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Understanding and Influencing Public Support for Insurgency and Terrorism

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Cover photo: Protesters shout slogans as they march on a street in the southern Yemeni town of Radfan on December 19, 2009, to denounce a government military operation that the authorities said killed about 30 al-Qa'ida militants. (Reuters)

Preface

This monograph contributes to a series of RAND studies relating social-science concepts to insurgency and terrorism. The project was requested by the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) as one component of follow-on research building on an earlier RAND study,

> Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin, eds., *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, 2009.[1]

The monograph focuses on public support for insurgency and terrorism and how it can be influenced. It is organized around the testing and refinement of conceptual models that seek to integrate much of what is known from relevant social science about public support. The primary intended audiences are officials and staffs concerned with strategy, policy, strategic communications, and analysis relating to international terrorism and irregular warfare, but the monograph should also be of interest to the wider scholarly community concerned with insurgency and terrorism.

Comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to the project leaders: Paul K. Davis (pdavis@rand.org) and Eric Larson (larson@rand.org).

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[1] Other follow-on studies were completed in 2010 by colleagues Todd Helmus, Brian Jackson, and Kim Cragin, which deal, respectively, with empirical information on individual reasons for participating in terrorism, terrorist decisionmaking, and unintended side effects of influence efforts.

Contents

Figures

Tables

Summary

Overview

This monograph presents, assesses, and improves a conceptual model dealing with public support of insurgency and terrorism. It builds on an earlier RAND study that reviewed social science for counterterrorism and introduced conceptual "factor tree" models to integrate knowledge, improve coherence of discussion, and take a modest step toward relatively general theory. The present study extends the scope to insurgency and incorporates insights stimulated by social movement theory, which add a dynamic dimension relating to the purposeful methods, i.e., stratagems, by which insurgents stimulate and maintain support.

Much of the monograph describes lessons learned from assessing the validity of early versions of our model against empirical information from Afghanistan, Turkey, Nepal, and the cross-national aspects of al-Qa'ida. Broad features of the initial model held up well, but the empirical work motivated refinements. As expected, the salience of the conceptual model's various factors varied markedly with case. That is, the conceptual model is intended to be rather general, identifying *possible* specific factors for and causal pathways to public support. In applications to a particular context, such as our cases, the conceptual model is merely a starting point indicating what to look for. Only some of the general factors will be salient, which allows useful narrowing—albeit with recognition that which factors are important may change with time as the result of insurgent and counterinsurgent strategy, as well as changes of circumstances.

The last part of our study uses a generic model of "persuasive communication," based on a rich scholarly literature, to relate our con-

ceptual model of public support for insurgency and terrorism to broad suggestions about strategy in overlapping domains referred to variously as "public diplomacy," "strategic communication," and "influence operations."

Approach

We began our study by constructing a static factor tree conceptual model that built on the previous counterterrorism work, and by adding insights stimulated by social movement theory. The resulting combination was the initial hypothesis base for evaluation. The evaluation was largely qualitative and somewhat subjective because the phenomena being studied are complex, with no laboratory in which to control and measure variables rigorously. Nonetheless, we could use the empirical information to see (1) whether the factors of our theory showed up in the cases studied, (2) whether the cases revealed additional factors that had been omitted (a kind of falsification of the original theory), (3) whether the cases suggested better ways to relate the factors to each other (i.e., better depictions of causal pathways), and (4) whether (as expected) there were sharp differences in the relative salience of factors from one context to another.

The intent in all this was not just "testing," but also iterative theory refinement in the spirit of qualitative case studies as pioneered by Alexander George. Entangling theory development and testing was appropriate given the embryonic state of integrative knowledge. Correspondingly, we took an opportunistic, adaptive approach rather than, say, fixing the hypotheses and methods, selecting a representative set of cases, and proceeding linearly and rigorously to test the hypotheses. Our initial empirical work was for the Taliban in Afghanistan and included experimenting with quantitative methods. We also did substantial qualitative research on al-Qa'ida, illustrating the explanatory value of the factors suggested by social movement theory. We then extended our research, exploiting the opportunity to have doctoral fellows from Turkey and Nepal do case studies on insurgencies in their native countries. These studies were purely qualitative and used differ-

ent types of data than in earlier phases. As we neared completion of the study, another opportunity arose: We obtained specialized public-opinion data on Afghanistan that allowed us to supplement the earlier analysis. The study, then, evolved in nonlinear fashion, with diverse methods and data types.

Data

We drew on extensive primary- and secondary-source material. The Afghan work reflects press accounts, with testimonials and quotations from local sources in the largely Pashtun areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan. These came from two English-language Pakistani newspapers, as well as the *New York Times* and *Asia Times Online* and translated versions of Afghan-language material. We supplemented the press-account data with information from surveys conducted in Afghanistan. Results were largely consistent, but the survey data highlighted additional factors and clarified some issues. The material on al-Qa'ida consisted largely of original-Arabic or translated statements of al-Qa'ida leaders and other significant figures debating matters of ideology and strategy. The material on Turkey came from Turkish-language newspapers and English- and Turkish-language government reports, books, and articles about the Kurdish PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). The Nepalese case depended primarily on the work of Nepalese scholars writing in English, the website of the United Communist party of Nepal, and the work of some other scholars.

The Conceptual Model

Initial Hypothesis, Evaluation, and Revision

As noted above, our initial hypothesis base consisted of (1) a factor tree based on combining trees from past work and (2) insights motivated by social movement theory that we treated as constituting a second, supplementary lens. We then evaluated the cases using this combination of lenses.

The higher-level aspects of the factor-tree model held up very well in the empirical testing, and nearly all of the lower-level factors showed

up as important in at least one of the cases studied. Further, very few factors arising in the data had previously been omitted. Nonetheless, experience with the new cases stimulated *many* refinements. Also, they and reviews of the draft monograph caused us to integrate the two "lenses" into a single integrated factor tree, shown in Figure S.1.

The conceptual model of Figure S.1 is actually quite simple if only the top layer of factors is considered (the items in red), but understanding phenomena typically requires considering some of the more specific lower-level factors. A positive or unmarked arrow means that more of the first factor tends to cause more of the second factor (the actual effect depends on the other factors influencing the higher-level factor). A negative arrow means that more of the first factor tends to cause a reduction of the second factor. Where +/- appears, the direction of the effect is ambiguous—perhaps because it varies with population segment or because of hidden variables. Where factors are connected by "~and" (as at the top level in Figure S.1), it means that the effect (public support, in this case) depends in a first approximation on *all* of the connected factors being present. Where factors are connected by "or," it means that the higher-level effect may occur as the result of any one of the factors or a combination. The lower-level factors indicate alternative causal pathways, such as different motivations, rather than decomposition. In a particular country at a particular time, only some of the lower-level factors shown may be important.

The boxes at the bottom of Figure S.1 show cross-cutting factors affecting several or all of the higher-level factors.

In interpreting the model, it is crucial to understand that "the public" consists of many subpopulations. Which factors of Figure S.1 are important varies not only with country, but also across those subpopulations. For example, the portion of the public that is already sympathetic to a violent organization may have an enduring resonance with the organization's allegedly high-minded ideology. Another portion may be uninterested in or hostile to the ideology but nevertheless animated by the organization's efforts to protest long-held grievances or recent actions by a despised government. In a similar manner, the factors may have different effects on different classes of insurgency sup-

Figure S.1
Factors Underlying Public Support for Terrorism or Insurgency

Public support for insurgency and terrorism

~ands

Effectiveness of organization

Motivation for supporting group or cause

Perceived legitimacy of violence

Acceptability of costs and risks

ors

Presence, tactics, and deeds

Leadership
• Strategic
• Charismatic
• Otherwise effective

Opportunism, adaptation

Resource mobilization

Ideological package and framing

ors

Attractions

Duty, honor
• Fight repression
• Defend homeland or people
• Eject occupier
• Seek revenge

Rewards
• Financial
• Power
• Prestige

ors

Ideological, religious concepts

Social services

Glory, excitement

Identity
• National/ regional
• Ethnic
• Religious

• Real or fictive kinship
• Cause

+/–   ors

Religious, ideological, ethical beliefs; intolerance

Revenge

Necessity, desperation

Cultural propensity for, acceptance of violence

+/–   +/–   ors   –

Intimi-dation

Assessment of likely victor

Personal risks and opportunity costs

Counter-vailing social costs, pressures

–

Shared grievances, aspirations
• Repression   • Corruption
• Humiliation   • Freedom

Unacceptable group behavior
• Excessive casualties and other damage
• Distasteful religious rules

– –

Impulses, emotions, social psychology

Environmental factors
• International political-military   • Economic and social
  (e.g., state support)   • Cultural and historical

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

RAND *MG1122-S.1*

porter (e.g., those offering indirect financial support rather than safe havens).

The Narrative

Top-Level Factors. The narrative that goes with Figure S.1 is that public support for insurgency and terrorism depends on four top-level factors: effectiveness of the organization, motivation, perceived legitimacy, and acceptability of costs and risks.

Effectiveness of the Organization. Public support for an insurgent or terrorist organization requires that the organization exist and have some level of effectiveness. Grievances, identity, and many other individual-level factors are ubiquitous; only sometimes, however, does public support for insurgency build to significant levels. The insurgent organization's effectiveness, then, is crucial and may be seen as the result of leadership, ideological package and related framing, the mobilization of resources, opportunism and adaptation to circumstances, and presence, tactics, and deeds. This effectiveness is a prerequisite for—and, over time, a cause of—the other factors.

Motivation. Most people who support insurgency and terrorism believe that they are doing something positive, such as contributing to a worthy cause, fulfilling a duty, or maintaining honor. Some attractions are rooted in religion or other ideology, a sense of identity, appreciation of social services provided by the violent organization, the glory and excitement of the cause or activity, or some combination. Referring again to the issue of identity, people may feel a sense of duty or honor to support the insurgency because of nationalism (e.g., when dealing with an occupier) or their connection with a particular ethnic group, tribe, religion, or cause. Other motivations may involve financial payments or gaining power or prestige.

Sense of Legitimacy. Violence may be perceived as legitimate for any or a combination of many reasons. The reasons may be religious, otherwise ideological, or ethical; they may be due to intolerance rooted in unthinking ethnic prejudices and ignorance that denigrate "others"; they may be rooted in a sense of legitimate personal revenge or, in a culture with endemic violence, a belief that legitimacy is a non-issue. And, even if violence is seen as deplorable, it may be seen as necessary.

It should also be remembered that "good" revolutionaries are often insurgents and that only sometimes do they have the luxury of taking a peaceful approach, as in Gandhi's India or in the Egypt of 2011's Arab Spring. A public may deplore (or come to deplore) terrorism but approve other forms of violence as necessary for the cause.

Acceptability of Costs and Risks. The fourth branch is expressed as acceptability of costs and risks (given motivations), because the behaviors in question are often not the result solely of sober cost-benefit calculations but also of emotions, such as the excitement of revolution or the horror of having witnessed slaughter. Responding to intimidation is less a matter of calculation than of being frightened by the government, insurgent group, or both. For those cross-pressured by both, a calculation may indeed occur: Who will be the likely victor and, thus, with whom is it most important to cooperate? There may also be personal-level risks and opportunities to consider, and a variety of countervailing social and culture pressures against support.

All of the top-level factors affect the others over time. Additional cross-cutting factors are indicated at the bottom of Figure S.1. These include shared grievances and aspirations, unacceptable behavior by the insurgent organization (which can undercut public support), various psychological and emotional factors, and such environmental factors as international relations, economics, instability, and culture.

Lessons from the Case Histories

Our case studies dealt with al-Qa'ida, the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Kurdish PKK separatist movement in Turkey, and the Maoists of Nepal.

Al-Qa'ida. We drew on past research to construct a specialized factor tree for public support of al-Qa'ida in the large, i.e., of al-Qa'ida as a transnational, global Salafi-jihadi organization. That is, we did not consider al-Qa'ida affiliates, for which public opinion is often driven by local considerations, or to rank-and-file participants, who are sometimes more like a "bunch of guys" than those attracted strongly to the tenets of al-Qa'ida. Our empirical work on al-Qa'ida in this study was

primarily to assess the value of the additions to our model from social movement theory. The result, Figure S.2, stems from the general factor tree (Figure S.1), but uses thickened arrows and bold font to show factors that we see as noteworthy for the al-Qa'ida case.

Al-Qa'ida's organizational effectiveness has been due in part to the late Usama bin Ladin and to Ayman Zawahiri, who between them brought a combination of charisma, strategic thinking, and organizational skills. Al-Qa'ida's framing of issues has been extremely important, especially the notion that violent jihad is an obligation of good Muslims, on behalf of brother Muslims worldwide (not in a single country).

The motivations for public support stem from religious beliefs (a violent-extremist version of Salifism), an ideology stressing identity within the universal brotherhood of Muslims, and a duty to defend Muslims, who are seen as under attack worldwide. All of this is supported by shared grievances related to an accumulated but inchoate sense of humiliation in the Muslim world and by widespread repression and corruption by the governments of Muslim countries. The perceived glory and excitement of supporting a cause that seeks to redress these problems is also a factor.

Religious and brotherhood-of-Muslim beliefs are also major factors in the perceived legitimacy of violence against Westerners, unbelievers, and even Muslims who do not agree with Salafi-jihad interpretations. However, religious and cultural beliefs also operate in the opposite direction (hence the +/− in Figure S.2), with many in the Muslim world disapproving of the extreme violence of al-Qa'ida.

As for the acceptability of costs and risks, the most notable point is the strength of factors *against* support (negative effects in Figure S.2). The scale and ferocity of anti-al-Qa'ida activities worldwide (as well as religious and cultural values) have spawned broad countervailing pressures that discourage would-be supporters for pragmatic reasons, perhaps in part because it seems unlikely that al-Qa'ida will emerge as the victor.

Notably absent in Figure S.2 is an emphasis on social services, e.g., health and sanitation (al-Qa'ida does not provide such services, as do some insurgent organizations); the search for financial, power,

**Figure S.2
Salient Factors in Public Support for al-Qa'ida**

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

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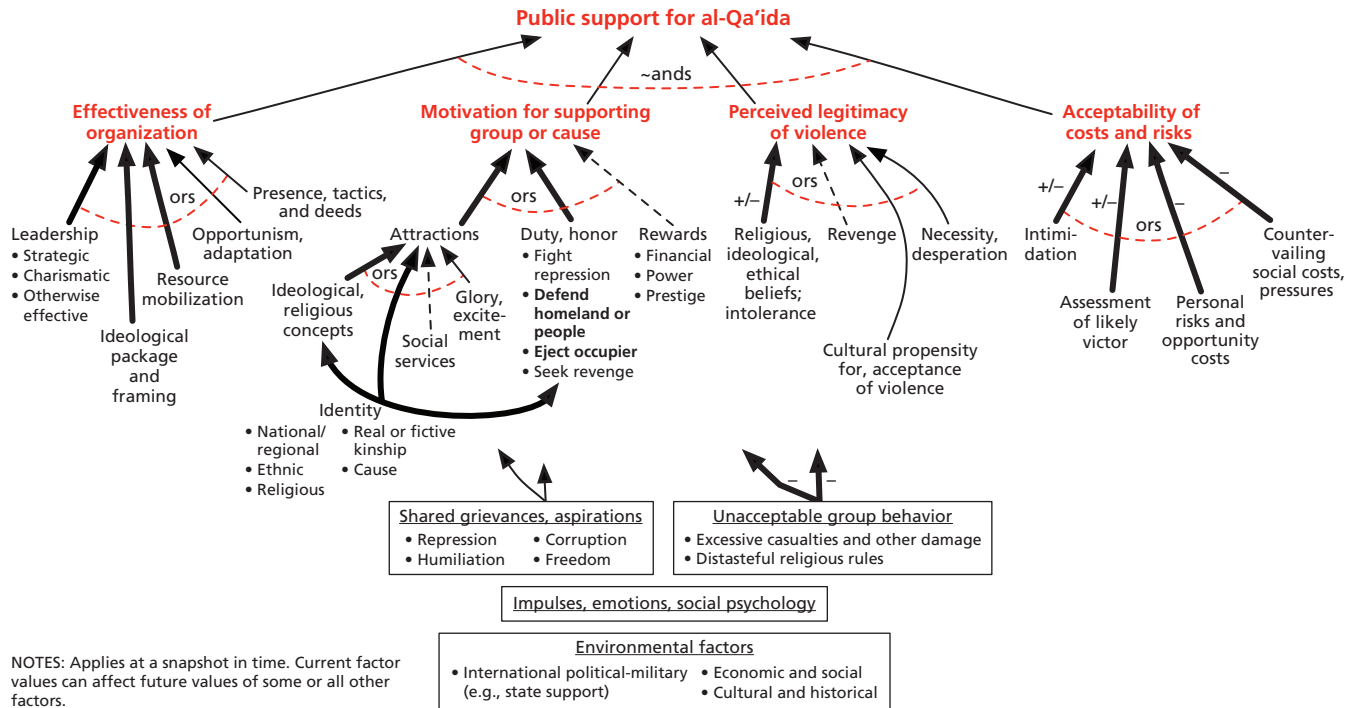
or prestige rewards; personal revenge; and calculation of personal risks and opportunity costs. Such factors almost surely play a role but are not prominent in the data. To be sure, some active participants and supporters of al-Qa'ida engage also in criminal activities, which can bring personal benefits. These, however, do not characterize what drives such public support as al-Qa'ida enjoys.

The Taliban in Afghanistan. The Taliban, although not a tightly unified organization, has also benefited from strong leadership, a narrative that taps into cultural points of reference, and adaptations in response to changing circumstances (see Figure S.3). A subset of the Afghan population supports the religiously extreme views of the Taliban. Another major factor in popular support is a broad sense of duty and honor in repelling the occupier (whether Alexander the Great, the Soviet Union, or the United States). Decades of nonstop violence in Afghanistan have also created a culture in which violence is part of the norm. Intimidation by the Taliban is an especially powerful factor, with "support" often being a matter of acquiescence to the less-bad option—cooperation with the side most present and most feared. And, finally, there is the strong sense of identity among Pashtuns, who live in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and distrust of what they see as a Tajik-dominated central government (even though President Karzai is a Pashtun). The cross-border bonds among Pashtuns are strong enough that many observers over the years have regretted failure, in the 19th century, to have drawn borders creating a separate Pashtunistan.

