions on the freedom of movement in regards to people and goods during the post-Oslo era gravely affected the Palestinian economy. By the end of 2003, 31 percent of the Palestinian labor force was unemployed. According to the World Bank report, the Israeli checkpoints, military raids, and frequent closure of routes, which were supported by the Oslo accords, were some of the main reasons the economy of the Palestinians were suffering despite receiving over \$1 billion dollars in international aid since 2002.<sup>141</sup> As discussed, the Oslo accords failed to establish Palestinian statehood and only allowed the formation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), an interim Palestinian self-ruled government, which was far from the desired end for Palestinians and viewed as another failure of the PLO to acquire a definite means towards statehood. In fact, some scholars have compared the establishment of the PA with the establishment of the Bantusans by the South African in the 1959 apartheid process. The apartheid law established rule to the Bantu people in the form of Bantusans, which institutionalized segregation (apartheid) between whites and

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<sup>139</sup> “Yitzhak Rabin, Statement to Knesset on Gaza-Jericho Agreement, Jerusalem, 11 May 1994 (excerpts),” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 1 (1994): 141–143.

<sup>140</sup> Giacaman, *After Oslo*, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, xvi.

blacks as the Oslo accords have done for Palestinians and Israelis.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, permits and passes for movement throughout the region were established as an apartheid tactic as well.<sup>143</sup> The combination of the poor economic condition, the failed Oslo process, and the acceptance of an Israeli state while a Palestinian statehood was nowhere in sight weakened the domestic support for the ruling PLO and created the conditions for Hamas to expand its political opportunity in a bid for hegemon of the Palestinian movement and strengthen its influence over the Palestinian people.

### C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

It was not only the shift of political opportunities that allowed for Hamas to compete with the PLO as a representative body of Palestinians in years to come. If it were not for Hamas' establishment of a "complex" organizational structure, the countermovement would not have had the capacity to compete with the PLO's domination of institutional infrastructure or take advantage of the shift. It was evident during the First Intifada that the PLO had institutional dominance of occupied Palestine. The PLO had the ability to work through local activist and mobilize the masses for violent and non-violent purposes with relative ease.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, Hamas needed a composition to counter the organizational strength of the PLO.

Hamas' organization can be analyzed in three layers: formal hierarchical organization, organization of collective action, and informal connective structures. The formal hierarchal organizational structure of Hamas was designed and constructed by its leader Sheik Yassin. Hamas was characterized vertically by a hierarchical chain of command controlled by commanders, sub-commanders, and fixed numbers and positions. Horizontally, Hamas assigned various tasks to specific groups within its organization based upon functions performed for the organization. The bureaucratic hierarchy included four separate groups that included some of the collective action groups: internal

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<sup>142</sup> Tanya Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 236–237.

<sup>143</sup> Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 237.

<sup>144</sup> Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, 154.

security, military activities, political activities, and Islamic preaching (da'wa).<sup>145</sup> Sheik Yassin was heavily influenced by the MB. Hamas' origins are deeply rooted in the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which founded Palestinian institutions like the Islamic Center (al-Mujamma' al-islami) that played crucial roles in Hamas' future development of the social infrastructure. Mujamma became the focal point for religious and social education and development when Sheik Yassin created Hamas.<sup>146</sup> This organizational foundation in MB not only gave Hamas access to the leadership and resource pool of the Mujamma, it also tied it to multiple other institutions that MB had ties and control of like the Islamic University in Gaza, the Department of Islamic Endowments (Da'irat al-awqaf al-islamiyya), the Islamic Workers Union and other voluntary and public institutions.<sup>147</sup>

Hamas also used the role of the da'wa in order to establish control of the public by means of social mobilization and religion. The da'wa activities were concentrated around the mosques and incorporated religion education, sports, and social activities as means for recruitment and training.<sup>148</sup> This practice facilitated in Hamas growing from within the social connective tissues of the Palestinians. This practice also saved the organization during the Intifada when Hamas' formal hierarchical organization was severely damaged as key leaders and sub-commanders were targeted and killed throughout the conflict. Despite Israel's intelligence success on deciphering codes, gathering and identifying key information, and targeting key Hamas figures, the organization survived obstacles and reprisal with the help from the younger grass-roots community who risked their lives to keep the movement strong for the cause.

When the political opportunity presented itself, Hamas was well-suited and networked into the Palestinian infrastructure than the PLO. With its organizational structure it not only had the will and capacity to continue the pursuit for national liberation, it was better equipped to respond to the socio-economic problems of the

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 155–156.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 19–24, 158.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 156 .