The PKK in Turkey. Public support for the PKK in Turkey (Figure S.4) has been motivated overwhelmingly by a sense of Kurdish identity and Abdullah Öcalan's charisma. Other notable factors include widespread intimidation by the PKK within portions of Kurdish Turkey, as well as various cultural aspects, such as acceptance of violence in the poorly developed Kurdish areas. Considerations such as revenge have also played a role at times. Legitimacy of violence arising from perceived necessity is another consideration, but with an unusual twist. For those who embrace Kurdish nationalism, the PKK was long a unique outlet, because in earlier years the PKK largely eliminated what might have been less violent competitors. The state of Turkey has become much more accommodating about Kurdish identity in recent

Figure S.3
Salient Factors in Public Support of the Taliban in Afghanistan

Public support for the Taliban

~ands

Effectiveness of organization

Motivation for supporting group or cause

Perceived legitimacy of violence

Acceptability of costs and risks

ors

Presence, tactics, and deeds

Leadership
• Strategic
• Charismatic
• Otherwise effective

Opportunism, adaptation

Resource mobilization

Ideological package and framing

ors

Attractions

Ideological, religious concepts

Social services

Glory, excitement

Identity
• National/ regional
• Ethnic
• Religious

• Real or fictive kinship
• Cause

ors

Duty, honor
• Fight repression
• **Defend homeland or people**
• **Eject occupier**
• Seek revenge

Rewards
• Financial
• Power
• Prestige

+/–

ors

Religious, ideological, ethical beliefs; intolerance

Revenge

Necessity, desperation

Cultural propensity for, acceptance of violence

+/–

+/–

ors

–

–

Intimi- dation

Assessment of likely victor

Personal risks and opportunity costs

Counter- vailing social costs, pressures

Shared grievances, aspirations
• Repression
• Humiliation
• Corruption
• Freedom

Unacceptable group behavior
• Excessive casualties and other damage
• Distasteful religious rules

–

–

Impulses, emotions, social psychology

Environmental factors
• International political-military (e.g., state support)
• Economic and social
• Cultural and historical

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

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Figure S.4
Salient Factors in Public Support for the PKK

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

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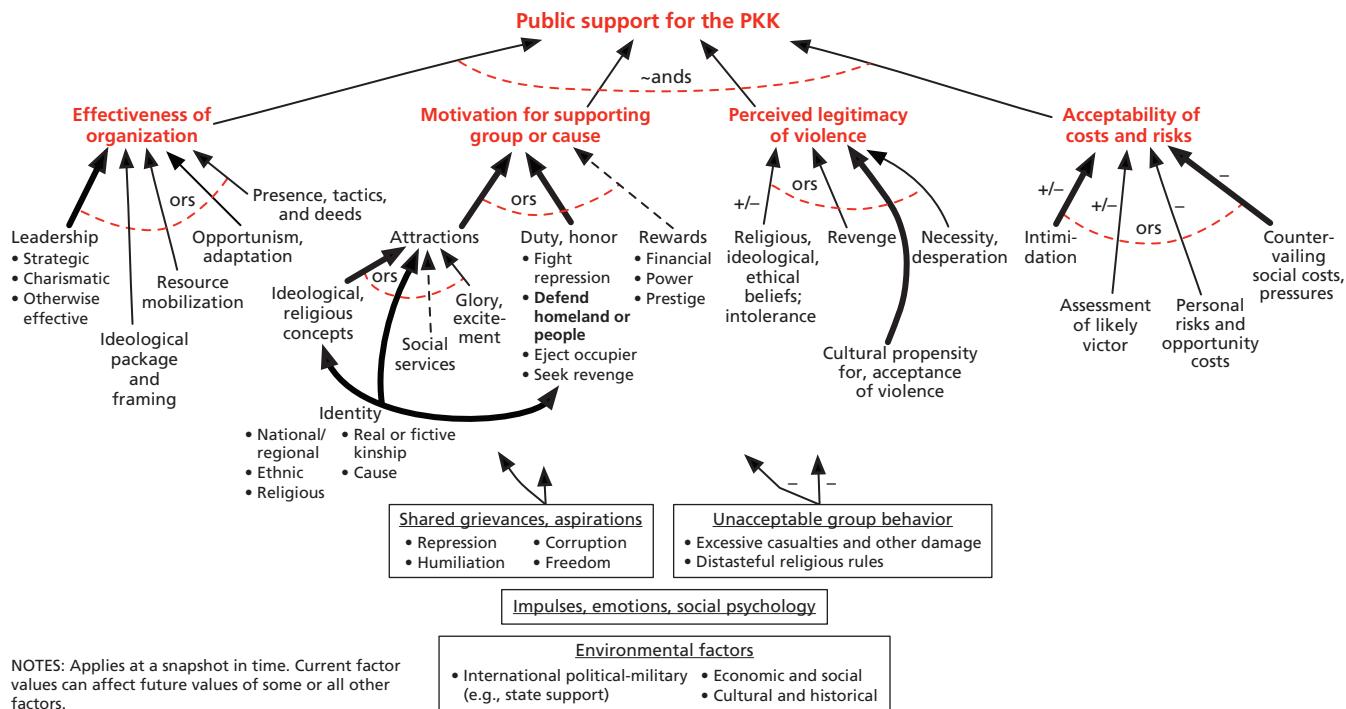
times, but support for the PKK continues. For those who become involved with the PKK, ideology is very important, but—aside from the core issue of Kurdish identity—the "ideology" has been inconsistent and incoherent over time, the product of a single individual who has played a dominant role despite having been in prison for more than a decade.

The Maoists in Nepal. The noteworthy factors in Nepal (Figure S.5) are different because the problems that led to the Maoist insurgency included government incompetence, corruption, inequality (e.g., separation by castes), and a vacuum of government at critical times. The movement has had a single leader from the beginning. Ideology has played a role (including Maoist thinking with strains of Marxist-Leninist thinking), but the most powerful strand has been that of a "people's movement" in response to many grievances—i.e., the *cause* was more important than particular political ideological concepts. Despite their name, the self-described Maoists support a pluralistic republic, participate in elections, hold a substantial number of seats in parliament, and have struck compromises with other political actors. During the bloodiest period of the insurgency, however, they employed intimidation effectively, appealed to identification themes, and used other methods expected by social movement theory.

Comparisons. Table S.1 summarizes the differences across cases subjectively, in a manner consistent with the highlighting in Figures S.2–S.5. The numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicate, respectively, that the factors were seldom observed, were present, or were present and seemed to us noteworthy by virtue of unusualness or significance. All top-level factors are rated 2 (and not shown in the table) because all are seen as necessary. We also used 2's where coding was uncertain, in part because data sources varied across our cases studies. Some factors were certainly significant even though we did not see them as noteworthy for purposes of discussion.

Table S.1 shows the results. The primary observations are as follows:

- Organizational effectiveness (the factors motivated by social movement theory) were noteworthy in all cases. *How* these fac-

Figure S.5
Salient Factors in Public Support for the Nepalese Maoists

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

RAND *MG1122-S.5*
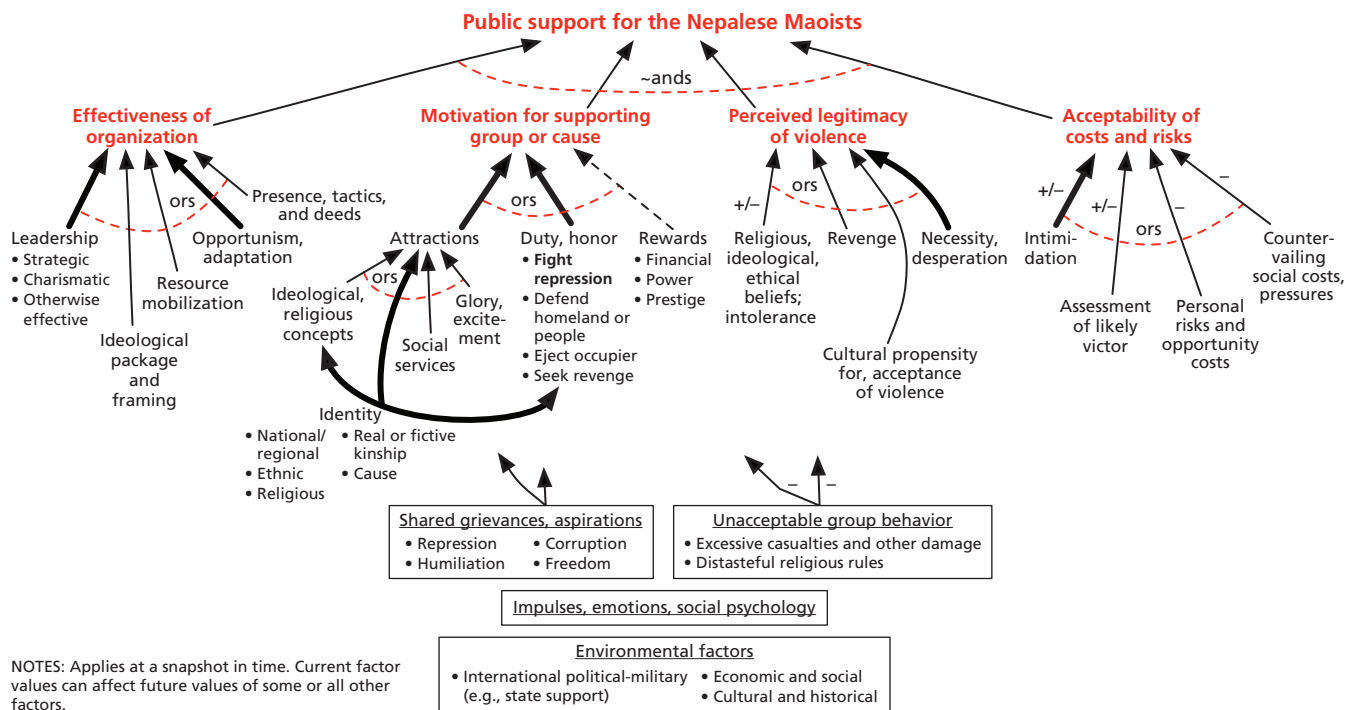
tors were triggered, however, varied across case, as indicated in Table S.2.

- Attractions, duty and honor, and intimidation were noteworthy in all cases.
- Identity was noteworthy in all cases, manifesting itself through both attractions and perceived legitimacy of violence.
- In these particular cases, public support seems *not* to have been strongly affected by purely personal motives, such as gaining great wealth, or by exogenous events.

Table S.2 elaborates on *how* factors that were triggered varied and uses the subfactors under "Effectiveness of the organization."

Leadership. Charismatic leadership appears to have been more closely associated with the PKK, al-Qa'ida, and the Taliban than with the Nepalese Maoists (which has had effective although not especially charismatic leadership).

Ideology and Framing. Ideology of one sort or another was important in all cases: Salafi-jihadism for al-Qa'ida, nationalist hardline Deobandism for the Afghan Taliban, Kurdish nationalism and socialism for the PKK, and anti-feudalism and Maoism for the Nepalese insurgents. All groups, however, tended to pragmatism in accenting or downplaying aspects of ideology at various times depending on circumstances. This has been least so for al-Qa'ida, since its extremist religious ideology is so central to its identity. In its framing, al-Qa'ida has emphasized pan-Islamic global-Muslim-identity, religious duty, and grievances. Taliban support has primarily been based on Pashtun identity and Afghan nationalism with respect to outsiders. The PKK has focused on building support from within the Kurdish community. The Nepalese Maoists exploited state repression while differentiating among subpopulations (e.g., nationalists, ethnic and caste groups, women, and students), creating a "big tent" movement and providing a political framework for meeting various ethnic demands. In addition, al-Qa'ida and the PKK appear to have done more to use intellectuals in mobilizing support.

Resource Mobilization. The Taliban's principal organizational resource appears to have been the hardline madrassas out of which the

Table S.1
Noteworthiness of Factors in the Case Studies

Structure from Initial Factor Tree			Al-Qa'ida	The Taliban in Afghanistan	The PKK in Turkey	The Maoists in Nepal
Top-Level Factor	Second-Level Factor	Third-Level Factor				
Effectiveness of organization	Leadership		3	3	3	3
	Ideological package and framing		3	2	2	2
	Resource mobilization		3	2	2	2
	Opportunism and adaption		2	2	2	3
	Presence, tactics, and deeds		2	2	2	2
Motivation for support	Attractions		3	3	3	3
		Ideological, religious	3	3	2	2
		Identity	3	3	3	3
		Social services	1	2	1	1
		Glory, excitement	2	2	2	2
	Duty and honor		3	3	3	3
		Fight repression	2	2	2	3
		Defend homeland, people . . .	3	3	3	2
		Identity	3	3	3	3
	Rewards	Financial, power, prestige . . .	1	2	1	1

Table S.1—Continued

Structure from Initial Factor Tree			Al-Qa'ida	The Taliban in Afghanistan	The PKK in Turkey	The Maoists in Nepal
Top-Level Factor	Second-Level Factor	Third-Level Factor				
Perceived legitimacy of violence	Religious, ideological ethical (+/–)		3	3	2	2
	Intolerance		3	1	1	1
	Personal revenge		1	2	2	2
	Cultural propensity for violence		2	3	3	1
	Necessity or desperation		2	3	2	3
Acceptability of costs and risks	Intimidation (+/–)		3	3	3	3
	Assessment of likely victor (+/–)		3	3	2	2
	Personal risks, opportunity costs (–)		3	2	2	2
	Countervailing pressures (–)		3	2	3	2
"Global"	Shared grievances		2	2	2	3
	Unacceptable group behavior (–)		3	2	2	2
	Other (impulses, actions . . .)		2	2	2	2

NOTES: 1 = "not present"; 2 = "present"; 3 = "present and noteworthy." Where coding was uncertain, 2 was used.

core of the organization arose, whereas al-Qa'ida, the PKK, and the Nepalese Maoists have built their organizations over time—sometimes incorporating the splinters of prior organizations.

Adaptation to Political Opportunities. Over the years, al-Qa'ida has exploited local political circumstances to gain safer havens for operation and shelter (e.g., in Pakistan and Yemen), but has exhibited no intent to negotiate or moderate on core matters. The Afghan Taliban has many different elements but is, at best, in the embryonic stages of negotiations with the Afghan national government. In contrast, both the PKK and Nepalese Maoists took a page from the socialist playbook in emphasizing political-front organizations to build mass support and position their organizations for elections. Somewhat uniquely, the Nepalese Maoists engaged in peace negotiations and were able to secure an election victory.

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. Across all of the cases, violence against civilians (terrorism) sometimes resulted in growing disaffection. In the case of al-Qa'ida, the killing of fellow Muslims in Iraq and elsewhere appears to have diminished support, which has sometimes caused leadership to advise caution on such matters. The Taliban has sought to mute the impact of civilian deaths resulting from its actions by periodically releasing updated guidance on rules of engagement for its commanders. In the case of the Nepalese Maoists, the 2001 Royal Family Massacre created shock and bereavement among the Nepalese due to the public's strong affection for King Birendra, which necessitated a toning-down of demands for a republic. In the case of the PKK, intimidation and coercive violence have undercut some of its popularity, but the PKK has nonetheless ruthlessly used both to enforce discipline and build support within the Kurdish community.

Implications for Strategy

Although our study was primarily focused on the interface between science and policy analysis, we also considered implications for strategy—working at the general level rather than for a specific context, such as Afghanistan. Our primary observations relate to "persuasive commu-

Table S.2
Case Comparison for Factors Motivated by Social Movement Theory

Factor	Al-Qa'ida	Taliban	PKK	Nepalese Maoists
Leadership	Charisma, strategic thinking, and organizational talent	Charisma rooted in religious authority	Charisma of leader seen as at core of the movement	Effective leadership
Ideology	Religion as core element	Nationalism, religion, ethnic identity[a]	Kurdish nationalism with varied political concepts	The cause of overturning government to redress grievances
Framing	Muslim identity, grievances, religious duty, global jihad	Expulsion of occupier, identity, religious duty, preservation of traditions, restoration of sharia	Kurdish identity and grievances	Support of cause and need to fill vacuum of governance
Resource mobilization	Decentralization, effective unifying propaganda	Roots in madrasas, with later evolution	Developed over time	Developed over time
Dealing with political opportunities and constraints	Many adaptations, to extent permitted by core ideology	Tactical adaptations, reinvigoration	Numerous adaptations as Turkish government has evolved and Soviet socialism has lost sheen	Substantial adaptation leading to full participation in mainstream political processes
Presence, tactics, and deeds	High-visibility attacks as well as smaller ones; many have proved counterproductive	Daring attacks (e.g., to liberate prisoners) with consistent presence and intimidation	Small-scale attacks, intimidation, ubiquitous presence, political monopoly (in early years)	Helped topple government

[a] Portions of the Taliban are more religiously radicalized along Salafi-jihadi lines than others, and also more transnational in outlook due in part to al-Qa'ida influence.

nications" relating to aspects of public diplomacy, strategic communication, and influence operations.

Persuasive Communications

It is a big step to move from the research conclusions above to recommendations on how to issue persuasive messages and otherwise influence attitudes. It is useful to keep several points in mind:

- "The public" consists of numerous discrete groups with different prior beliefs, psychologies, and circumstances. These are the battleground for competition as actors seek to recognize and influence the different target audiences—pushing hot buttons of some and avoiding hot buttons of others. *Each actor tries to affect all the relevant factors of our conceptual model.*
- The sources of influence include real-word events and actions, which often speak louder than words, but can affect segments of the public quite differently.
- Influences are received through a variety of channels (e.g., direct experiences, mass media, or personal networks). Receptivity to the information, and the way it is interpreted, depends heavily on details, such as how information is presented.

We concluded from our analysis that it is useful to think explicitly about three *levels* of strategy, which can be called macro, meso (faction-level), and micro.

Macro Level. The macro level of strategy can be seen as akin to a broad-spectrum antibiotic in enhancing a population's overall resistance to insurgent and terrorist group appeals. Messages need to be informed by an understanding of real-world events and the larger framing contests between government and insurgent or terrorist groups; the frames and themes within the mass media and both social and personal networks; and the extent to which target populations are aware of, resonate with, and react to the various events, actions, and messages.