Palestinian people. In regards to military strength and capabilities, organizations like the al-Aqsa Martyrs were able to match the activities of Hamas, but few of them could compete with the social services of Hamas, which remains one of the principal deciding factors in retaining domestic support of the Palestinians over the PLO.<sup>149</sup>

#### **D. COUNTER-NARRATIVE AND FRAMING PROCESS**

At the time of Hamas' inception, the PLO was the leading organization in mobilizing Palestinians towards statehood, but Hamas emerged as the Islamic alternative to the PLO. Hamas countered the PLO's mission of secular nationalism in return for a more Islamic narrative, which called for the combination of religious doctrine with daily concerns.<sup>150</sup>

The Islamic theme presented by Hamas was not a new ideology. It was part of a growing movement in the Middle East that called for a return to Islam. This renewed sense to return to Islam resulted from the Arab defeat in the 1967 conflict, the failure of Arab states to achieve social and economic progress in terms of the socio-economic gap, and the fear of the West's expansion of its modern -secular culture.<sup>151</sup> These conditions allowed the religious sect to place blame for their recent conditions on the widening division of Arab culture from Allah (Islamic name for God). These conditions also supported the call for Arabs to return to the foundations of Islam, so that they could avoid jahiliyya (non-Islamic rule characterized by ignorance) in exchange for the perfect rule of Allah.

The Islamic nationalist approach was not the only selling point for Hamas. Hamas initially portrayed itself as a non-violent nationalist socio-religious movement. Therefore, in addition to Islamic and nationalist approaches, Hamas engrained itself into the social infrastructure as it maintained support for the community through funding "veritable networks of welfare and charitable services (such as schools, orphanages, soup

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., xiv–xvi.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 27.

kitchens).”<sup>152</sup> These actions not only provided the needs of the community, but it gave Hamas the advantage of augmenting its narrative with humanitarian and social welfare ideals, which drew people towards the religious leaders of Hamas.<sup>153</sup> This aspect of the narrative was not only able to influence the impoverished people of Palestine, it also gained the group international recognition and support, which predominantly came from Jordan and Saudi Arabia.<sup>154</sup> This guise as a non-violent movement also fashioned passive Israeli support towards Hamas, which led to Israel’s decision to not interfere with Hamas’ financial operations and organizational activities that enabled it to gain a foundation into the Palestinian social infrastructure. Even when Hamas finally showed its true face to the world as a VEM, Hamas continued use of controlled violence in perspective towards the PLO, which gave Hamas time to expand its ranks and consolidate its power.<sup>155</sup>

...Hamas maintained a policy of controlled violence against Israel while demonstrating a moderate attitude toward the Palestinian self-governing authority. Thus, although Hamas’s [sic] top leadership refused to meet with Arafat and Abu Mazin because of their part in signing the DOP, it did issue instructions prohibiting infighting and maintaining open channels with Fatah.<sup>156</sup>

Hamas’ approach to a negotiated coexistence with the PLO during the years of the Intifada, when the PLO was the dominant movement, was necessary to ensure survival of the movement.<sup>157</sup> The leadership of Hamas knew that the political shift that would give the movement momentum was not in full tilt. While Hamas displayed a savvy understanding of the political environment with its emphasis on an all-Islamic approach, it also understood that an all-or-nothing approach would lead to a full confrontation between Israel, the PLO and the PA. Hamas would therefore take a pragmatic approach

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<sup>152</sup> Gunning, *Hamas in Politics*, 16.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Bard, “Myth or Fact: The Creation of Hamas.”

<sup>155</sup> Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, 84.

<sup>156</sup> Ali al Jarbawi, “The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord.” *Muslim World* 83, no. 1–2 (1994): 144–153, analyses the way Hamas coped with the Declaration of Principles (DOP).

<sup>157</sup> Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, 147.

as it neither fully accepted nor rejected the Oslo accords, which allowed it to continue its religious armed struggle against Israel without the loss of its socio-political basis.<sup>158</sup> This move supported a “long-term” vision towards achieving popular support, which would eventually come into fruition in 2006.

Hamas’ narrative was extremely successful, because it was inclusive enough to draw support from multiple audiences. It incorporated an Islamic premise to its nationalist approach in order to not only draw support from the Palestinians that wanted statehood, but also took advantage of the “return to Islam” movement to entice the religious sect. Moreover, Hamas added non-violent humanitarian tones to invoke the support of the Palestinians that wanted socio-economic reforms and the support of international actors that saw Hamas as a more legitimate alternative to support the Palestinians. As is evident with Hamas, the advantages of a wide-ranging narrative allows for greater access to different communities, and therefore access into more institutions, leaders, and financial support. Hamas’ narrative initially gave it legitimacy as a movement characterized by religious, social, and nationalist desires. It was not until later that Hamas unveiled its true intentions, which were for the outset of Israel from Palestine by any means necessary to include violence, however by the time this narrative was realized Hamas was already a movement deeply rooted and staged for political and military engagements.

## **E. ISRAEL AND HAMAS**

Although, Hamas accomplished a portion of what Israel wanted in developing an oppositional force against the PLO. Israel made a miscalculation much like the United States did in Iran during the 1970s with the encouragement of Islamist groups should the Shah lose power.<sup>159</sup> However, the Shah did lose power and radical Islam expanded its anti-Western influence throughout Iran.

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Pierre Tristam, “How Israel Helped Create Hamas: In the 1970s, Israel Saw Hamas’ Founders as Allies,” About.com Middle East Issues, accessed May 01, 2014, <http://middleeast.about.com/od/israelandpalestine/a/me090126.htm>.

For years prior to Hamas' turn towards violence, Israel tolerated and, in some cases, emboldened Hamas to serve as a counterweight against the Fatah and the PLO.<sup>160</sup> Israel cooperated with Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, because it viewed Hamas' precursor, Mujama, as a charity organization, so Israel looked the other way when Mujama members established the foundation of its organizations into the Islamic University of Gaza, mosques, clubs and schools. Israel also allowed the secular PLO and the Islamists to battle for influence throughout the Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>161</sup> These actions later came to haunt Israel as the aforementioned organization soon became the focal point of violence, and Hamas grew emboldened from its interactions with the PLO.

So what went wrong? The problem was that Israel never had any real control of the anti-PLO countermovement. Israel merely just any organization that opposed the PLO to rise up without infiltrating deep enough into the organization to realize its core purpose, which was to rid Israel from the land of Palestine in substitute for an Islamic state. By now embedding itself into the organization, Israel could neither realize the extent of the core ideology nor frame its direction that would allow for a safer and more secure Israel. In contrast, Israel inherited an organization that endorsed massive suicide bombings and rockets aimed at the heart of Israel.

## **F. FINDINGS**

In terms of a counter-movement, Hamas emerged from ideal conditions that favored an alternative movement. Hamas waited for the right opportunity to take advantage of the ebb and flow of the socio-political environment, it developed a "complex" organizational structure consisting of formal hierarchical organizations to informal connective structures, and developed a counter-narrative that focused on attacking a preexisting vulnerability associated with the PLO. In 2006, Hamas won 74 of the legislative council's 132 seats to become the new dominant force in the Palestinian

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<sup>160</sup> Andrew Higgins, "How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas," About.com Middle East Issues, accessed May 1, 2014, <http://middleeast.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=middleeast&cdn=newsissues&tm=845&f=00&tt=2&bt=9&bts=9&zu=http%3A//online.wsj.com/article/SB123275572295011847.html>.

<sup>161</sup> Higgins, "How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas."



government.<sup>162</sup> Hamas' rise to power over the PLO was what Israel wanted to happen in order to weaken the PLO's influence over the Palestinian people. However Israel did not foresee Hamas' inevitable transition to a violent extremist movement that would be more militant than its predecessor.

Therefore in terms of countermobilization, this case study shows that even if a counter movement is organized and maintained properly, if the benefactor/sponsor of a countermovement does not have control or influence of the countermovement's aims there is a potential that the countermovement can become a more dangerous opponent in the end.

The selection of a sponsored countermovement should not be solely based on the concept of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." The United States also makes this mistake in supporting a movement that is eventually considered a global-oriented VEM. (i.e., U.S. sponsorship of Afghan resistance groups against the Soviet Union in the 70s, etc.) Israel saw an opportunity to weaken its perceived greater enemy, the PLO, but failed to identify the potential threat of allowing Hamas to grow. Israel had no control of the framing process or direct influence within the informal connective structures of Hamas, and both Hamas and the PLO's oppositional foundation was counter to Israeli interests, which was suited neither for direct nor indirect support as a means to an end.

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<sup>162</sup> Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, xiii.