Many of these matters can be monitored and analyzed. For example, content analysis, citation analysis, and network analysis can be integrated to map the public and private discourse of an insurgent or

terrorist group, as well as the commentary of critics. Analysis can provide insights into the changing level of intra-movement contention, specific wedge issues and fault lines, the leading voices associated with competing positions, and vulnerabilities to external criticism. Most publicly available polls, however, do not have the richness necessary for this purpose. More could be done to connect survey and focus-group efforts with theory.

Many generic options exist for reducing macro-level support for an insurgent or terrorist group. These include weakening the resonance of the group's narrative, exploiting or disrupting its propaganda networks, exploiting or creating divisions, and strengthening the resonance of counter-narratives.

The Meso Level of Factions. The meso level concentrates on the various factions, stakeholder, and subpopulation groups engaged in framing contests. Each has its own preferences on both proximate and underlying issues (e.g., whether to support the insurgents and whether the final power structure should be centralized or decentralized). Each has its own political, economic, and/or military capabilities. The eventual outcome will frequently be achieved when one side accumulates the cooperation of enough factions and segments to tilt the balance. As a result, understanding relationships among factions is crucial to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, as is being able to anticipate what is feasible.

Fortunately, there exists a class of models, called agent-based rational choice stakeholder models, which have been used for about 25 years to simulate the bargaining and other interactions among stakeholders and to forecast outcomes of insurgencies and many other issues. The models have been surprisingly good at this, with moderate data requirements that can be provided by subject-matter experts. Recent developments (including at RAND) have broadened the power of these methods.

Micro Level. If macro-level actions are like broad-spectrum antibiotics, then we also need micro options for special strains of "disease" (e.g., influence of special issues on special segments of the public). Corresponding options require additional knowledge, such as the ability to detect and interrupt the pipelines, networks, and processes that radi-

calize and mobilize individuals. This has been seen as in the domains of intelligence and law enforcement.

In addition to traditional security activities, a number of other micro-level actions could be fruitful. These would operate "left of the boom," preemptively addressing potential problems rather than reacting to actions, such as terrorist attacks. As radicalization and recruitment are most likely to take place at the fringes of at-risk communities, the most interesting opportunities may lie in community-based efforts to strengthen resistance to extremist appeals, and improving detection of radicalizing individuals or cells. Community policing, for example, can increase the willingness of the community to assist police in identifying at-risk individuals, members of insurgent or terrorist recruitment networks, and radical voices. More broadly, community outreach can provide training, tools, and resources to combat extremism at a local level. Engagement with local religious, business, and other community leaders can improve a community's ability to police itself and steer at-risk individuals away from harm. Community-based programs led by former insurgents or terrorists can, as with anti-gang programs, help to divert youth away from an extremist path; events featuring credible voices, such as former adherents, popular athletes, or musicians, can help to draw youth into these programs. Intervention programs—supported by law enforcement—can help protect members of the community against predation by insurgent and terrorist groups. Although we could discuss such matters in this monograph only briefly, evidence is accumulating on the effects of community-based outreach methods, and also about outreach methods in prisons.

A problem, of course, is that *doing something* along these lines calls for whole-of-government(s) activities (not just effort by defense and intelligence agencies), especially since so much intervention must occur at the state and local level, and most of it in foreign countries. In many cases, the current governments would have little credibility in related efforts.

Suggestions for Applied Analysis of Strategy in a Context

Finally, we offer some summary suggestions about counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies. For the given context in which a

commander or civilian policymaker is developing strategy, we suggest the following:

1. Review the applicable "whole of government" strategy to have it firmly in mind, seeing the public-support issue as part of that much larger context. Coordinate accordingly.
2. Identify the entities in competition (e.g., internal factions, government, alliance assisting in counterinsurgency, other foreign governments).
3. Characterize the insurgent's strategy, in part by characterizing how it addresses each of the elements of organizational effectiveness identified by the social-movement-theory portion of this study.
4. Develop specialized factor trees for each subpopulation so as to appreciate where potential actions could have both intended and counterproductive effects, depending on subpopulation and targeting. Plan efforts accordingly.
5. Focus on possible actions that are feasible, for which there can be congruence between reality and messages, and for which bad side effects (also called second- and third-order effects) are either unlikely or subject to mitigation.
6. Observe, assess, and adapt—reinforcing successes and adjusting where actions prove ineffective or counterproductive.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Background

In 2009, RAND published a study that reviewed and integrated social science relevant to understanding terrorism and counterterrorism.[1] The study introduced a number of conceptual models to help think about and discuss complex issues. Follow-on projects were commissioned to further check and extend the conceptual models, drawing on a variety of information sources. One of those, the present study, focused on public support for both insurgency and terrorism.[2] We looked at topical issues involving al-Qa'ida and the Taliban, but also at insurgencies

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[1] The book (Davis and Cragin, 2009) included conceptual models depicted graphically ("factor trees") to convey a quick view of the key factors affecting the root causes of terrorism (Noricks, 2009a), individual decisions to join in terrorism (Helmus, 2009), public support for a terrorist organization (Paul, 2009a), an economics interpretation of these matters (Berrebi, 2009), how terrorism ends (Gvineria, 2009), and decisionmaking of a terrorist organization in considering a particular operation or class of operations (Jackson, 2009). The book also included discussion of how individuals come to leave terrorism (Noricks, 2009b) and of principles of strategic communication (Egner, 2010). The conceptual methods were described in a separate chapter (Davis, 2009b) and a shorter subsequent paper (Davis, 2009a). A chapter was devoted to cross-cutting themes (Cragin, 2009). The book's executive summary (by Davis and Cragin) is an overview of the whole.

[2] Other follow-on studies dealt with individual reasons for becoming a terrorist, terrorist decisionmaking, and indirect consequences of counterterrorist actions. Those were led by Todd Helmus, Brian Jackson, and Kim Cragin, respectively, and were completed in 2010. The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) also requested a follow-on study about social science for stabilization and reconstruction, which will soon be published (Davis, 2011a).

with a different character (those involving the Turkish PKK and the Maoist movement in Nepal).[3]

Objectives and Approach

Against the background above, the stated objectives of our study were to

- assess and improve the conceptual modeling of public support by using new empirical information
- draw on empirical information for different specific contexts expected to check different aspects of the conceptual models
- offer suggestions about elements of policy (e.g., about leverage in strategic communication).

Many sources of empirical information exist. Although using only publicly available information, we drew initially on extensive primary- and secondary-source material on al-Qa'ida and the Taliban in Afghanistan.[4] Later, we added case studies on the Turkish PKK and the Maoists of Nepal. Our study thus evolved over time as we learned from earlier phases and exploited opportunities.[5] We also used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, and used different types of data as appropriate to the cases. Thus, the research was exploratory and nonlinear.

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[3]   Our research also built on prior studies led by Larson (Larson et al., 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Less directly, we benefited from related RAND studies (Jones and Libicki, 2008; Paul, 2010; Connable and Libicki, 2010), a DoD review of terrorism issues (Fenstermacher, Kuznar, and Speckhard, 2010), a study by the Defense Science Board (2008), and empirical work by the Gallup Organization (Rieger, 2008, 2010a). Davis and Larson also helped organize a useful DoD workshop on countering violent extremism (Arana, Baker, and Canna, 2010). Davis participated in an intensive intelligence-community summer study, the 2010 Summer Hard Problem Program, which was devoted to violent extremism.

[4]   An earlier phase of our work dealt with al-Qa'ida in Iraq.

[5]   One opportunity that arose was to have doctoral fellows do case histories on their native countries of Turkey and Nepal. Another opportunity came late in the study, when we obtained specialized polling data for Afghanistan that supplemented earlier work.

Seeing the Work in a System Context

One characteristic of our work was, from the beginning, to see public support for insurgency and terrorism as one aspect of a much more complex system phenomenon. Taking a system view of the whole requires, in particular:

- Identifying the numerous factions involved. These may include, for example, the primary violent extremist organization behind an insurgency; the national government; relevant local governments or actors of governance; competitor organizations also seeking to gain influence or supplant the government; the United States and its allies; other foreign powers and transnational organizations, such as al-Qa'ida; and—last but by no means least, the many factions within the state (e.g., those corresponding to ethnicity, region, religion, caste, income). Each of these, in turn, might be decomposed into elements as necessary to represent important microscopic interactions (for example, "the government" of a state suffering from insurgency includes such distinct entities as the national army and the Ministry of Interior, among others).
- Identifying major processes of activity. For counterinsurgency being conducted in connection with stabilization and reconstruction, for example, these would include establishing security, establishing governance, establishing social conditions conducive to stability, and establishing a viable economic system (see Davis, 2011a).
- Recognizing that many or all of the actors mentioned have a stake in the public-support issue. Thus, they directly compete to affect public support, whether through actions, strategic communication, or other mechanisms.
- Recognizing that, in a sense, "everything affects everything else." That is, it is not really feasible to think about public support for terrorism or insurgency without seriously contemplating such issues as the quality and legitimacy of governance and the ferocity of competition or conflict among factions.

- Finally, recognizing that the concept of "public support" is inherently over-aggregated. First, as discussed in Chapter Two, "support" may take quite a number of different forms, and be either active or passive. Second, "the public" has distinct or semi-distinct segments derived from some of the considerations mentioned above, and those segments obviously do not perceive the various factors at work in identical manner. It is better to think of distinct publics rather than a single unified public.

Figure 1.1 attempts to capture this schematically. We are asking about public support, but public support for an insurgency is but one observable of political processes that interact with security, social, and economic processes. Further, there are factions in play (A, B, and C), each making decisions and taking actions that affect all of the processes. These may all communicate with one another. Further, there are multiple segments of the population involved in or supporting the various activities (as indicated by the stacked boxes throughout the figure). The nature and strength of public support for insurgency, then, is just one manifestation from an entire cauldron of activities. This may all be obvious, but we elaborate because we see a recurrent tendency to discuss influencing public support as though it were an issue apart. In the extreme, this can come across as attempting to use "messages" to change attitudes despite the fact that practical issues, such as lack of security or rampant government corruption, can be realities that trump messages.

Does all this mean that we cannot reasonably discuss the subject of this monograph without treating all of the actors and interactions? No, because in the real world it is typically possible to say useful things about portions of the entirety. It does mean, however, that we need to remember the larger context, show restraint when discussing the popular-support issue in isolation, and disaggregate appropriately in some of our discussion. Further, it means resisting the temptation to extrapolate from a conceptual model, such as a factor tree, to a predictive model of what would happen if a certain factor could be manipulated. That is, the factor tree identifies issues to be addressed, but working the issues will require disaggregation and a context-specific

Figure 1.1
Public Support as One Observable from a Complex System

A, B, C: factions with different levels of organization

Public support for insurgency (in many subpopulations)

A

B

Actions on and observations

Security   Political

Social   Economic

Communication among actors

External environment (foreign powers, economy, . . .)

C

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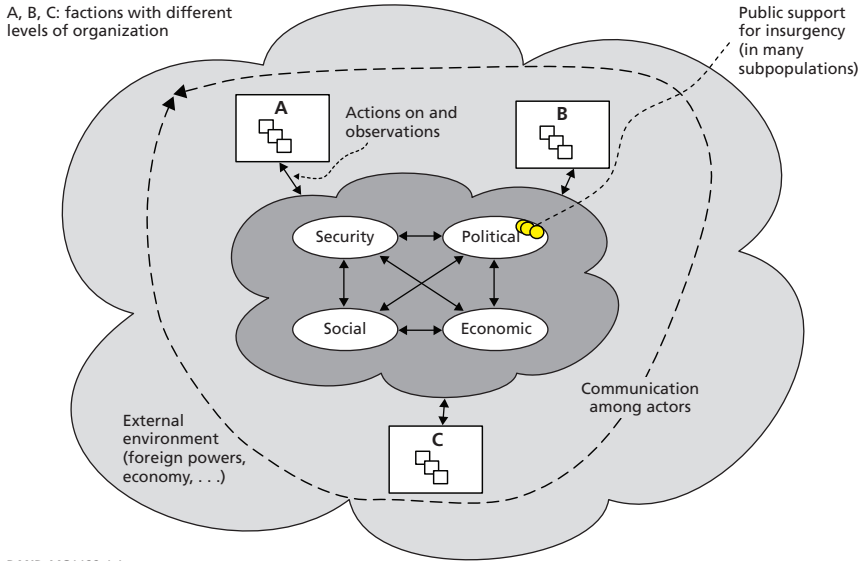
understanding of important competitions and other interactions—matters that go well beyond the scope of this monograph—and, arguably, the state of social science.

Concepts of Validation and Improvement

Challenges

One purpose of the study was to test ("evaluate" might be a better word, so as not to imply something like statistical testing of quantitative data) the conceptual model of public support from earlier work. Could the model be "validated"? The classic validation methods developed for science and engineering do not apply for several reasons, the most obvious of which is that we have no real-world reference system conveniently isolated and subjected to rigorous, systematic examina-

tion and manipulation.[6] One might think that the conceptual models could be tested by looking at data from a wide range of historical cases of public support for terrorism over time. That is not the case, however, for a number of reasons:[7]

- The available historical data are quite heterogeneous, coming from different contexts without the benefit an experimental design by the gods.
- The conceptual models focus on qualitative factors that have not typically been measured systematically. In contrast, statistical-empirical analysis typically uses readily available data that often have little theoretical basis.
- Correlations found by statistical analysis are often not very revealing on matters of causation due to hidden variables, covariances, and even sensitivity to specification. They can be more useful as cautionaries.[8]

Approach

Despite these problems, we concluded in this and related RAND work that much can be done with case studies relating to validation and simultaneous theory improvement:[9]

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[6]   See also Keefe and Moore (2005), who review what is feasible in validating social-science models. In doing so, they contrast theories of knowledge and argue that, in this context, "validation" will need to be largely the search for an interpretation that is credible to peers, subject-matter experts, and—ideally—the subjects themselves.

See Hartley (2010) and Sargent (2004) for discussion of validation issues in the operations research literature. Hartley discusses measures of model "coverage," which is relevant to our own work. He also defines a levels-of-validity index that is less relevant here because he has in mind computational models that predict results. McNamara (2010) discusses why many models do not forecast and why computational experimentation can help. Bigelow and Davis (2003) describe exploratory analysis methods to evaluate models that cannot be validated in classic ways.

[7]   See Windrum, Fagiolo, and Moneta (2007) for a thoughtful technical paper on the related issue of empirical validation of agent-based models of social phenomena.

[8]   These same issues were highlighted in a recent review of social science for reconstruction and intervention (Davis, 2011a).

[9]   The value of qualitative histories for this type of empirical work was pioneered by Alexander George, who emphasized the value of "process tracing" to understand causality and

Tentative Confirmation of Factors. Empirical information can be used to see whether the factors identified in the conceptual models appear to be at work in real-world cases as judged by, e.g., polls, accounts by reporters interviewing members of the public, interrogation of prisoners, the study of diaries and records captured in the process of counterterrorism operations, the voluminous writings of insurgent leaders, and so on. If the factors show up, this is useful incremental confirmation, although not proof. If the factors arise in a way conveying roughly the same narrative as the conceptual model, then the sense of confirmation is enhanced.

Tentative Confirmation Regarding Causality and Necessity. As discussed in Chapter Two, factor-tree models are causal models; they distinguish between sets of factors that are all necessary (at least in a first approximation) for an effect to occur and those that may be individually sufficient. Empirical information can provide tentative confirmation on both of these matters. The accumulation of such confirmations encourages confidence, especially if—once again—the empirical work also supports the causal explanations that are being given.

Falsification and Supplementation. If factors arising in such empirical information are not in the conceptual models, then the models are, in a sense, falsified—a key element of science.[10] The "in a sense" phrase applies because there is no shame in having a model that does well in most respects but needs to be improved with additional factors—so long as, over time, the number of factors does not continue to grow without bound. The primary downside is that doing so entangles model-building and testing—something unavoidable at this stage of research. In our study, we did a fair amount of supplementing, particularly as regards the mechanisms that factions use in attempting to influence public support.

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improve the emerging theory, as well as the importance of recognizing the existence of alternative causal pathways (see, e.g., Chapter 1 of George and Bennett [2005], which discusses this under the terminology of equifinality).

[10]   Sir Karl Popper first emphasized the central role of falsification in distinguishing between science and psuedoscience. Tenets of the former can, at least in principle, be falsified with empirical information. See, e.g., Popper, 1963. In the philosophy of science, Popper's contribution is recognized as a contrast with the earlier observationalist/inductionalist views of Sir Francis Bacon.

Similarly, if the narratives reported from empirical sources describe cause-effect relationships differently than do the models, then this might be another type of falsification (if the empirical sources' narrative is credible), as would be evidence that a factor shown by the model as necessary is often not necessary. Such evidence can motivate refinements in the evolving model.

Case-study research of the type we pursued, then, is helpful for establishing "concept validity" (correspondence of model to theory) and for theory-building (George and Bennett, 2005, pp. 19ff.).

Assessing Usefulness. Our conceptual models are idealizations. They omit some considerations idiosyncratic to particular people at particular times. Nonetheless, such idealized models can sometimes describe how people and groups eventually behave, even if their cognitive processes and interim behaviors are more complex and even erratic. That is, people may come to behave *as if* they were following a relatively simple model. If so, that model can be used for assessing and planning, albeit with caution. Economists have long argued that people's longer-term behavior is often "as though" they were making rational-analytic decisions, even though a direct view into their cognition might reveal something much more erratic and unstructured along the way.

Context Dependence. The conceptual models identify multiple pathways to the same results. That is, different factors in the models may apply in different context. Thus, the models are intended to be steps toward rather comprehensive theory, but with more factors than apply in particular instances. This means that we should judge "validity" by whether the factors of our most general formulation at least sometimes contribute, even though many of them will be irrelevant in some contexts. Such a model, then, may identify factors for an operator in the field to *start* with, but to then winnow down for the specific case of interest.[11]

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[11] As an example, various studies show that religion plays a surprisingly small role in Islamist terrorism in the West Bank or Gaza (Berrebi, 2009). In contrast, religion has been an important factor at times in Afghanistan.