## V. COUNTERMOBILIZATION AND THE AL-QA'IDA VIOLENT EXTREMIST MOVEMENT

There is a growing importance in transnational networking and mobilization that is emerging more rapidly as technologies like the Internet are used to communicate beliefs and ideals globally in an instance. This is evident with the case study pertaining to the Zapatista movement as well as recent “awakening” events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria. This global reach of ideals implies the existence of a “global civil society” that has the potential to represent its own social norms and influence state behaviors. With this being said, any actor whether state or non-state has the potential to influence the “global civil society” through transnational contention of beliefs, culture, and ideals.<sup>163</sup> The claim of potential influence is supported by violent extremist movements like Al-Qa’ida, which have achieved reach and reputation on a global scale. The ideology of Al-Qa’ida penetrates state and continental boundaries, yet the organization does not have a formal state to call home. This intriguing dynamic illustrates the power that social movements and contentious politics have and the potential that I present that could threaten, influence, or transform the status quo of a society. The consequences of disregarding this political phenomenon proves to be detrimental towards the stability and survivability of regimes, and strategies should be analyzed to determine viable ways of countering this threat.

I began this thesis by outlining distinct objectives that were to underlie the analysis of countermobilization. In this chapter, I return to those objectives and present a synthesis of theory and empirical analysis contained in the previous chapters. I present my findings into modifications that utilize the theory of countermobilization to frame a desired strategy to be used within the cycle of contention against Al-Qa’ida.

The objective of this chapter is two-fold. First, it is to discuss how Al-Qa’ida emerged as a transnational VEM able to contend with nation-states’ powers and influence. In this chapter, I also analyze the variable factors that facilitate the existence of

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<sup>163</sup> Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

Al-Qa'ida in terms of the political process model: the socio-economic process, the expanding political opportunities that were created, its indigenous organizational approach and subsequent transformation, and the narrative/ framing process it uses to recruit, motivate and employ its forces. Second, I will present a model to counter the Al-Qa'ida threat. The proposed countermobilization model entails the use of an unconventional warfare team that synchronizes multiple local networks in order to establish a countermovement that opposes Al-Qa'ida. The purpose of the proposed model is established as a strategy to neutralize Al-Qa'ida and its ideology. The following model includes elements that can be identified, organized, and influenced through the scope of countermobilization as this concept is tailored to express the employment of the model towards a targeted movement.

#### **A. AL-QA'IDA AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL**

Al-Qa'ida is a global movement with the ability to mobilize and sustain a global conflict against the mightiest of states in an attempt to achieve the social and political objectives of the movement. Al-Qa'ida's uncanny ability to grow and survive as a transnational phenomenon is not because counter-terrorist units and law enforcement agencies fail to react effectively against the organization.<sup>164</sup> Al-Qa'ida's strength is a result of its broad-based ideology, innovative structure, and capacity to take advantage of political opportunities across ethnic, class, and national borders.<sup>165</sup> In order to fully understand the mechanisms behind the emergence of Al-Qa'ida, we must first look at the socio-economic process that shaped the environment that allowed an organization like Al-Qa'ida to emerge.

Al-Qa'ida's leaders firmly aligned their ideals with the teachings of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan al-Banna. Al-Banna believed that the root of decay in the Muslim world was because of Western ideals. He sought for a return to the "pure" Islam

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<sup>164</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2003), 72.

<sup>165</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 72.

of the Prophet Mohammed's times,<sup>166</sup> and although al-Banna was assassinated in 1949 by the Egyptian government, his ideals lived on through successive reformers like Al Shaheed Sayyid Qutb and Sheikh Abdullah Yusuf Azzam. This perception of a deteriorating Muslim world flourished even more after the Muslim community was embarrassed at the results of a series of Arab-Israeli wars, most notably in 1948-1949, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982, and this perception also gave rise to a need for change. A change through which some called for a "defensive jihad."

According to Sheikh Azzam, who was a heavy influence of Osama bin Laden, the source of Muslims' misfortune is due to the abandonment of jihad for the love of this world and the things in it.<sup>167</sup> His teachings stressed the importance, need, and obligatory duty for all Muslims to employ jihad until the world was purified from the ideals of infidels.<sup>168</sup>

When the enemy enters that land of the Muslims, jihad becomes individually obligatory, according to all the jurists, mufassirin and muhaddithin...When jihad becomes obligatory, no permission of parents is required... Donating money does not exempt a person from bodily jihad, no matter how great the amount of money given... jihad is the obligation of a lifetime...Jihad is currently individually obligatory, in person and by wealth, in every place that the disbelievers have occupied. It remains obligatory continuously until every piece of land that was once Islamic is regained...Jihad is a collective act of worship, and every group must have a leader. Obedience to the leader is a necessity in jihad, and thus a person must condition himself invariably to obey the leader, as has been reported in the hadith: "You must hear and obey, whether it is easy or difficult for you, in things which are pleasant for you as well as those which are inconvenient and difficult for you."<sup>169</sup>