Structure of the Monograph

With this background, the monograph is structured as follows. Chapter Two summarizes the key ideas in the improved conceptual model emerging from this study. It begins by describing the previous study's conceptual models of public support, extending them to insurgency. As discussed in later chapters, the basic concepts held up quite well. However, we found it possible to combine what previously were separate factor trees and to rearrange the factors in a more coherent and consistent manner. We also added some factors (or at least raised the visibility of some factors) based on the new empirical work. Most important, we enhanced markedly the discussion of one portion of the model by drawing on social-movement theory to better understand mobilizing mechanisms for support of insurgency and terrorism. Doing so provided more visibility to certain dynamic issues and to how the factions' strategies come into play. The result, we believe, is a considerably improved single factor-tree model of public support for insurgency and terrorism.

Against the background of this overview, Chapters Three through Six are case histories of al Qa'ida, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the PKK in Turkey, and the Maosits in Nepal, used to evaluate the utility and validity of the conceptual model.[12] Chapter Seven makes comparisons and draws some implications for strategy and policy, including conclusions about countering or muting public support for terrorism.

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[12] In future work, we expect to supplement these further with an influence-diagram approach suitable for discussing longer-term dynamics. Some aspects of that can be seen in Davis, 2011a.

A Conceptual Model

The Concept of Factor Trees

A factor tree is a graphical depiction of the static aspects of a conceptual causal model,[1] one that can be understood quickly by a group of people with diverse backgrounds and then used as a basis for discussion and debate.[2] No technical background is needed in, e.g., mathematical graph theory, system dynamics, or other forms of modeling. A factor tree shows the factors contributing to a phenomenon at a snapshot in time and arranges them in layers of increasing detail in an approximate hierarchical tree showing how factors relate to each other.[3] It is to be understood that, over time, all of the factors can also affect the other factors. Such trees can also help planners to organize their thinking

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[1]   Our emphasis on causal modeling within a system perspective is quite different from data-driven statistical modeling (Davis, 2009a; Sargent, 2010). A completely specified causal model would deal explicitly with dynamics, but a factor tree is more of a snapshot view identifying factors at work at a slice in time. Over time, the factors will all interact. Elsewhere, we often use influence diagrams or even simulation models to describe such dynamics (Davis, 2006), in an approach somewhat akin to that in *System Dynamics* (Forrester, 1961).

[2]   Factor trees were introduced in earlier work (Davis and Cragin, 2009; Davis, 2009b), and a short primer is also available on their use (Davis, 2011b).

[3]   This is a form of *multiresolution modeling*, which has many advantages for policy analysis. Its success depends on approximations reducing explicit interactions among variables that complicate modeling and comprehension (Davis, 2003). The approximations can be rather good with techniques such as estimation theory and iteration.

by identifying challenges that may be dealt with in different "lines of approach."[4]

The next two sections and an appendix to the chapter describe the evolution of the factor tree emerging in this study. **The reader interested only in results may move directly to the section "The Final Conceptual Model of Our Study."**

Initial Factor Trees for the Study

An earlier RAND study of social science for counterterrorism included two factor trees bearing on the subject of this study, public support for insurgency and terrorism. The first, written by Christopher Paul,[5] drew heavily on work from sociology and other literatures relevant to public support of causes. Paul noted that a terrorist organization needs different types of support beyond that which it can self-generate, as suggested in Figure 2.1 (a decomposition rather than a factor tree). This can be seen as a definition or elaboration of "support"; some support is active and some is passive, as in not reporting insurgents to authorities. The public may contribute to both, but so also can, e.g., other nation states, ethnic diasporas, or even criminal organizations. Paul went on to develop a factor tree specifically for public support of terrorism (included in the appendix to this chapter as Figure 2.5).

Elsewhere in the same study, one of us (Davis) developed a factor tree (included in this chapter's appendix as Figure. 2.6) summarizing insights from the overall book and providing an overarching narrative (see Davis [2009a] or Davis [2009b]). It bore significantly on the issue of public support.

We began the current study by reviewing both of those factor trees and, after considerable discussion, creating a combined tree. Figure 2.2

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[4]   Robert Sheldon and colleagues at the U.S. Marine Corps Concept and Doctrine Command have begun using the approach for such purposes, using a variant terminology of *influence factor diagrams*.

[5]   See Christopher Paul's chapter in the original book (Paul, 2009a) or his subsequent journal article (Paul, 2010).

Figure 2.1
Types of Support
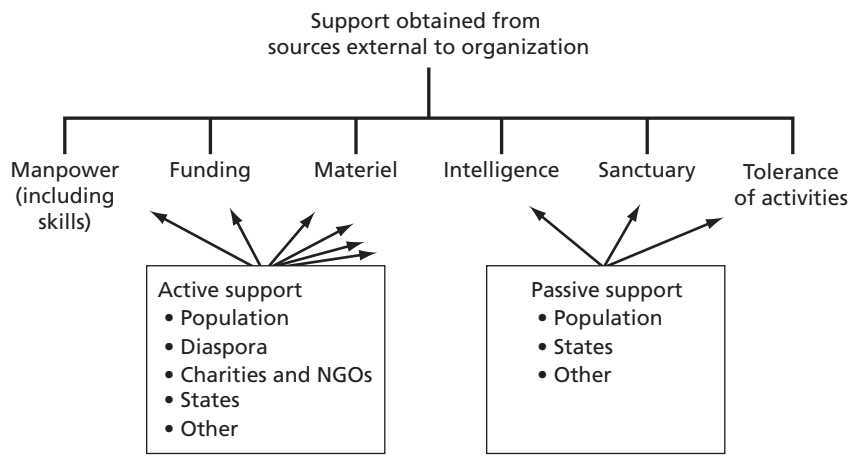
SOURCE: Adapted from Paul, 2009a, Figure 5.2.
NOTE: NGOs = nongovernmental organizations.
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shows that starting point. We hoped that the factor tree applied to the full range of ways in which support can be provided (i.e., to the components of Figure 2.1). However, the salience and persuasiveness of factors in Figure 2.2 can vary with type of support. For example, contributing funds to an insurgency can involve little risk. Providing sanctuary (e.g., allowing insurgents to use one's home) may be much more risky. We did not elaborate on such matters in our study, although it would certainly be interesting and useful to do so in the future.

The higher-level structure of Figure 2.2 followed the Davis formulation and emphasized (1) motivation, (2) perceived legitimacy, (3) perceived acceptability of costs and risks, and (4) the availability of mobilizing mechanisms. The deeper factors came from merging the Paul and Davis formulations and rearranging factors. The integration stemmed from realizing that Paul's formulation largely focused on, and was richer in dealing with, what Davis treated as motivations. It was also explicit about the important factor of intimidation, which we concluded was best related to calculations about costs and risks in the new

formulation. We also noted (based on preliminary work in the project by Haldeman) that the legitimacy factor could be strongly affected in either positive or negative directions by religious/ideological and cultural considerations. Thus, the tree in Figure 2.2 reflected quite a number of improvements relative to the work in 2009.

In reading a factor tree such as Figure 2.2, higher-level factors are shown to be the result of lower-level factors, perhaps through several levels of detail. This multiresolution depiction encourages thinking top-down, with relatively few top-level factors but many supporting factors that become more concrete with increased detail lower in the tree. Some of the lower-level structure identifies alternative causal pathways.[6] If a group of factors is linked by "ands," then the model is asserting that, to a first approximation, all of these factors are necessary for the higher-level effect. In more recent work we have used "~and" to remind the reader that the "and requirement" is merely approximate, with known counterexamples.[7] Most of the second- and third-level factors are linked by "ors." That is, any one of them, or combinations, may be sufficient to cause the higher-level effect.[8]

In some instances, factors are shown as bullets rather than as separate nodes on the tree. The convention is that bulleted factors are examples rather than complete sets.

At the bottom of Figure 2.2 are boxes with additional factors of a sort that can affect several or many of the higher-level factors. By the study's end we had merged some of these into the top-level description, as discussed later.

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[6]   In this respect, our factor trees are a very different kind of typology than mere taxonomies, a distinction made in George and Bennett (2005).

[7]   As examples of where the approximation fails, motivation for support can be temporary and fuzzy-minded; legitimacy may be a non-issue in a context where violence is ubiquitous; people may support an activity without consciously calculating benefits and risks; and public support for some terrorists and violent insurgents may be spontaneous and easily accomplished, without particular mechanisms or means.

[8]   This feature is sometimes referred to as equifinality (George and Bennett, 2005).

Figure 2.2
Initial Combined Factor Tree for Public Support

Propensity to actively support insurgency or terrorism

~ands

Motivation for supporting group or cause

Perceived legitimacy of methods

Acceptability of costs and risks

Availability of mobilizing mechanism

Attractions

Social pressures, incentives

+/– Religious, ideological or ethical basis

+/– Cultural propensity for violence

Necessity or effectiveness

+/– Charged emotions

+/– Intimidation

– Countervailing social pressures

– Social costs

Personal risks, opportunity costs

Financial incentives

Glory, excitement

Ideology, religion

Peer influence

Cultural obligations

Prestige, power over rivals

Duty to act

Identification with or appreciation

Influence of respected authorities

Absence of alternatives

History of success

Political

External threat to homeland, people, or group

Revenge

Social movement

Shared goals

Social services

Kinship (real or fictive)

– Unacceptable group behavior
• Excessive Muslim casualties
• Excessive civilian casualties
• Distasteful religious rules

+/–

+/–

Leadership and organizational factors
• Charismatic leadership
• Entreprenuerism
• Propaganda…
• Misconceptions, self deceptions…
General counterterrorism factors

Other general factors of environment and context:
• International political and political-military factors (including state support)
• Economic issues, social instability, human insecurity (context of demographics, globalization)
• Cultural issues (within contexts of globalization, modernization…)
• History and cultural history

NOTES: At snapshot in time. This was a preliminary version of the model. The final version appears in Figure 2.4.

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Enhancements Drawn from Social Movement Theory

Our next step was to enhance the model by drawing on social movement theory to expand our treatment of the rightmost branch in Figure 2.2, *Availability of mobilizing mechanism*. In particular, we sought to highlight the functions that an insurgent organization must take on if it is to be successful over time. Whereas the earlier factor tree provided a purely static depiction of the public-support phenomenon, the intent was to provide more insight about dynamics, process, and purposeful use of instruments by the violent organization to affect the various factors.[9] Modern social movement theory goes far in describing how leaders, acting as political entrepreneurs, attempt to mobilize public support for their group.[10]

After providing an overview of the social-movement-theory framework, we apply it (in Chapter Three) to the al-Qa'ida Central organization led by Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Major Elements of Social Movement Theory

Social movement theory is an interdisciplinary field of research that concerns itself with describing and explaining the dynamics of movements—including violent social movements—that has included signal contributions from sociologists, social psychologists, political scientists, and other social scientists.[11] First, a definition:

> Social movements are coordinated and sustained collectivities that engage in "contentious collective action" with "elites, authorities, and opponents." (Lichbach, 1995a, pp. 567–570)

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[9]   Initially (and through the first draft of this monograph), we saw the insights from social movement theory as constituting a separate, parallel lens through which to view insurgency. Ultimately, we merged the insights into the final factor tree, Figure 2.4. We thank one of our reviewers, Carolin Goerzig, and James Dobbins for related suggestions.

[10]   We agree with Dalgaard-Nielsen (2008a, 2008b) in her assessments of social science approaches to the analysis of violent radicalization in Europe, that identity theory, group process approaches, and framing theory are among the most promising avenues for further research.

[11]   See especially Gamson, 1975; Tilly, 1978 and 2002; Lichbach, 1995a, 1995b; della Porta and Diani, 1999; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 2001; and Snow, Soule and Kriesi, 2004.

One appeal of social movement theory is that it takes as its point of departure the observation that grievances, identity, and many other individual-level factors are ubiquitous, and that the key question is not so much why people are aggrieved, but rather, how it is that group leaders can mobilize some aggrieved people to participate in social movements, while failing to mobilize most (Klandermans, 2004, pp. 360–379). Social movement theory provides a diagnostic lens for addressing that question. As such, social movement theory is a potentially useful framework for assessing the efforts of Islamist political movements and violent insurgent or terrorist groups to mobilize public support for their cause.

As indicated by a review of recent scholarship on social movement theory, analysts have focused on a small number of key variables that help in understanding mobilization of public support for terrorist and insurgent groups. These elements are depicted in Figure 2.3 and will be discussed in turn. These elements should not be seen as steps in a single process, but rather as elements of an overall, swirling process. For example, whether leadership's objectives come first, with ideology generated to serve their purposes, or whether ideology comes first but is ineffectual without leadership, plans, and so on, depends on the case and may be hard to assess. The elements are as follows:

- Leaders establish goals and engage in strategic decisionmaking to promote group/movement objectives.
- An ideological package provides some semblance of a coherent worldview, and the impetus for an action program.
- Collective action frames and framing processes manipulate symbols and appeal to identity to generate sympathy and support from different audiences.
- Resource mobilization activities aim to increase group resources and organizational capacity.
- Political opportunity structures represent the opportunities and constraints group leaders face in promoting their movement.
- Presence, tactics, and deeds may have effects on perceptions and support.

Leadership. Social movement theory assumes that insurgent and terrorist leaders (who may or may not be charismatic, may or may

Figure 2.3
Elements of Social Movements
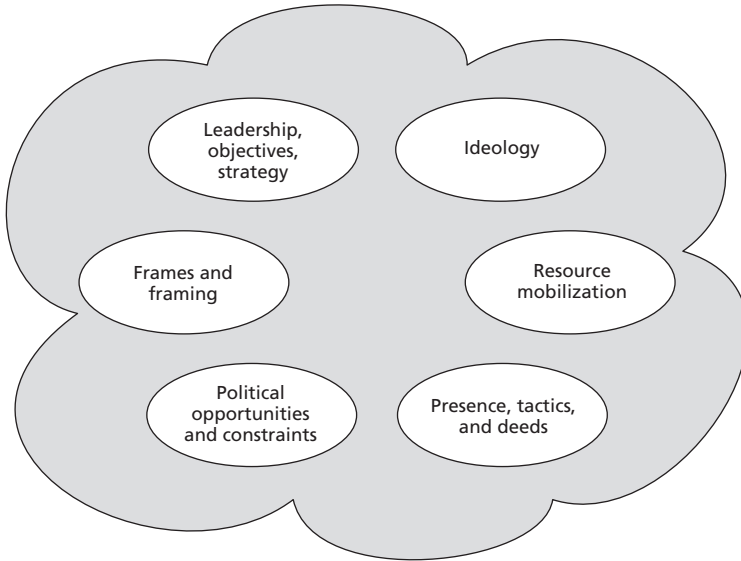
RAND *MG1122-2.3*

not be hierarchically related, and who may change over time) develop strategies and engage in strategic and tactical assessments of costs and risks in promoting group objectives in the face of changing opportunities and constraints imposed by their environment.[12] Among the most important of these objectives are group survival and growth, which hinge on leaders' ability to sustain, broaden, and deepen support for their group or movement, so as to build a movement that can challenge existing political authority.

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[12]   The kind of rational decisionmaking described here implies neither rational ends, perfect information, nor infallibility in the decisions that are made. Rather, it simply suggests that leaders attempt to achieve their chosen ends by putting the ways and means available to them to best use. See Wiktorowicz, 2004b, p. 13. For a discussion of protest strategy and political opportunity structures, see Gamson, 1989, pp. 455–467. Others refer to such decisionmaking by such other terms as "bounded rationality" (Simon, 1957) or "limited rationality" (Davis, Kulick, and Egner, 2005).

Leaders develop and adapt strategies and doctrines for the employment of the nonviolent and violent means they believe can best promote group objectives under evolving circumstances and constraints. They also make choices regarding the specific types and mix of actions—referred to as "action repertoires" or "tactical repertoires" in social movement theory terms—that will be used to promote group aims:

> Tactics are shaped by external limits such as poverty of resources, exclusion from the legitimate political order, scarcity of opportunities for action, difficulty of mobilization, or repression by opponents. They are also shaped by an "inner logic," which is based on the group's ideology and organization and on the cost-benefit analyses of participants. (Ennis, 1987, pp. 520–553)

An Ideological Package and Framing.

Ideological Package. An ideological package provides a group or movement with some semblance of a coherent worldview in diagnosing the current (unacceptable) situation, prescribing a program of action that may allow for or even promote the use of violence, and providing the basic narratives and other material that can be employed in a group's apologetics for its actions, including violence.[13] A group's ideology also can circumscribe the "imaginable options" that are doctrinally permissible (Wiktorowicz, 2004a).

Collective-Action Frames and Framing. Group ideologies and actions require explanations that can garner the understanding and sympathy of potential supporters. While some recent analyses of Islamist activist, insurgent, and terrorist groups have deemphasized ideology and belief as causal variables in mobilization, they have focused on how ideas are socially created, arranged, and disseminated, i.e., how groups construct discourse that will resonate with target audiences (Wiktorowicz, 2004a). Group leaders, ideologues, and propagandists use framing processes to create collective identities and to exploit and

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[13]   Most movements eschew the use of violence. Two historical examples of movements embracing nonviolence are Mohandas Gandhi's Indian independence movement and Martin Luther King's civil rights movement.

collectivize the grievances of sympathetic target audiences, build support, animate action, or achieve other objectives.[14]

At their essence, framing processes are persuasive communications that aim to tie ideology, program, and actions to compelling religious, historical, and/or cultural identities, values, symbols, or narratives. This can be accomplished through the production of mobilizing and countermobilizing messages that imbue group programs and actions with greater potency and achieve "frame resonance" with sympathetic target audiences. Such efforts tend to be highly interactive and opportunistic:

> In some instances, Islamists construct frames that meld religious and non-religious themes to reach broader audiences. Appeals to nationalism, tribal symbolism, and even human rights find themselves intertwined with religion in ideational packages. The eclectic nature of such frames demonstrates the strategic dimension of framing: content is frequently selected according to its potential persuasive effect rather than solely on the basis of ideology. (Wiktorowicz, 2004a)

Resource Mobilization. Resource-mobilization efforts aim to preserve and expand organizational resources, such as money, meeting places and other facilities, labor, and communications technology, and to exploit or develop social networks and other types of mobilizing structures that can help to further the growth and objectives of the group in organizing, directing, and mobilizing contention.[15]

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[14] Polletta and Jasper (2001, p. 298) describe collective identity as follows:

> Collective identity describes imagined as well as concrete communities, involves an act of perception and construction as well as the discovery of preexisting bonds, interests, and boundaries. It is fluid and relational, emerging out of interactions with a number of different audiences (bystanders, allies, opponents, news media, state authorities), rather than fixed. It channels words and actions, enabling some claims and deeds but delegitimating others. It provides categories by which individuals divide up and make sense of the social world.

See Benford and Snow, 2000, pp. 611–639. For an analysis of the role of popular intellectuals in promoting social movements, see Baud and Rutten, 2005.

[15] See McCarthy and Zaid, 1977, pp. 1212–1241; and Wiktorowicz, 2004a. Edwards and McCarthy (2004, pp. 116–52) identified five types of resources that can be mobilized: mate-

Opportunism and Adaptation. Organizations often need to relate their strategy to the realities outside the social movement itself, which may create opportunities or constraints.[16] The literature often refers to dealing with "political opportunity structures":

> The basic premise [of political opportunity structures] is that exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization, for particular sorts of claims to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised, and for movements to affect mainstream institutional politics and policy.[17]

> [Political opportunity structures are] Consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure.[18]

Included among political opportunity structures are the openness of the political system to group efforts to promote its political program, the extent to which intelligence and security services constrain activities, the receptivity of different population groups to group appeals, and other key features of the broader environment that can present either opportunities or challenges.

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. Finally, we add here that what an insurgent organization actually *does* matters. Its actions and deeds may be observed and have effects on perceptions and support. The orga-

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rial (money and physical capital), moral (solidarity, support for the movement's goals), socio-organizational (organizational strategies, social networks, bloc recruitment), human (volunteers, staff, leaders), and cultural resources (prior activist experience, understanding of the issues, collective action know-how).

[16] Excellent reviews can be found in Meyer and Minkoff, 2004, and Meyer, 2004. Among other important works discussing political opportunity structure are Eisinger, 1973; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1983, Tarrow, 1994; Gamson and Meyer, 1996; and Kurzman, 1998.

[17] See Meyer and Minkoff, 2004; Meyer, 2004; McAdam, 1982; Meyer, 2004; Goodwin and Jasper, 1999.

[18] See Tarrow, 1994, p. 85. This definition from Tarrow differs only slightly from an earlier one that he used in 1989: "Consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent—dimensions of the political struggle that encourage people to engage in contentious politics" (Tarrow, 1998 [a second edition]).

nization will try to take actions and accomplish deeds that reinforce its message. It will not always be successful in doing so, and effects may change over time. For example, the 9/11 attack was inspiring to some elements of the Muslim public, but subsequently came to be seen largely in negative terms by large segments of that public—whether because of the worldwide costs arising from U.S. and international action against al-Qa'ida and its supporters worldwide or because of moral and ethical objections.

Using the Elements as a Diagnostic Lens

Taken together, the variables just described provide a diagnostic lens for understanding the strategies and tactics that insurgent and terrorist group leaders choose to navigate exogenous shifts in opportunities and constraints, and how they frame and propagate group ideologies and collectivize grievances to win broader sympathy and support. We concluded that highlighting these variables would be an important extension of our conceptual model. Just using this aspect of the conceptual model in an application would involve four discrete steps:

1. Drawing on all-source information, and more specific thinking, characterize the insurgent or terrorist organization in terms of the five key dimensions of the social movement theory lens described above.
2. Based on the preceding analysis, identify the observable successes, failures, strengths, and weaknesses of the group and the most important opportunities, constraints, and challenges that it faces.
3. Identify the key factors responsible for group success or failure as background for strategy development that can include intelligence collection and analysis, strategy and policy analysis, and strategy or policy actions.
4. Discuss potential side effects, feedback loops, second- and third-order effects, and other potential consequences of strategic or policy actions.

We illustrate this in Chapter Three for the case of al-Qa'ida.

The Final Conceptual Model of Our Study

Anticipating Conclusions

Rather than leaving this matter to the conclusions chapter, and imagining that the reader will proceed linearly through the monograph, let us note here—early in the monograph—that the results of our empirical work and continuing thinking led to still further improvements in the factor tree.[19] The result was Figure 2.4, the final general factor tree of our study. Anticipating what will be discussed in Chapters Three through Six, the tree has a number of features different from the discussions in Davis and Cragin (2009), and even from Figure 2.2. Beyond extending the scope to be support for either terrorism or insurgency, the improvements are

- replacing the factor "Availability of mobilizing mechanism" with "Effectiveness of insurgent organization," elaborated with subfactors motivated by social movement theory, and placement of the factor on the left to convey a sense of precondition and cause, left to right
- more integration
- greater structural and logical coherence with better clumping of related factors and the appearance of a more tree-like character that enhances comprehension[20]
- refined labeling of factors[21]
- highlighting both identification issues and intimidation, but recognizing that intimidation may come from either the government

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[19] We are often asked about how much the various RAND factor trees are dictated by empirical information versus theory. The answer, of course, is that theory and empiricism go together. Theory, in the sense of logical and sometimes creative reasoning that attempts to make sense of "the whole," played a very big role in structuring the information and filling in where factors are sometimes not observed directly or are too sensitive to discuss in some circles. However, the theory has been inspired by a wealth of qualitative research and some well-conceived quantitative research (see particularly Berrebi, 2009, and references therein).

[20] This depended in part on putting some important factors at the bottom, with influences to most or all of the higher-level variables.

[21] For example, we have used "duty and honor" instead of "felt need," and "cultural propensity for violence" rather than "normative acceptability of violence."

Figure 2.4
An Improved Factor Tree for Public Support of Terrorism

Public support for insurgency and terrorism

~ands

Effectiveness of organization

Motivation for supporting group or cause

Perceived legitimacy of violence

Acceptability of costs and risks

ors

Presence, tactics, and deeds

Leadership
• Strategic
• Charismatic
• Otherwise effective

Opportunism, adaptation

Resource mobilization

Ideological package and framing

ors

Attractions

Ideological, religious concepts

ors

Social services

Glory, excitement

Duty, honor
• Fight repression
• Defend homeland or people
• Eject occupier
• Seek revenge

Rewards
• Financial
• Power
• Prestige

+/−   ors

Religious, ideological, ethical beliefs; intolerance

Revenge

Necessity, desperation

Cultural propensity for, acceptance of violence

+/−

Intimidation

+/−   ors   −

Assessment of likely victor

Personal risks and opportunity costs

−

Countervailing social costs, pressures

Identity
• National/ regional
• Ethnic
• Religious

• Real or fictive kinship
• Cause

Shared grievances, aspirations
• Repression   • Corruption
• Humiliation   • Freedom

Unacceptable group behavior
• Excessive casualties and other damage
• Distasteful religious rules

−   −

Impulses, emotions, social psychology

Environmental factors
• International political-military   • Economic and social
(e.g., state support)   • Cultural and historical

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

RAND *MG1122-2.4*

or the terrorist/insurgent organization, with the these working in different directions

- more explicit highlighting (at the bottom of the figure) of emotional and psychological influences above and beyond those implicit in the higher-level factors
- a newly emphasized factor for assessment of which side is likely to win (discussed to some extent as "bandwagoning" in the earlier work)
- more extensive recognition that even the signs of some factors' influences can vary from positive to negative (e.g., religious beliefs can undercut or enhance perceived legitimacy of violence).[22]

The Narrative

The narrative that goes with Figure 2.4 is that the degree of public support for terrorism or insurgency violence depends of the four top-level factors mentioned earlier (effectiveness of organization, motivation,[23] perceived legitimacy, and acceptability of costs and risks).[24]

Starting at the left of Figure 2.4, public support for an insurgent or terrorist organization requires that the organization exist and have some level of effectiveness. As highlighted in social movement theory, effectiveness may be the result of various combinations of leadership,

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[22] An alternative approach would have separate factors and arrows for both "positive" and "negative" influences.

[23] The motivation branch more or less corresponds to benefits, whereas the acceptabilities-of-costs-and-risks branch is, in a sense, costs. Thus, the factor for countervailing social costs and pressures, for example, would be seen as on the costs side. We deemphasize simultaneous balancing of calculated benefits and risks in favor of the depiction shown so as to add visibility to less-than-rational factors affecting behavior. We fully recognize the arguments in support of the rational-actor model (e.g., Berrebi, 2009), but find the model to be severely limiting.

That said, in particular instances Figure 2.4 reduces to a "rational actor calculation." Merely as an example, the public in an Afghan village might support the government and occupiers, or support the Taliban, largely based on which side is more feared, immediately and over the longer run. The calculation might be with survival rather than ideas being of primary importance. The historical willingness of Afghanis to switch sides, both individually and in blocks, can certainly be seen as evidence of rational calculations.

[24] We use the term *narrative* to convey the sense that any such conceptual model reflects a perspective.

ideological package and related framing, the mobilization of resources, the opportunistic adaptation to circumstances, and a combination of presence, tactics, and deeds.

Continuing rightward, most people who provide support to terrorism or insurgent violence believe that they are doing something positive, such as contributing to a worthy cause, fulfilling a duty, or maintaining honor. Some attractions are rooted in the ideas of ideology or religion;[25] in religious, ethnic, or other identities; in appreciation of the organization's social services; in the glory and excitement of the cause or activity; or in some combination of these. If the attractions are strong enough and self-reinforcing, a social movement may emerge.[26] There are also other possible motivations, such as joining from a sense of duty or honor, albeit without enthusiasm, or joining because of the possibility of rewards such as gaining power, wealth, or prestige. Self-identity is an important contribution to many of these—so much so that it is often difficult or impossible to disentangle the factors or their cause-effect relationships.[27] In the context of attraction to an organization, identifications, in turn, are sometimes affected by shared grievances of

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[25] It is unclear whether to refer to "ideological or religious" or "religious or otherwise ideological." It can be argued that religious motivations are driven by faith-based notions that cannot be questioned, whereas ideological motivations stem more from ideas and reasoning. The distinction is dubious, however, because many "ideologues" merely accept the received ideology without question, despite conflicting evidence, and even fundamentalists such as Salafis may draw on a mix of carefully reasoned argument and faith-based beliefs. (See Nakhleh, 2006, for a nuanced discussion.) In practice, then, we see these types of factors as hard to separate.

[26] A social movement can be seen as an "emergent phenomenon" in the sense of the science of complex adaptive systems. The power of such a movement can be "more than the sum of its parts" with the movement being more than an organization or set of ideas—something with its own momentum (Chesters and Welsh, 2006).

[27] In factor-tree constructions, lower-level factors are often relatively more entangled in the real world, so that their separation and relative relationships are more arguable. This issue can be mitigated by interpreting the terms appropriately and thinking left to right. For example, the factor shown as duty and honor should be seen in Figure 2.3 as that part of duty and honor that has not already been covered by factors to the left, as with someone who supports the organization despite having no attraction to it.

many kinds, and also by shared goals and aspirations.[28] Other factors also contribute (see items in boxes along the bottom of the figure).

Moving rightward, the perceived legitimacy of violence can also come about for any of many reasons, such as fundamentalist and intolerant religion,[29] intolerance rooted in unthinking ethnic prejudices and ignorance, or a belief in personal revenge. Or, in a culture in which violence is endemic, the very issue of legitimacy may be largely absent.[30] Finally, it may be that while violence is seen as deplorable, it may also be seen as necessary for the purposes that underlie motivation. Revolutionaries, after all, only sometimes have the luxury of taking a peaceful approach, as in Gandhi's India or the current-day Egypt. Finally, the violence may be deemed regrettable but necessary: There may be the perception of having no other effective options or there may be a related sense of desperation "requiring" the violence.

The fourth branch is expressed as the acceptability of costs and risks given motivations because the behaviors in question are not really the result solely of sober cost-benefit calculations. They can be affected by emotions, such as the excitement of revolution or the horror of having witnessed slaughter. In particular, responding to intimidation is less a matter of doing cost-benefit calculations than of being frightened or perhaps tortured into one or another action. Intimidation may come from the government (undercutting support for insurgency or nonstate terrorism) or from the insurgent group itself (demanding support). For some, feeling pressures from both the government and the insurgent group, a calculation may indeed occur: Who will be the likely victor and, thus, with whom should one be most cooperative? There may also

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[28] For a good discussion of root causes of terrorism, see Noricks, 2009.

[29] We should remember that the spiritual texts of many world religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have many passages that celebrate horrific violence. These passages are clearly seen differently by people of different stripes within the same nominal religion, even across different strains of fundamentalism.

[30] This factor has been controversial with some readers, but the fact that the propensity for violence varies with culture seems apparent. Scholarly discussions include Wimmer and Schetter, 2003, on ethnic violence and Chapter 11 of Breckler, Olson, and Wiggnis, 2006. A vivid description of often-routine violence in Afghanistan can be found in the Pulitzer Prize war reporting of Dexter Filkins (2008).

be personal-level risks and opportunities to consider, and also a variety of social and culture pressures against support.

The astute reader might ask how this factor tree for public support varies from one for individuals. As noted in RAND's earlier work, there is considerable commonality of factors (Paul, 2009; Helmus, 2009). However, group processes can greatly reinforce identification: People may come to see themselves as "brothers and sisters" in a cause, rather than merely people with shared interests. Paul referred to this as *group intimacy*. As another example, we are all aware of how inhibitions can be lowered as part of group activity; that applies also to accepting violence and accepting costs and risks—or, in other cases—to the opposite behavior of abhorring violence and overvaluing costs and risks.

The Relative Importance of Factors

The intent is that the factors shown in Figure 2.4 be rather comprehensive, in the spirit of moving toward one aspect of a general theory. However, as shown, the factor tree does not say which of the many factors and subfactors are more or less important: Generality comes at the expense of relative emphasis. In reality, the factors differ greatly in their relative salience, but which factors matter more or less depends on context and segment of the population:

Context. As illustrated in Chapters Three through Six, the relative salience of factors will vary with context—not only in the aggregate sense of, say, Iraq versus Afghanistan versus Turkey versus Nepal, but also within a given country, on, e.g., the phase of conflict, province, tribe, and so on. A strength of the factor-tree approach is that the general tree can be specialized for the case of current interest. Some factors may then drop out and some may be much more important than others. Also, the "combining rules" may vary with context.

Segment of the Population. A related but more subtle issue is that whereas Figure 2.4 purports to be about factors affecting "the public," the reality is that "the public" is nothing like a single entity. We have already mentioned tribes above, but think also about the difference between segments of the population that might be described at a point in time as oppositional, passive, sympathetic, or extremely supportive with respect to the violent organization at issue. Strategic communica-

tion by or in opposition to the violent organization might have little or no effect on the population segments that are oppositional or passive, whereas a major shift in government actions might affect them (e.g., a particularly repressive crackdown or the lifting of repressive measures, or the providing or not providing of physical security by police forces). In contrast, the segments of the population that are already extremist or at least sympathetic might be more affected by strategic communication (especially the subset interested in ideas and debate)[31] and less influenced by government actions—seeing a repressive crackdown as something to be expected, and seeing an easing of repressive measures as a cynical tactic before the next crackdown. These considerations will be important in Chapter Seven when we discuss implications for strategy and policy.

Future Research: Modeling the Extent of Influence

In this monograph we do not attempt to go beyond indicating what factors influence public support for terrorism or insurgency. That is, we do not attempt to assess how much effect changing a given factor to some degree would have either on overall support (as judged, e.g., by some polling mechanism) or for specific and direct support (e.g., encouraging youth to join the organization on the one hand, or reporting organization members and activities to police on the other). Much more could be done on such matters with additional research, but the obstacles are profound.

It *should* be quite possible to move from the factor trees to logical-model representations, such as could be encoded in look-up tables or even in very simple computer programs. The results would be more context-specific and would need to be based heavily on the structured judgments of subject-matter experts, but such extensions are definitely possible, even if difficult.[32]

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[31] As discussed in Chapter Three, there is vigorous discussion and debate within portions of the Salafi community, including changes of belief by people who previously favored violent jihad.

[32] For discussion, see Davis (2009a, 2009b) and prior work on qualitative adversary modeling (Davis, 2003, 2006).

Even more difficult, however, is understanding how to relate the values of factors—once defined well enough to allow measurement, even if subjective—to tangible consequences. Even if "the public" is very angry with the government and expresses itself in polls as moderately supportive of an insurgent cause (e.g., contributing funds and providing various forms of passive support) and moderately accepting of violence and even terrorism, how much more violence would be expected? Or, even more difficult, how much reduction of public support would be needed before violence would abate?

These issues are especially difficult in the modern era because one or a few individuals can accomplish great damage to property and kill many people because of the destructive power of explosives and other weapons. Further, the degree of public support needed by small groups can be quite small—especially if they do not stand out physically or otherwise. Social science does not yet know how public-in-the-large attitudes, such as "public support for terrorism," relate to the manifestation of terrorism by some within their community.[33]

Appendix to Chapter Two

Figures 2.5 and 2.6 are the original factor trees developed by Christopher Paul (Paul, 2010) and one of us (Davis) (Davis and Cragin, 2009, Chapter 11) that were inputs for the current work. Paul's tree has top-level factors about "felt need to support," identification, and social pressures and incentives. It highlights identification. The structure is not very tree-like because of myriad interactions. For example, occupation by a foreign power affects both humiliation and grievances, which affect both of the first two branches. Group provision of social services

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[33]   As a partial analogy, consider how little is understood about why one or a very small number of young people attempt to massacre their teachers and schoolmates, or why Timothy McVeigh and his accomplices performed the Oklahoma bombing. So far as we known, nothing to be found in public opinion predicts either. It may be, however, that as the "temperature" of a society rises, as measured by the prevalence of violence or relatively extreme attitudes, the number of "super-hot" individuals and groups increases sharply, even if remaining small in absolute numbers. At present, that notion is purely speculative.