Al-Qa'ida tied its ideology firmly within this concept of defensive jihad in order to legitimize the organization's campaign. Osama bin Laden used the ideology of this obligatory form of jihad in order to attract the broadest support possible and subsequently

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<sup>166</sup> Jim Lacey, *The Canons of Jihad: Terrorists' Strategy for Defeating America* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>169</sup> Abdullah Azzam, *Join the Caravan* (London, U.K.: Azzam Publications, 1991).

expand the organization's political opportunities. The consequences of refusing to conduct jihad is written to be promised by Allah: "Unless you march forth, he will punish you with severe punishment, and will replace you with another people."<sup>170</sup> As the call for jihad amassed more supporters, Osama bin Laden also used anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-Israeli rhetoric to even further ensure that his support base would reach global proportions and resiliency. In a 1996 edict issued by Osama bin Laden he uses his disdain for the United States to raise awareness of Muslim grievances and calls for jihad:

It should not be hidden from you that the people of Islam have suffered from aggression, iniquity and injustices imposed upon them by the Zionist-Crusader alliance and their collaborators to the extent that the Muslims' blood has become the cheapest in the eyes of the 'world,' and their wealth has become as loot, in the hands of their enemies. Their blood was spilled in Palestine and Iraq. The horrifying pictures of the massacre of Qana, Lebanon, are still fresh in our memories. Massacres in Tajikistan, Burma, Kashmir, Assam, the Philippines, Fatani, Ogaden, Somalia, Eritrea, Chechnya, and Bosnia-Herzegovina have taken place, massacres that sent shivers through the body, and shake the conscience.

All of this—and the world watched and heard, and not only did they not respond to the atrocities, but also, under a clear conspiracy—between the USA and its allies, under the cover of the iniquitous 'United Nations'—dispossessed people were even prevented from obtaining arms to defend themselves. The people of Islam awakened, and realized that they were the main target for the aggression of the Zionist-Crusader alliance. And all the false claims and propaganda about 'human rights' were hammered down and exposed for what they were, by the massacres that had taken place against the Muslims in every part of the world.<sup>171</sup>

Although Osama bin Laden was not a religious scholar, he had a pragmatic mind-set, which allowed him to avoid pitfalls of past "Islamic" struggles. In the framing process of Al-Qa'ida's narrative, he developed a pragmatic approach that promoted the establishment of the umma (community of believers) rather than the concept of

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<sup>170</sup> Lacey, *The Canons of Jihad*, 125.

<sup>171</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," August 1996, PBS Newshour, accessed June 12, 2014 [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military-july-dec96-fatwa\\_1996/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military-july-dec96-fatwa_1996/)

Arabism.<sup>172</sup> This concept divested the notion of a mono-ethnic movement and ensured that all Muslims whether newly converted, Asian, or Arab had a place in Al-Qa'ida. Thus it is the religious and open culture (Middle Eastern or non-Middle Eastern as long as they are believers) nature of Al-Qa'ida that appeals to a wide-based support that spans culture, borders, or objectives in which to build a robust organizational infrastructure.<sup>173</sup>

Because of Al-Qa'ida's appeal to certain sects of Muslims across the globe, it has the ability to pursue its objectives through a decentralized network structured from regionally-structured cells.<sup>174</sup> These cells are made up of affiliated organizations, guerrilla groups, and even international non-governmental organizations. Rather than build an organization from scratch in each region, an essential part of Al-Qa'ida's success and resiliency is its support system based of affiliated local networks that were infiltrated by the organization. Many of these organizations are banks or charity-based organizations like Benevolence International Foundation and Global Relief Foundation that may not have direct ties to Al-Qa'ida, but these organizations allow Al-Qa'ida to funnel money in support of operational activities.<sup>175</sup> Al-Qa'ida also imbedded a vanguard of "graduates" into Islamic groups and communities worldwide in order to spread their violent extremist beliefs.<sup>176</sup> These vanguards were considered the religious zealots of Al-Qa'ida and were specifically trained and indoctrinated to plant seeds of Al-Qa'ida's beliefs throughout different countries and cultures. These vanguard groups would install themselves into mosques, schools, clubs, and organizations and slowly indoctrinate the community with Al-Qa'ida's message. As a result, the neutralization of Al-Qa'ida's central command has done little in stopping the spread of violence or its ability to attract Muslims, because the ideology of Al-Qa'ida has already multiplied and morphed into an entity that can live and

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<sup>172</sup> Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 115–116.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 92, 150.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

continue to proliferate on its own. Even with Osama bin Laden dead Al-Qa'ida exists, and if Zawahiri were killed tomorrow Al-Qa'ida would still exist, because it lives within the informal connective tissues of local societies.