Figure 2.5
The Original Factor Tree for Public Support
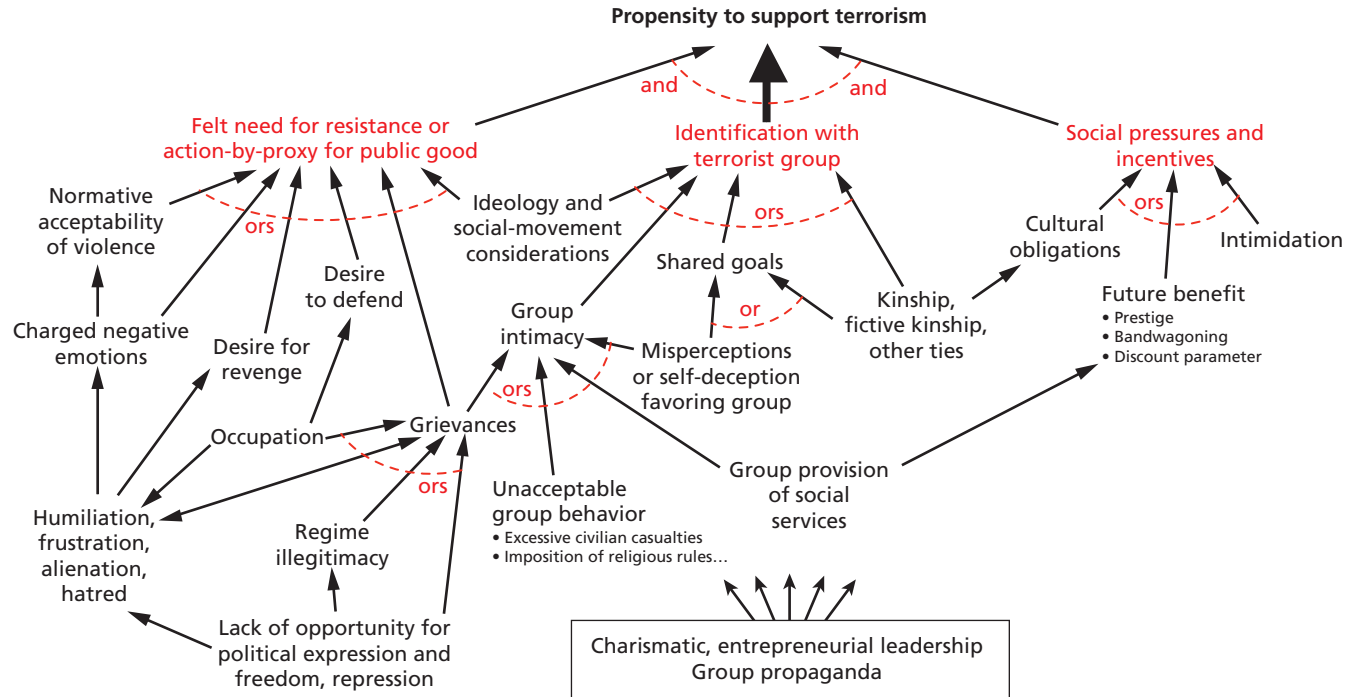
Figure 2.6
The Original Generic Factor Tree
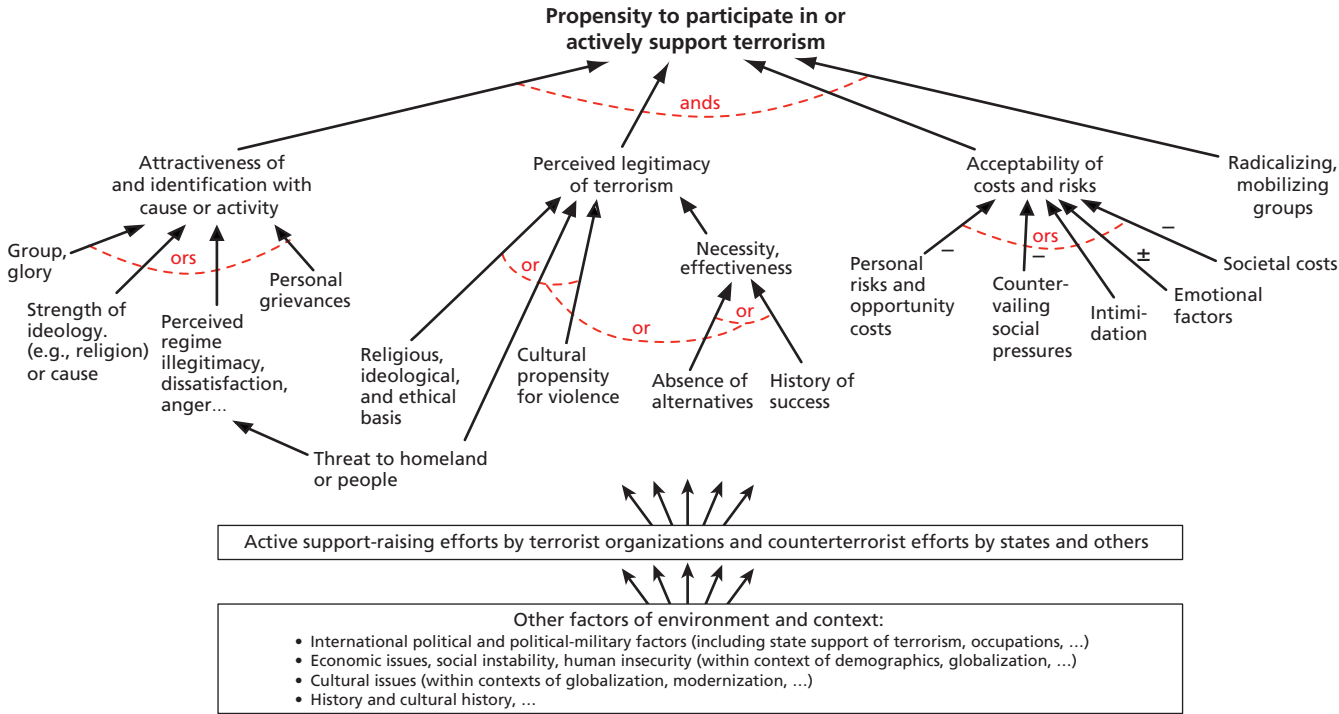
affects both the second and third branches. The original Davis tree (Figure 2.6) was organized around a different narrative and was less rich than Paul's in describing factors such as identity, humility, and so on.

The Case of al-Qa'ida

Introduction

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: (1) to construct and discuss an application of the overall conceptual model (Figure 2.4) for the case of al-Qa'ida (a case relating more to global terrorism than to local insurgency) and (2) to illustrate in considerable depth the value of that part of the model drawn from social movement theory. The brevity of the first part is due to our having already used a good deal of knowledge about al-Qa'ida in the earlier factor-tree work on terrorism and, thus, not having new original work bearing on most aspects of the model. The exception is the left-most branch, "Effectiveness of organization," which enriches the minimal early discussion under the label "Availability of mobilizing mechanisms" (the right-most branch of Figure 2.2). The enrichment was stimulated by drawing insights from social movement theory. We did substantial original work in this study using those insights to review al-Qa'ida discourse and strategy over time, thus allowing us to assess the value of those enhancements to the model. The cases discussed in subsequent chapters describe new case data on all aspects of the conceptual model, but are relatively more terse on the aspects drawn from social movement theory.

Methodology

The bulk of the chapter is based on original source material (in Arabic or in translation) on statements by members of al-Qa'ida, its supporters, and Muslim thought leaders with opposing points of view.

A Factor Tree for Public Support of al-Qa'ida

In examining public support for al-Qa'ida, we have in mind support for the transnational, global aspects of al-Qa'ida associated with al-Qa'ida Central and some dedicated regional affiliates. We do *not* have in mind the kinds of public support that are often dominant within al-Qa'ida "affiliates" around the globe. In those more local settings, motivations may include, e.g., traditional tribal-level desires for power and reward in continuing competitions or struggles with a local government. In such cases, the depth of commitment to al-Qa'ida ideology may be quite thin.[1] That was illustrated in the history of al-Qa'ida in Iraq, including the Sunni Awakening that played such a major role.[2]

Turning now to public support for "global al-Qa'ida," we constructed a factor tree (Figure 3.1) by drawing on past work, as reflected in the study's starting-point tree (Figure 2.2),[3] and by assuming that many of those in public segments that support al-Qa'ida accept major features of its message.[4] Thickened arrows in Figure 3.1 highlight noteworthy influences; light dashed arrows indicate influences that seem to be minimal. Normally thick arrows indicate the normal degree of influence expected from the factor (these may be significant but are

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[1]   See Rollins (2011) for a recent look across affiliates. The centrality of local considerations is emphasized in a recent study of methods and programs for disengagement or deradicalization (Rabasa et al., 2010), a subject of major research interest (see especially Horgan, 2009). See also Rabasa et al., 2006.

[2]   The history is not yet completely written, since some Sunni Awakening members reportedly reconnected with al-Qa'ida in Iraq in 2010 because of the attacks on Awakening members and distrust of the Shi'a-dominated government (Williams and Adnan, 2010). Such side-switching illustrates that the primary issues are political rather than religious.

[3]   See the review by Paul (2009a) and, for more individual-level considerations, the review by Helmus (2009). Both are in Davis and Cragin, 2009. See also Fenstermacher, Kuznar, and Speckhard, 2010.

[4]   This assumption decidedly does *not* apply equally to all participants in al-Qa'ida or all segments of support. As noted so well by Marc Sageman, many such segments are small groups (a "bunch of guys") with people who are not at all intellectually, much less theologically, oriented (Sageman, 2004, 2008). Glory and excitement are attractions. Criminal activities and related minor rewards are sometimes part of their activities, as illustrated by the history of a Salafi jihadist in the 1990s (Nasiri, 2006).

regarded as noteworthy when comparing across cases). Where a factor is elaborated with a bulleted list or parenthetical list, bold lettering identifies noteworthy items.

Reading left to right, we see that the various subfactors of organizational effectiveness are all highlighted. These are the new elements of our conceptual model stimulated by social movement theory, and we discuss them at length later in the section. Let us first discuss the other three top-level factors.

Attractions

The attractions branch is also prominent in Figure 3.1.[5] This reflects the religious-extremist attraction of Salafi jihadism, which treats violent jihad as a *requirement* in ostensible defense of the worldwide Muslim community and Islam itself. Contributions to jihad may be direct, as when individuals use terrorist tactics, or may be indirect, as noted in Chapter Two (Figure 2.1). *Identity as a Muslim is fundamental and is a core element of the appeal*. We know from documented instances that it has been important to individual-level decisions, and it is probably important to supporters who are not actual participants. Since violent jihad is promoted as a requirement of the circumstances faced by Muslims, some semblance of theological legitimacy is built in from the start. Viewed from the outside, the role of intolerance is also remarkable: The religious ideology has no room for compromise with other strands of Islam, much less members of other religions or nonbelievers. This intolerance and its corresponding clarity have appeal to those of certain mindsets.[6]

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[5]   The strong religious-extremist motivations for interest in al-Qa'ida have been discussed in, e.g., Stout, Huckabey, and Schindler, 2008; Fenstermacher, Kuznar, and Speckhard, 2010; and Hamid, 2009. Hamid's discussion is based on his own experiences growing up in Egypt, through his years in medical school, and subsequent study.

[6]   The intolerance was evident in the earlier writings of the influential Sayyid Qutb, who treated versions of Islam outside of his own interpretation as apostasy. See also al-Zawahiri, 2001.

Figure 3.1
Factors in Public Support of "Global al-Qa'ida"

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

RAND *MG1122-3.1*
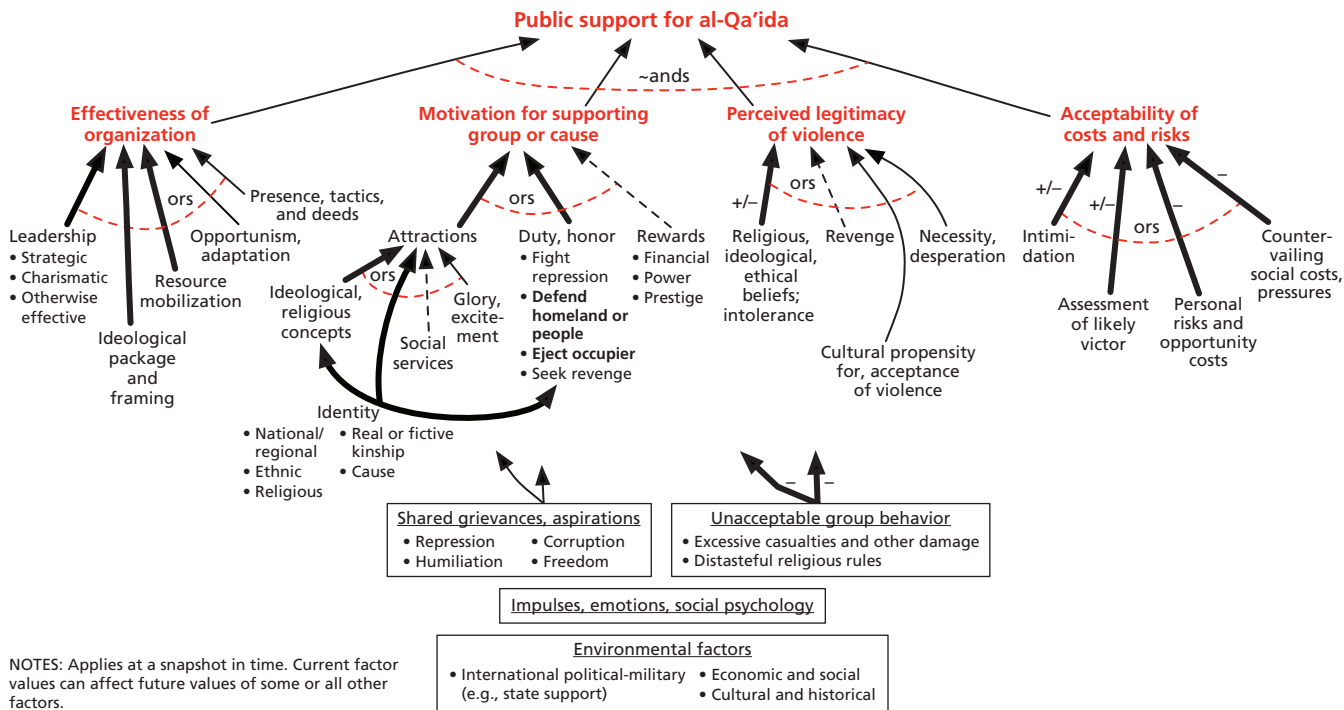
The major role played by identity as a member of the global Muslim community[7] interacts with the well-known polling result that anti-American attitudes are widespread among Muslim publics, who largely approve of al-Qa'ida's opposition to the United States (presumably seen as attacking Islam or Muslims), even while they largely disapprove of the most extreme of al-Qa'ida's tactics (i.e., 9/11 or similar attacks on civilians) (Pew Global Attitudes Key Indicators Database, 2011; Kull et al., 2009). Polling responses vary markedly across countries.

Figure 3.1 also highlights attractions such as duty, honor, and glory, but not earthly rewards (and not social services, such as medical care or education, since that is not something al-Qa'ida does). The factors contributing to legitimacy of violence include religion, intolerance of "unbelievers," and a belief that violence is necessary (and effective, as evidenced by the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan). We see no evidence of a culture of violence within the Muslim world generally.

Perceived Legitimacy of Violence

As mentioned above, perceived legitimacy of violence is not much of an issue for those who support al-Qa'ida, because the organization is not a normal insurgent organization seeking political change in a particular country but rather an organization built around the concept of international violent jihad.

Acceptability of Costs and Risks

Figure 3.1 shows a strong negative influence with respect to costs and risks. In the wake of a decade's attacks on al-Qa'ida and its extended system, from financiers to mere sympathizers providing passive assistance, the costs and risks are now evident, and it seems unlikely that many people expect al-Qa'ida to emerge as the victor. Although public

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[7]   The importance of this identity can also be seen clearly in individual histories, such as that of Omar Nasari (a pseudonym of a Moroccan-born individual who started with petty crime, grew to participate in extremist activities, trained in an Afghan Salafi-jhadi camp in Afghanistan, and simultaneously served as an informer for French intelligence) (Nasiri, 2006); the curious case of Omar Hammami from Daphne, Alabama (Elliott, 2010); and the better-known case of Anwar al-Awlaki (Shane and Mekhennet, 2010), thought to be the major figure behind the jihadi magazine *Inspire*.

opinion is strongly segmented, social pressures from fellow Muslims are broadly against involvement with al-Qa'ida, as can be inferred from polling and testimony[8] and from the number of instances in which al-Qa'ida activities have been reported to authorities with subsequent interception. Although intimidation plays no special role in the case of al-Qa'ida broadly, it can be very important in a particular context (al-Qa'ida is ruthless in this respect when necessary), as occurred in Iraq, for example. Although the organization has many would-be jihadis offering up their services and seeks to maintain a small vanguard rather than (at this time) build a mass movement, we also highlight mobilizing mechanisms and means because al-Qa'ida has proven itself exceptionally capable in this regard, despite highly disruptive counterterrorism activities.

At the bottom of the figure, we highlight unacceptable group behavior because it seems apparent from polls and other sources that al-Qa'ida has antagonized a good portion of its potential support base with attacks that have killed many Muslims (e.g., the Riyadh attack in 2003) and with religious rules that appeal to some but are seen as barbaric by others.

Let us now assess in much more detail the aspects of the factor tree stimulated by social movement theory—i.e., the left-most branch of Figure 3.1 labeled "Effectiveness of Organization." The next section reviews al-Qa'ida discourse over time, structuring the review around the items in that branch of the factor tree.

Effectiveness of the Organization: Public Support Through the Lens of Social Movement Theory

Our motivation for the substructure of the factor "Effectiveness of Organization" was the work in recent years of a number of scholars who have sought to apply social movement theory to the field of Islamist activism, with fruitful results. In analyses of Islamist activism ranging from the Lebanese Shi'a Hezbollah movement to the Muslim

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[8]   The decline over a decade of "confidence in Usama bin Ladin" has been reported in the Pew Research polling (Horowitz, 2009; Pew Global Attitudes Key Indicators Database, 2011). It can be seen as an imperfect proxy for support of al-Qa'ida.

Brotherhood and al-Qa'ida and its Salafi-jihadi trend,[9] these scholars have generally viewed leadership and decisionmaking in these organizations as more politically pragmatic and rational than ideologically doctrinaire: Group leaders attempt to promote their goals (survival, of course, being the preeminent one) while adapting to the opportunities and constraints they face and manipulating the ideologically based frames, narratives symbols, and appeals to competing identities they believe are most likely to resonate, persuade, and mobilize additional support for their cause, thereby enhancing organizational resources and capabilities. Islamist groups not only contest the state but also compete for adherents, in part based on the appeal of their ideology and doctrine (Wiktorowicz, undated).