Therefore the way to defeat Al-Qa'ida is not by solely relying on the targeting and killing of every cell member in the world. This militaristic approach has rarely led to the termination of a VEM.<sup>177</sup> Since the ideology of Al-Qa'ida has become a virtual living entity that can currently survive with or without a leader to push an agenda, the ideology must be targeted, which bullets, bombs, and drones cannot do. A broader-based strategy to defeat Al-Qa'ida must be constructed,<sup>178</sup> which I argue is by establishing a countermovement aimed at one or more vulnerabilities within the building blocks of a social movement: socio-economic environment, organization, narrative, and political opportunities.

From these building blocks, the most vulnerable is not Al-Qa'ida's organization. Al-Qa'ida's vulnerability lies within its ideology. For more than a decade, coalition forces spearheaded by the United States have tried to neutralize Al-Qa'ida by disrupting its financial networks, denying it safe-havens, and killing central leaders, but the organization continues to grow despite these actions. Although Al-Qa'ida-Central has lost the majority of its control of the organization, the movement lives on. That is because we are treating Al-Qa'ida as an army fighting against us in the "War on Terrorism," rather than as a movement that is engrained into the hearts and minds of a particular fraction of the "global civil society."

## **B. COUNTER-MOBILIZATION AND AL-QA'IDA**

The development of a countermovement that focuses on defeating Al-Qa'ida from all levels of contention is the means to engage Al-Qa'ida and its ideology. As stated above, the United States cannot solely rely on attacking the organizational structure of Al-Qa'ida. The United States must construct a means to counter Al-Qa'ida's narrative

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<sup>177</sup> Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, "How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida" (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2008), Summary.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, Summary.

and framing process. This can be achieved through the incorporative mix of UW into the countermovement process. The days of solely viewing UW as Special Forces soldiers garbed in camouflage operating in the jungle with guerrilla chiefs and fighters armed to the teeth is fading. In this concept of countermobilization, a consolidated UW effort is established by UW teams armed predominantly with cultural/social knowledge of a targeted region and a strong narrative related to their respective region. With these instruments at their disposal, a myriad of UW teams dispersed throughout the global theater can create a robust countermovement that is capable of countering Al-Qa'ida's ideology.

Currently, the ebb and flow of contention is ripe for the development of a countermovement against Al-Qa'ida. Although, there is no need to try and change the process or the environment, the effort must be made to use the existing environment as part of the framing process within the counter-narrative. Using a diagnostic frame, part of the framing process should highlight that the Muslim world is still in disarray despite the spread of Al-Qa'ida's message. This is supported by Shi'ite and Sunnis battling in Iraq, Syria's continued civil war, the Palestinian's lack of a state, and Palestinian's continued impoverished conditions. Muslim nations are looking for answers and are growing weary of corrupt regimes as well as violent extremism, which is why we have seen regime changes in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, etc. Now is the time to capitalize on favorable conditions to expand political opportunities that present themselves.

At each location a UW team is operational, there will exist different local conditions that will require interpreting and predicting to ensure the right time and conditions are established for a countermovement to emerge. However, if the domestic arena continues to operate in unfavorable conditions for an extended amount of time, actions must be taken to influence conditions that are advantageous to the countermovement. Additionally, a countermovement can engage international organizations and institutions in an attempt to limit whatever local obstacles are a hindrance. Now is the time to unite Islamic groups, communities and organization from



around the globe under a strong counter-narrative supported by a swarming framing process and a robust organizational structure that encompasses multiple aspects of political opportunities.

A good place to begin developing a narrative is by looking at the counter to Al-Qa'ida's narrative of a holy war. Jihad is used in several different contexts. These include love of the Creator, staying on the righteous path, resisting temptation, conducting religious acts of kindness, courage to convey the message of Islam, defending Islam and the community, helping allied people who may not be Muslim, removing apostate regimes, freeing people from tyranny, etc.<sup>179</sup> Jihad can be viewed as an external violent struggle as adopted by violent extremist movements like Al-Qa'ida or an internal war between one's self and the temptations of the devil and earthly desires.