The case of al-Qa'ida Central, the terrorist organization led by the late Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri, is quite different in many respects because ideology is at the core, rather than merely an instrument to be used. However, ideology can be malleable for tactical purposes. Al-Qa'ida Central is also a natural case to look at because of its inherent importance in today's events and because it is an example of terrorist organization that has sought quite consciously to create a movement by building public support within the Muslim world, especially among Arab Sunni Muslims, and to compete for adherents with other Islamist trends, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. While al-Qa'ida has generally failed in its efforts to rally the Muslim world under its banner, it nonetheless provides an instructive case of how that organization has sought to balance the requirements of its ideology and doctrine with the need for pragmatism in perpetuating its movement. In the following sections, we discuss in turn all of the elements of "Effectiveness of Organization" in Figure 3.1.

Leadership. Al-Qa'ida Central has promoted two main strategic objectives: one unrealistically ambitious and quixotic, the other sur-

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[9]   Excellent applications of social movement theory to Islamist groups include Vierges, 1997; Kalyvas, 1999; Wickham, 2002; Hafez, 2003; Hafez and Wiktorowicz, 2004; Wiktorowicz, undated, 2005c; Bayat, 2005; al-Rasheed, 2006; Snow and Byrd, 2007; Karagiannis, 2009; and Olesen, 2009. For good summaries of work in this area, see Wiktorowicz, 2004a, 2004b; and Meijer, 2005.

prisingly modest in nature, but both flowing from al-Qa'ida's Salafi-jihadi ideological worldview, which is described in the next section.

Al-Qa'ida's more ambitious objective is the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate as it existed in the years following the death of the Prophet Muhammad.[10] To accomplish this aim, al-Qa'ida reckoned that it would be impossible to overthrow existing regimes in the Muslim world as long as the United States served as their protector. Accordingly, in the latter half of the 1990s, al-Qa'ida developed a strategy that promoted attacks on "the far enemy" (i.e., the United States) in the hope that the United States could be compelled to withdraw from the Muslim world. Thus, al-Qa'ida calculated, the United States' local client regimes would be left vulnerable to overthrow by insurrections inspired and led by al-Qa'ida, clearing the way toward establishment of Islamic emirates and, ultimately, the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate (Gerges, 2005).[11]

While bin Ladin's initial call to jihad in August 1996 was aimed at expelling U.S. influence from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula,[12] by the time of the World Islamic Front statement in February 1998, bin Ladin, along with a number of other jihadi leaders, was calling for the expulsion of U.S. influence from the entire Muslim world and for attacks on Americans wherever they might be found (World Islamic Front, 1998).[13]

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[10]   As described in al-Qa'ida's constitutional charter, for example, the goals of al-Qa'ida are: "The victory of the mighty religion of Allah, the establishment of an Islamic Regime and the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate, God willing" (Combating Terrorism Center, "Al-Qaida: Constitutional Charter, Rules, and Regulations," 2002).

[11]   As a practical matter, al-Qa'ida has promoted the emergence of Islamic emirates in ungoverned territories, in the apparent hope that they can later be stitched together into an Islamic Caliphate. Examples include Iraq and Yemen. An important strategic document detailing strategies for establishing "zones of savagery" is Abu Bakr Naji's *The Management of Savagery*, translation in McCants, 2006.

[12]   See bin Ladin, 1996. By this time, U.S. troops had been in Saudi Arabia for six years since they originally arrived in August 1990 following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This appears to have been bin Ladin's principal grievance during this period.

[13]   In addition to bin Ladin, signatories included Ayman al-Zawahiri, amir of the Jihad Group in Egypt; Abu-Yasir Rifa'i Ahmad Taha, a leader of the [Egyptian] Islamic Group;

Accordingly, in the years leading up to 2001, the roster of al-Qa'ida attacks grew,[14] in an apparent effort to raise the scale of these attacks to the point where the United States would be compelled to invade Muslim lands with large-scale military forces.[15] The apparent desirability of a U.S. intervention in Muslim lands flowed from al-Qa'ida leaders' expectation that in reaction to any U.S. intervention, large numbers of Muslims could be easily mobilized into defensive jihad under al-Qa'ida's banner.[16] According to an April 2002 statement by al-Qa'ida, for example:

> After study and deliberation, we have found that operations like this [the 9/11 attacks] are what will return its glory to the ummah [Muslim nation] and convince the oppressive enemy of the rights of the Islamic community.
>
> By means of this document we send a message to America and those behind it. We are coming, by the will of Allah almighty, no matter what America does. It will never be safe from the fury of

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Shaykh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan; and Fazlul Rahman, amir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh. For an analysis, see Ranstorp, 1998, pp. 321–330.

[14] The U.S. Government has identified al-Qa'ida as the party responsible for four attacks on U.S. interests prior to the 9/11 attacks: the attempted bombing of U.S. troops in Aden, Yemen, in December 1992; the shoot down of U.S. helicopters in Mogadishu, Somalia, in October 1993; the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and the October 12, 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* in the port of Aden, Yemen (U.S. Department of State, 2003, pp. 118–119). This report also lists a number of attempted attacks that were disrupted.

[15] This view is somewhat more apparent in Ayman al-Zawahiri's thinking than in bin Ladin's, as the latter is sometimes described as believing that, based upon the U.S. experience in Somalia, the U.S. would balk at a large-scale military invasion in Muslim lands. See al-Tawil, 2010.

[16] To greatly simplify, defensive jihad is generally considered an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) of Muslims whose lands have been invaded, and an obligation of Muslims in neighboring lands if those who are invaded are incapable of defending themselves. As Quintan Wiktorowicz (2005a, p. 83) has noted: "Defending the faith-based community against external aggression is considered a just cause par excellence" and is a "widely accepted notion." In its jurisprudential argumentation and apologetics, al-Qa'ida has sought to extend and universalize the individual obligation for defensive jihad to mobilize the entire Muslim community.

the Muslims. America is the one who began the war, and it will lose the battle by the permission of Allah almighty. (Al-Qa'ida, 2002)

Al-Qa'ida Central leadership figure Mustafa Abu al-Yazid restated this basic strategy in an interview with Al-Jazeera in June 2009:

The organization's strategy in the future is similar to its strategy in the past; namely, hitting the Americans who are the head of the snake and the great evil. This can be achieved by proceeding with operations on the already open fronts, opening new fronts in a way that meets the interests of Islam and Muslims, and increasing and doubling military operations that can drain the American enemy in terms of economy and finance, as well as marching toward Bayt al-Maqdis [Jerusalem]. Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, may God reward him, specified the practical steps that we intend to carry out. This will be carried out by all mujahidin, and not only the Al-Qa'ida Organization. We will continue our incitement to the Nation of Islam until we militarize it and place it behind the commanders of jihad and the nation's truthful religious scholars, God willing. [17]

Put another way, once it managed to lure the United States into intervening in Muslim lands, al-Qa'ida's strategy was to bleed the United States, raising the costs in blood and treasure to the point where the United States would withdraw its military forces and influence from the Muslim world, and al-Qa'ida could advance on Jerusalem.[18]

Al-Qa'ida's second objective has been far less grand: to simply keep the spirit of jihadi Salafism alive and inspire enough new adherents to this radical strain of Islamic thought to secure the continua-

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[17] Interview with Mustafa Abu al-Yazid in Zaydan, 2009. It bears mentioning that al-Qa'ida and Taliban propaganda frequently draw parallels between the mujahiddin's earlier victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan, and the current U.S.-NATO intervention.

[18] It bears noting that as a practical matter, al-Qa'ida's affiliates in Iraq and other regions generally have been more focused on attacking the "near enemy"—local regimes, security forces, and even civilian populations—than on the U.S. "far enemy." On this point, see Hamitouche, 2007.

tion of al-Qa'ida's vanguard movement with enough committed muja-hiddin to keep up the fight against al-Qa'ida's enemies.[19] This second objective of survival became far more urgent with the post-9/11 over-throw of the Taliban and al-Qa'ida's loss of sanctuary in Afghanistan, and in light of the challenges faced by al-Qa'ida both in the Pakistani tribal regions and in the lands of its various regional affiliates.

As described above, al-Qa'ida assessed that its objectives of a caliphate could only be achieved through attacks on the U.S. "far enemy" that would lure the United States into a military intervention in Muslim lands, lead to a worldwide uprising of Muslims against the United States, and, ultimately, force the U.S. to withdraw its support for local regimes. Instead, following the 9/11 attacks, al-Qa'ida faced a triple catastrophe. First, it lost its sanctuary and infrastructure in Afghanistan, dashing hopes that Mullah Muhammad 'Umar's Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan could serve as the nucleus of a future Islamic Caliphate. Second, al-Qa'ida failed to mobilize the Muslim world into jihad against the United States under its banner.[20] Third, al-Qa'ida

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[19] Bin Ladin has stated, for example:

> When sufficiency has been reached—when few thousands of good, healthy, and disci-plined young men who love Allah and His messenger [emigate]—we will be the first to say to the Arabs and Muslims: "Sufficiency has been reached." Do you know the number we want? Do you know the percentage of Muslims we want? We want one man from every 100,000 Muslims." (Quoted in al-Sahab, 2006)

[20] Some statements and communications at this time described the situation as nakba ("catastrophe"), an Arabic phrase generally reserved by Islamists to refer to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

In June 2002, al-Qa'ida military planner Sayf al-Adl offered the following particularly bitter review of events since the U.S. military response to 9/11:

> Stop rushing into action and take time out to consider all the fatal and successive disas-ters that have afflicted us during a period of no more than six months. Those observing our affairs wonder what has happened to us.

> My beloved brother, stop all foreign actions, stop sending people to captivity, stop devis-ing new operations, regardless of whether orders come or do not come from Abu Abdalla (TN: Bin Ladin). Our adherents have lost confidence in us and in our ability to manage the action, and they wonder, what has befallen us(?).

> My hope is that you come to us so we can consider and reorganize the matter so that you will not be solely brought to account, whether before your brethren or whether for gen-

faced a worldwide crackdown on its members and supporting networks by intelligence and security services.

Most of those in al-Qa'ida Central's leadership who were not killed or captured in U.S. Operation Enduring Freedom appear to have fled Afghanistan,[21] with bin Ladin, al-Zawahiri, and others in al-Qa'ida's management council reportedly fleeing to Pakistan's tribal regions, and much of the membership of its mujahiddin shura council fleeing to Iran, where many reportedly remain in Iranian custody. In addition to losing its training camps and other infrastructure in Afghanistan,[22] al-Qa'ida's communications, recruiting, fundraising, and other networks also were disrupted, which reduced al-Qa'ida Central's ability to plan and conduct operations abroad.

While simultaneously attempting to reconstitute its capabilities for conducting attacks abroad from its presumed sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal regions, al-Qa'ida Central undertook a range of other strategic actions to effect a reversal of fortune and to better promote its Salafi-jihadi program in the face of the heightened threat to the movement (see Cook, 2003). Among the more important of these actions were the following:

- *Decentralization.* Constrained in its ability to plan and direct attacks against the West from its new sanctuary, al-Qa'ida promoted ideologically compatible regional jihadi organizations, including branded affiliates, and "home-grown terrorism" that could extend al-Qa'ida's operational reach, complicate Western counterterrorism efforts to prevent additional al-Qa'ida terror-

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eral evaluation by the Ummah's (TN: "nation's") wise men, who examine matters with disregard for the cheers of the young men that blind our eyes to the path. (el-Adl, 2002)

[21] For example, Heghammer (2006) reports that several hundred Saudis who had joined bin Ladin's organization in Afghanistan are estimated to have returned to Saudi Arabia in early 2002, and many of these individuals helped to form the core of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

[22] In a mid-2003 letter to *Alsharq al-Awsat*, Sayf al-Adl estimated that around 350 "Afghan Arabs" had been killed in Afghanistan since the U.S. invasion, and around 180 had been captured. See West Point Combating Terrorism Center, "Saif al-Adel," undated, p. 7.

ist attacks,[23] and/or provide new seeds for the establishment of Islamic emirates.[24]

- *Use of the Media.* Generally denied access to mainstream mass media, al-Qa'ida Central established a media production organization (al-Sahab Media Production Institute) and a media distribution organization (al-Fajr Media Center) for audio, video, and written propaganda releases, as well as an Internet-based publication system that relied on al-Qa'ida-sympathetic Salafi-jihadi websites as the primary vehicle for reaching its audience.[25]

- *Exploiting the Opportunity of the Iraq Invasion.* Al-Qa'ida seized on the opportunity presented by the United States' shift to a war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2002–2003 by resurrecting its effort to mobilize Muslims into defensive jihad against another invasion of Muslim lands by a non-Muslim U.S. invader and by supporting the emergence of Salafi-jihadi resistance

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[23] Among al-Qa'ida's formally branded affiliates were: al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which was effectively destroyed by Saudi security forces by the middle of the last decade, but resurfaced in 2009 in a new, Yemeni-dominant form; al-Qa'ida in the Land of Kinanah (Egypt), an organization that appears to have existed only on paper, or the Internet; al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQLIM), which arose out of some of the more militant splinters of the Salafi-jihadi Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC); and, perhaps most famously, Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi's al-Qa'ida in the Lands of Mesopotamia, also known as al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI), which was later succeeded by the AQI front organization, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq. There also exists an al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan, which provides operational and other support to the Afghan Taliban, including fighting forces, military training, propaganda operations, and consultations "on all new developments and on the practical steps that we should take at every stage." See Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, interview with Al-Jazeera Television, June 21, 2009.

The November 2007 announcement of a merger of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) into al-Qa'ida appears to have had two aims. The first was to increase the visibility of "Libyan Afghans" in the al-Qa'ida Central organization, so as to boost the morale of al-Qa'ida's North African affiliates. Second, the announcement aimed to blunt the impact of the imminent release of doctrinal revisions by the LIFG leadership (held in Libyan prison) that would lead to a disavowal of al-Qa'ida's doctrinal interpretations of jihad.

[24] More recently, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula has released a glossy English-language magazine called *Inspire.* Both Anwar Awlaki and Sheikh Abu Basir Nasir al-Wuhaysi, an aide to bin Laden, were featured in the first issue.

[25] For excellent descriptions of al-Qa'ida's propaganda apparatus, see Kimmage and Ridolfo, 2007, and Kimmage, 2008.

organizations, including that led by the Jordanian Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi.[26] And with al-Qa'ida's vision of an Islamic Caliphate centered in Afghanistan in increasing doubt, al-Qa'ida also exploited the Iraq situation to promote a new, Arab-centric vision of the Islamic Caliphate, with Iraq serving as the nucleus of its aspirational caliphate and as al-Qa'ida Central's most important theater of jihad.

- *Modulating Ideology for Higher Purposes.* During the height of sectarian warfare in Iraq, al-Qa'ida Central's number two, Ayman al-Zawahiri, expressed concern about "the political angle" of al-Zarqawi's campaign and advised al-Zarqawi that his beheadings and killing of Shi'a Muslims—considered by Salafi-jihadis to be heretics, and therefore deserving of death—was eroding Muslim support for al-Qa'ida's movement and that the sectarian killings might put at risk al-Qa'ida leaders who were in Iranian custody.[27] In an excellent example of the interplay of al-Qa'ida ideology and strategic decisionmaking, al-Zawahiri urged al-Zarqawi to consider such factors in his actions, as long as they did not contravene the Salafi-jihadi interpretation of Islamic sharia law.[28]

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[26] Until his pledge of allegiance to bin Ladin in October 2004, and the rebranding of his organization to al-Qa'ida in the Land of the Two Rivers, al-Zarqawi led *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*, which roughly translates to the "Monotheism and Jihad Group."

[27] The al-Qa'ida figure named "Atiyah," likely Atiyah Abd al-Rahman al-Libi AKA Shaykh Atiyatallah, also wrote a December 2005 letter to al-Zarqawi that was considerably more critical of al-Zarqawi's failure to understand al-Qa'ida's broader strategic objective of attracting mass support among the wider Sunni community. See Combating Terrorism Center, "Letter Exposes New Leader in Al-Qa'ida High Command," 2006.

In an interesting example of pragmatism over doctrinal purity, Al-Zawahiri asked al-Zarqawi: "[D]o the brothers forget that we have more than one hundred prisoners—many of whom are from the leadership who are wanted in their countries—in the custody of the Iranians?" (Combating Terrorism Center, "Letter Exposes New Leader in Al-Qa'ida High Command," 2006).

[28] In his letter to al-Zarqawi, Al-Zawahiri urged that al-Zarqawi, within the range of what the *Salafi-jihadi* interpretation of Islamic sharia law considered permissible, avoid actions that would erode support:

> If we look at the two short-term goals, which are removing the Americans and establishing an Islamic emirate in Iraq, or a caliphate if possible, then, we will see that the strongest weapon which the mujahedeen enjoy—after the help and granting of success

- Moreover, following the Sunni Awakening movement that arose against al-Qa'ida—which occurred when the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), the successor organization to al-Zarqawi's al-Qa'ida in Iraq, was in obvious decline and the United States had announced a timetable for an orderly withdrawal of troops from Iraq and a shift to Afghanistan—al-Qa'ida Central announced its own shift in strategic focus from Iraq back to Afghanistan and, especially, Pakistan (al-Zawahiri, 2009).
- Meanwhile, after the siege of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad in July 2007, al-Qa'ida assessed that Pakistan was ripe for an al-Qa'ida-led Islamist rebellion. Bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida's shura council reportedly approved a strategy of fomenting an uprising in Pakistan, and al-Qa'ida developed organizational and other capabilities to destabilize Pakistan and promote a broader insurrection[29] and increased its propaganda messaging directed

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by God—is popular support from the Muslim masses in Iraq, and the surrounding Muslim countries. So, we must maintain this support as best we can, and we should strive to increase it, on the condition that striving for that support does not lead to any concession in the laws of the Sharia.

Therefore, the mujahed movement must avoid any action that the masses do not understand or approve, if there is no contravention of Sharia in such avoidance, and as long as there are other options to resort to, meaning we must not throw the masses—scant in knowledge—into the sea before we teach them to swim, relying for guidance in that on the saying of the Prophet to Umar bin al-Khattab: lest the people should say that Muhammad used to kill his Companions. (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2005)

[29] Following the storming of the Red Mosque in Islamabad, in July 2007, al-Qa'ida designated an Emir al-Khuruj ("emir of uprisings") to plan and coordinate operations that could foment a mass urban uprising against the Pakistani government. See Shahzad, 2008a, 2008b; and Sandee, 2009.