In developing a counter-narrative, it is essential to generate a motivational frame that highlights the validity of the countermovement's interpretation over Al-Qa'ida's misinterpretation of the word jihad. If the basis of Al-Qa'ida's ideology is discredited, then the populace, to include oppositional brokers, have the potential to believe that the idea of internal jihad is the true jihad. The motivational frame should also focus on the legitimacy of Al-Qa'ida's interpretation of jihad by how it conducts jihad. It is no secret that Al-Qa'ida supports the use of terrorism as a means to an end. Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants orchestrated the 9/11 attacks against the United States and many other attacks against U.S. embassies and personnel. Terrorism, which requires the deliberate targeting and killing of innocent civilians, is forbidden in the Qur'an, and even a religious scholar quoted many times by Bin Laden states:

As for those who cannot offer resistance or cannot fight, such as women, children, monks, old people, the blind, handicapped and their like shall not be killed, unless they actually fight with words [e.g., by propaganda] and acts [e.g., by spying or otherwise assisting in warfare]. Some [jurists] are of the opinion that all of them may be killed on the mere ground that they are unbelievers, but they make an exception for women and children since

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<sup>179</sup> M. Amir Ali, "Jihad Explained," The Institute of Islamic Information & Education, accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.themodernreligion.com/jihad/jihad-explained.html>.

for Muslims they constitute property. However, the first opinion is the correct one, because we may only fight those who fight us when we want to make the religion of Allah victorious.<sup>180</sup>

Finally, the framing process should highlight the perception that the current deteriorating Muslim world is in chaos, because the Muslim people have further alienated themselves from the true meaning of Islamic teachings as presented by the Prophet Mohammed in the name of Allah. A frame should denote that jihadists have forsaken the true meaning of jihad and transformed Islamic teachings for personal gain. A need to return to the true meaning of jihad, the internal conflict of righteousness, will create more resolute and faithful Muslims and subsequently a more righteous Muslim world. Only then can Allah truly bless the Muslim nation.

Additionally, UW teams must ensure that the framing process is tailored to each specific region and local community. Moreover, the message should be disseminated utilizing a complex organizational structure mixed with non-governmental organizations, communities, and groups. Since sacred authority is an essential part of the Muslim world, an organizational infrastructure must be constructed that centers around the religious institutions like the mosques and madrasas. It is also understood that groups like “moderate” Muslims and reformist salafis outnumber the jihadi nation, but what is lacking is organization. This is where the UW teams become vital. It is essential that UW teams are embedded into social structures of targeted regions in order to truly grasp the social interworking of a region. With the knowledge provided by social understanding, a UW team knows which brokers to exploit and which organizations need to be tied in with other organizations to bridge stronger infrastructure. UW teams will not serve specifically as the vanguards of the movement per se, but as the groups who identify the vanguards of the movement. Then they should focus on linking individuals, groups, and formal organization together aimed at fighting the local fight. Once the local level is

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<sup>180</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *The Religious and Moral Doctrine on Jihad* (Birmingham, England: Maktabah Al Ansaar Publications, 2001), 28.

successful, it raises the likelihood that it influences external communities. In particular, continuous local victories will allow the countermovement to spread out to regional and international communities.

Although the majority of the countermovement's activities will focus on the local communities and a regional approach, groups like the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) and Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) have either identified or have been actively working with programs that are aimed at reducing the threat of politically motivated violence around the world. Sources like these can serve as formal organizations and institutions that UW teams can link local connective tissues into. These programs already work with local communities to promote moderate Islam or deter VEMs.<sup>181</sup> By linking institutions like these with local influential brokers, the countermovement will receive additional resources and support with engaging the populace. This will also allow for formal organizations and institutions the access to survive within the local societies during times of unfavorable conditions associated with the cycle of contention.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Al-Qa'ida is a robust transnational organization with many strengths. It has proved to be very resilient against past strategies to disrupt or destroy the organization's infrastructure, to include its command, control, and finances. However, through understanding the political process model, we realize that Al-Qa'ida is inherently a social movement, more specifically a VEM. Therefore, Al-Qa'ida has vulnerabilities as all movements do. By understanding how social movements rise and fall due to internal and external factors, a strategy can be fashioned to manipulate the necessary conditions for Al-Qa'ida to collapse. It is also understood that all movements are continually in a constant state of contention with either a regime or more importantly, countermovements. From the interactions within the cycle of contention, a general consensus will emerge.

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<sup>181</sup> "About ICPVTR," International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research: A Centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.pvtr.org/home.htm>; "About Us," Arab Reform Initiative, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.arab-reform.net/about-us>.

Whether or not that consensus is a radical, moderate, or hybrid consensus depends on how the actors interact in terms of pilfering key brokers from neutral and oppositional parties as well as maintaining indigenous support.

As discussed, there is currently an opportunity to take advantage of the current state of affairs regarding the Muslim world. The existence of a counter-culture against the ideology of Al-Qa'ida is already present. The only thing lacking is the mechanism to stimulate "collective action" against Al-Qa'ida. With this in mind I return back to my three hypothesis.

My first hypothesis is that a countermovement must identify and exploit positive shifts in the socio-political environment to steal and align with more powerful political groups and brokers from oppositional and neutral parties than the targeted movement. This is supported by Hamas' interaction with the PLO. Although Hamas had a respectable fraction of Palestinian support, it was not viewed as a political or social contender until conditions were established that facilitated Hamas' efforts of gaining popular support from the PLO. SOI also became more effective and successful once individuals and groups were changing sides and fighting against AQI rather than supporting the AQI campaign against the U.S. and Coalition forces.

My second hypothesis suggests that a countermovement must not rely solely on indigenous organizations, it must steal influential brokers from oppositional and neutral parties. The integration of additional brokers into a "complex" organizational structure will facilitate the mobilization and sustainment of a countermovement. This hypothesis holds true based upon the analysis provided in this thesis. The countermovements that pilfered influential brokers from the oppositional movement grew while the targeted movement lost support and resources from critical brokers. SOI was able to steal key brokers from AQI, which allowed the organization to grow and afforded the countermovement with valuable information, resources, and access into local communities. At the same time, AQI's loss of the brokers led to a fragmented organization that lost resources and popular support. Hamas also won over key brokers to gain support of the populace. During the transition of brokers, the PLO lost essential support and resources, which led to PLO's loss in the legislative elections. The PLO also

lost the Palestinian communities in the Gaza strip to Hamas. In contrast to the previous two countermovements, anti-Zapatistas did not pilfer essential brokers from the oppositional movement. The Zapatista movement was never fragmented or pressured to in-fighting, which allowed the EZLN/Zapatistas to survive within its informal networks during unfavorable conditions. Furthermore, the targeted movement continues to survive as an autonomous entity separate of Mexican politics.

My third hypothesis claims that in order for a countermovement to win over brokers, it must establish an effective counter-narrative and framing process. SOI and Hamas demonstrated their capacity to form a broad and pragmatic narrative that allowed for more than a select few organizations to join. Moreover, their counter-narratives directly attacked the target movement's ideology, which was further supported by a framing process that highlighted vulnerabilities and blunders of the targeted organizations. SOI attacked AQI's credibility of fighting for the people when the organizations consistently assassinated and pillaged Sunni tribesmen and towns. Hamas took advantage of the failed Oslo accords to highlight the PLO's ineffectiveness. Whereas, the counter-Zapatista movement never effectively established a robust counter to EZLN/Zapatistas' elaborate information campaign. The failure to do so helped the Zapatistas to gain sympathy and support from within the international community.

In addition to my theoretical analysis, through my analysis of the case studies, I found that a sponsor-countermovement relationship can affect the outcome of success in countermobilization. A sponsor must establish and maintain some form of influence or control to either limit the size and power of a countermovement or to control its sense of direction and consciousness. The avoidance of this particular factor has the potential to present major problems in the long-term process. Israel did not have any form of control or influence over Hamas, and although Hamas severely disrupted the PLO's operations, Hamas turned out to be a large threat rather than a benefit in the future. Furthermore, if a sponsor promotes an overaggressive method of interacting with a movement, it could have negative consequences for the countermovement's overall strategy. This is supported by the Zapatista case study. The anti-Zapatista movement was characterized as the aggressor in the contention, because of initial actions conducted by the Mexican

government and the subsequent violent actions conducted by the paramilitary forces. The results of their interactions hampered any attempt to try and steal brokers from the oppositional movement.

The aforementioned sponsor-countermovement relationships are opposite of U.S. forces interaction with SOI. U.S. forces maintained control over SOI's role, training, and implementation in countering AQI. This interaction facilitated actions to ensure SOI did not become more influential or powerful than GOI. However, the limitations established on SOI did not gravely affect their capacity to aid in the neutralization of AQI.

Therefore, with regard to a strategy against Al-Qa'ida it is important to understand the factors involved in countermobilization. If a UW effort consisting of educated teams armed with the knowledge of social networking and the cultural/social environment could be inserted into key areas of interests, Al-Qa'ida can be engaged at multiple levels of contention. This strategy would have a significant impact in disrupting or even neutralizing Al-Qa'ida's ideology and the violent extremist movement altogether.

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