The second part of Shahzad's article (2008b) describes the interplay of strategic considerations and sharia (Islamic law) in the decision to undertake an uprising as follows:

Al-Qa'ida's shura makes all decisions, including the religious and strategic assessment of any project, for instance the decision to stage a khuruj [uprising] was approved by Bin Laden last year. The shura discussed the religious justification of khuruj and after long debate agreed it was essential for Pakistan. The religious requirements to launch khuruj include the appointment of an "amir of khuruj." According to sharia law, khuruj against rulers can only be launched when the chances of success are good. "It [khuruj] will be different from isolated attacks, rather it will be collective actions of revolt throughout

at Pakistanis. As of the end of 2010, however, al-Qa'ida had not achieved the goal of an uprising in Pakistan.[30] Nor had al-Qa'ida yet abandoned its vision of Iraq as the nucleus of an Islamic Caliphate and returned to its earlier vision of a caliphate emerging from within the Afghan-Pakistani theater.

As described earlier, group leaders also need to make choices regarding the mix of tactics—"action repertoires"—they will use to promote group objectives. Historically speaking, al-Qa'ida's action repertoire has been quite constrained, consisting generally, but not exclusively, of violent action. This violence has historically taken the form of al-Qa'ida's signature high-explosive attacks on various targets, whether truck bombs, bombs on aircraft, or use of aircraft as missiles. Nonetheless, al-Qa'ida reportedly also has considered operations involving chemicals or poison, and, as just discussed, in the case of Pakistan, it appears to have chosen to supplement its signature bombings with a campaign to orchestrate a mass uprising in Pakistan's cities. Al-Qa'ida's action repertoire also has included propaganda activities that aim to provide a steady stream of audio, video, and written messages to members of jihadi web forums and other al-Qa'ida sympathizers to exploit new developments, provide guidance, and boost morale.

Religious Ideology and Framing.

Ideology. Although it does not in and of itself provide a guide to al-Qa'ida's decisions and actions, because it serves as a preface to al-Qa'ida's strategic thought, a constraint on religiously permissible actions, and a source of sacred authority and narratives for its propaganda efforts, we begin with al-Qa'ida's Salafi-jihadi ideology.[31] As

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Pakistani cities. This is what khuruj is by strategy and according to the demands of sharia," [al-Qa'ida commander] Abu Haris said.

[30] Al-Qa'ida reportedly has been cooperating with other militant Pakistani groups in its destabilization efforts, but appears to have been checked by Pakistani security forces (Chishti, 2010).

[31] As Michael Doran has observed (2002a, p. 178):

When it comes to matters related to politics and war, al-Qaeda maneuvers around its dogmas with alacrity…In general terms, however, the needs of the revolution require al-Qaeda to preserve itself to fight another day. The gravity of the situation requires

described by an al-Qa'ida leader in a recent edition of al-Qa'ida's jihadi magazine *Vanguards of Khurasan*:

> What they call ideology for us is belief and faith and a set of criteria, values, and religious concepts that were brought by Islam and which are enshrined in a Muslim who accepts God Almighty as a Lord, Muhammad (prayers and peace be upon him) as a prophet and a messenger, Islam as a religion, one who accepts existence and life, the world and the Hereafter, and the relationship between things, all these cannot be separated from what they call the hearts and minds [of Muslims] because they have taken over the hearts and minds.[32]

Many of the foundations of al-Qa'ida's strategic thinking are to be found in the ideology, creed, and methodology of Salafi-jihadi thought, a conservative and militant jihadi strand of a puritanical, literalist, and doctrinaire current of Islam called Salafism.[33] Unlike most mainstream Muslim currents, which tend to define Muslims simply as those who make the profession of faith (*shahada*) and subscribe to the other Pillars of Islam, the militant Salafi creed promotes a narrower view of who is a Muslim, holding that the only true Muslims are those who practice Islam in the Salafi way, ostensibly as it was practiced by Muhammad and his followers in Medina, which they view as a model and template for religious governance in a future Islamic Caliphate that restores Islam to its past glory. Thus, al-Qa'ida describes itself as follows:

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al-Qaeda to pursue its interests by any means available; conventional morality impinges on its political thought only with regard to its utility in manipulating others. Al-Qaeda's long-term goals are set by its fervent devotion to a radical religious ideology, but in its short-term behavior, it is a rational political actor operating according to the dictates of realpolitik.

[32] Commentary by Shaykh Atiyatallah in Sadiq, 2010. Shaykh Atiyatallah is believed to be the pen name of the al-Qa'ida Central figure named Atiyah Abd al-Rahman al-Libi.

[33] For overviews of various trends that comprise Salafism, see Wiktorowicz, 2006; Blanchard, 2006; and Abdelhaleem, 2004.

> A faction of the people of Mohammad . . . its beliefs are the beliefs
> of the Sunni people and the community as it is understood by the
> virtuous path (May Allah be pleased with them). The Jihad is
> established on a path of change so that God's words will be high-
> est and it strives to agitate toward this and to prepare for this and
> to pursue this operationally (as possible) towards that path.[34]

Salafi-jihadi thought relies on theological and jurispruden-
tial doctrines that enjoin the separation of—and encourage conflict
between—Muslims and non-Muslims.[35] This highly exclusionary view
of Islam is coupled with the ready availability of doctrines that can be
used to declare other Muslims to be apostates or unbelievers and to
justify violence against them.[36] Finally, Salafi-jihadis embrace the view
that violent jihad is a pillar of faith in its own right, and one that is
second in importance only to belief (*iman*). [37]

Taken together, this combustible mix of doctrinal predisposi-
tions toward violence creates a high potential for both sectarian and
intra-sect conflict. Its ideological and doctrinal underpinnings also set
it apart from other Sunni groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood–
affiliated Hamas and Shi'a Hezbollah. This tendency to exclusion and
violence is captured well in an April 2006 statement by Abu Mus'ab
al-Zarqawi during his campaign against Iraqi civilians:

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[34] See Combating Terrorism Center, "Interior Organization," 2002.

[35] Salafi-jihadis tend toward a particular literal reading of the Qur'an and the traditions and
sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (the sunnah and hadith) and the opportunistic employ-
ment of the theological and jurisprudential reasoning of hard-line Salafi scholars such as
that found in Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's writings on the "nullifiers of Islam." Hard-
line Salafis frequently promote the doctrine known as *al-wala' wa al-bara'* ("loyalty and
disavowal") to promote an insular community of believers and to justify violence against
non-Muslims.

[36] For example, Salafi-jihadis sometimes use the doctrine called *takfir*, i.e., a declaration
that another Muslim is an apostate.

[37] Non-Salafi-jihadi doctrines frequently promote a focus on a "greater jihad" that involves
the struggle within the individual toward piety and correct action over a "lesser jihad" of
individual struggle to promote Islam in the larger world. Moreover, in non-Salafi-jihadi
traditions, "jihad" can take many more forms, ranging from "jihad of the pen" or "jihad of
the tongue" to violent armed conflict. In this chapter, we generally focus on the Salafi-jihadi
focus on jihad as violent armed conflict.

> We believe that any government that is formed in Iraq now regardless of who its members are, whether they are from the malicious rejectionists, the secularist Kurdish Zionists, or the collaborators that are falsely considered Sunnis, is a government that is an agent, collaborating, and allied with the crusaders. (BBC News, 2006)

Frames and Framing. The social movement theory lens also focuses the analyst on the ways in which movement leaders attempt to frame their arguments to various audiences to promote acceptance and resonance of their messages and to inspire action.

Al-Qa'ida's frames and framing processes generally target two audiences: First, they are used to promote al-Qa'ida's religiously inspired ideological package and program to attract and mobilize new members and supporters from within the community of Sunni Muslims; second, they are used to maintain the cohesion and morale of its jihadi cadres. Like many other Islamist terrorist movements, al-Qa'ida's framing can be said to consist of diagnostic frames, prognostic (or prescriptive) frames, and motivational frames (Snow and Byrd, 2007).

While appealing to historical and cultural identities, grievances and motives in its interpretations of contemporary events, al-Qa'ida attempts to assert the scriptural basis for its larger program and to contest the interpretations of mainstream and establishment scholars. Accordingly, al-Qa'ida firmly roots its narrative, apologetics, and propaganda in (1) a highly selective—and distinctly Salafi-jihadi—reading of Islam's most sacred texts, the Qur'an, and the traditions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (the sunnah and hadiths) and (2) an equally selective employment of theological and jurisprudential arguments developed by hard-line Salafi and Salafi-jihadi scholars.[38] Put another way, al-Qa'ida is engaged in an ideological war over the

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[38] Among the scholars who are associated with the hard-line Salafi and Salafi-jihadi schools are Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal (d. 855), founder of the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh); Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328); Muhammad Ibn abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), the founder of Saudi Wahhabism; Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966); Syed Abul a'ala Maududi (d. 1979); Abd al-Salam Faraj (d. 1982); and Abdullah 'Azzam (d. 1989). Prominent contemporary Salafi-jihadi scholars include Hamid al-Ali, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, and Nasir al-Fahd.

proper interpretation of Islam's sacred texts and the definition of what it means to be a good Muslim, and al-Qa'idais engaged in "framing contests" with others within the Salafi-jihadi, Salafi, Sunni, and larger Muslim communities for adherents to various competing interpretations of Islam and Islamist programs.[39]

Thomas Hegghammer describes al-Qa'ida's basic narrative frame as follows:

> Osama bin Laden's central theme is the suffering and humiliation of the Muslim nation (the umma) at the hands of non-Muslims. He conveys a pan-Islamic nationalist world view according to which the umma is facing an existential threat from outside forces led by the U.S. Bin Laden's principal rhetorical device is the enumeration of symbols of suffering—examples of situations where Muslims have been humiliated or oppressed by non-Muslims, such as in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir and, above all, his homeland, Saudi Arabia, where the U.S. military "occupies" the holy places of Islam. The only way to defend against this onslaught, he argues, is to confront America militarily. (Hegghammer, 2008)

Al-Qa'ida's ideological package, frame, or narrative thus includes a diagnosis of the Muslim world's present weakened condition that, in many or perhaps most respects, differs little from many other Islamist movements in laying blame for the Muslim world's condition on the United States, Israel, and un-Islamic rulers of Muslim nations.[40]

Although it has done very little itself to address the Palestinian situation, al-Qa'ida has reckoned that Palestine is the theme most

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For penetrating analyses of the Salafi and Salafi-jihadi movements, see Wiktorowicz, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006. On al-Qa'ida's framing efforts, see Wiktorowicz and Kaltner, 2003, and Wiktorowicz, 2004c.

[39] See Doran, 2002a, 2002b; and Wiktorowicz, 2004c.

[40] The notion that framing includes both diagnosis and prescription is consistent with what Benford and Snow (2000) seemed to have had in mind when they wrote that

> Collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change. (p. 615)

likely to enrage and mobilize Muslims into armed jihad.[41] Accordingly, al-Qa'ida frequently cites the catastrophe and Muslim humiliation associated with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent plight of the Palestinians under Israeli domination. But al-Qa'ida also offers a litany of other historical instances of Muslim humiliation and defeat, from 1924, when the last caliphate (the Ottoman empire) was abolished by the Turkish parliament, completing the establishment of a secular, Western-style government in Istanbul, to salient examples from the contemporary era, e.g., 1990, when the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia allowed U.S. military forces to deploy to the land of the Two Holy Places, and more recent U.S. military interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

While its diagnoses of Muslims' current condition may be somewhat anodyne from an Islamist perspective, al-Qa'ida promotes a specific transnational Salafi-jihadi prescription: jihad as armed struggle (mostly mass-casualty bomb attacks) against the movement's many enemies, especially the "Crusader" U.S. "far enemy," but also against local apostate regimes that comprise its "near enemy," and, of course, "Zionist" Israel.[42]

Al-Qa'ida's regional affiliates also have sought to promote a narrative of Sunnis under attack. In Iraq, for example, Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi undertook attacks on Iraqi Shi'a to promote a backlash against Sunnis and then attempted to position his group as the ultimate defender of Sunni identity and honor in the face of the rise of the Iraqi Shi'a.[43]

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[41] See, for example, the serialization of Ayman al-Zawahiri's book (al Zawahiri, 2001) and Usama bin Ladin on practical steps for the liberation of Palestine (bin Ladin, 2009).

[42] Other Islamist groups promote other prescriptions. The Muslim Brotherhood, for example, prescribes capture of the state through peaceful political activity, while the UK-based al-Muhajiroun prescribes assassination of un-Islamic rulers. On the Muhajiroun, see Wiktorowicz, undated, 2005c.

[43] In a letter to bin Ladin intercepted by the Kurds in January 2004, al-Zarqawi wrote (al-Zarqawi, 2004):

> These in our opinion are the key to change. I mean that targeting and hitting them [i.e., Iraqi Shi'a] in [their] religious, political, and military depth will provoke them to show the Sunnis their rabies . . . and bare the teeth of the hidden rancor working in their

As suggested in the earlier discussion of al-Zawahiri's letter to al-Zarqawi, however, and as evidenced in available public opinion survey results, al-Qa'ida Central affiliates' use of violence has primarily been against fellow Muslims[44] and has played quite poorly in the Muslim world: Rather than inspiring confidence in and support for al-Qa'ida, most survey results suggest that Muslims have generally soured on al-Qa'ida's movement on account of its extreme violence targeting Muslims.[45]

For example, according to Gallup Organization polling in 2005–2006,[46] 7 percent of the Muslim respondents surveyed at that time both viewed the United States unfavorably and said that they thought that the 9/11 attacks were "completely" justified (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007, p. 69).[47] Gallup identified this group as "politically radicalized," with extreme views that made them the likeliest base of support and potential recruitment for terrorism. But even within this group, only

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breasts. If we succeed in dragging them into the arena of sectarian war, it will become possible to awaken the inattentive Sunnis as they feel imminent danger and annihilating death at the hands of these Sabeans.

After months of negotiations with al-Qa'ida Central, in October 2004 al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to bin Ladin and renamed his organization *Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* ("Al-Qa'ida Organization in Mesopotamia," also known as "Al-Qa'ida in Iraq").

[44] For an accounting of the victims of al-Qa'ida terrorism, see Helfstein, Abdullah, and al-Obaidi, 2009.

[45] See, for example, the series of surveys of Muslim countries conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes project and the Gallup Organization. Pew's results suggest a general decline in support for suicide terrorism and confidence in Usama bin Ladin, and substantial proportions who expressed concern about Islamic extremism in their country, and in the world. See Pew Global Attitudes Key Indicators Database (2011). Civilian casualties are hugely important in influencing support or opposition for one side or another in an insurgency. See Larson and Savych, 2006, Their and Ranjibar, 2008, and Condra et al., 2010.

[46] In 2005–2006, Gallup surveyed 35 countries with Muslim majorities or substantial proportions of Muslims, representing 90 percent of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims. See Esposito and Mogahed, 2007, p. xi.

[47] Gallup estimated that 7 percent of those surveyed would amount to about 91 million Muslims (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007, p. 97).

13 percent said that attacks on civilians were "completely justified."[48] Put another way, attacks on civilians—especially Muslim civilians—do not play well even within al-Qa'ida's presumed base.

Importantly, the al-Qa'ida movement, and the Salafi-jihadi movement as a whole, have been rife with contention, debate, and rancor over doctrinal and other issues.[49] Perhaps less well recognized is that al-Qa'ida's efforts to promote its violent agenda have not gone unanswered in its "framing contest" with its ideological competitors, and strong public criticism of al-Qa'ida's program has forced it to expend substantial time and energy defending its ideology, program, and actions.

Indeed, a number of heavyweights in the Salafi-jihadi, Salafi, and Sunni Muslim spheres can now be counted among al-Qa'ida's harshest critics. Among al-Qa'ida Central's Salafi-jihadi critics are the former Egyptian Islamic Jihad ideologue Sayyid Imam al-Sharif,[50] former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) leadership figure Nu'man bin 'Uthman,[51] and even former members of the senior ranks of al-Qa'ida

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[48] Among "moderates," i.e., those who felt the 9/11 attacks were not justified, 60 percent viewed the United States unfavorably, while 40 percent held pro-U.S. views, but only 1 percent thought attacks on civilians were "completely justified" (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007, pp. 69–70).

[49] Jihadi web forums are the locus of lively debates over al-Qa'ida's doctrine, strategy, and actions. For good reviews of divisions within al-Qa'ida, see the Combating Terrorism Center's *Cracks in the Foundation* (2007) and *Self-Inflicted Wounds* (2010).

Al-Qa'ida also engages in contentious debates over doctrinal and other issues with other, e.g., nationalist trends in the Salafi-jihadi movement, such as the Islamic Army of Iraq, as well as non-Salafi trends, such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

[50] Also known as Abd al-Qader bin 'Abd Al-'Aziz and Dr. Fadl. Sayyid Imam was the author of a classic jihadi book called *al-'Umda fi I'dad al-'Udda* (*The Essentials of Making Ready [for Jihad]*) that was used by al-Qa'ida in its training program. In late 2007, he released an extended recantation of his earlier doctrinal analysis of jihad titled *Wathiqat Tarshid Al-'Aml Al-Jihadi fi Misr w'Al-'Alam* (*Rationalizing Jihad in Egypt and the World*) that greatly circumscribed the conditions under which jihad was permissible. Sayyid Imam's *votre face* on the permissibility of jihad sent shockwaves through the Salafi-jihadi community and led to a public dispute with al-Zawahiri. For a summary, see Wright, 2008.

[51] Bin 'Uthman was among the Salafi-jihadi movement figures attending a conference in Kandahar in the summer of 2000 who opposed bin Ladin's program of attacking the United States due to the likelihood that the movement would thereafter be destroyed. In recent

Central, including former al-Qa'ida spokesman Sulemian Abu Ghaith[52] and rumored former head of al-Qa'ida's Military Committee, Sayf al-Adl.[53] In addition, the popular Saudi Salafi cleric Salman al-Awda and the popular Muslim Brotherhood–affiliated Yusuf al-Qaradawi also have criticized the religious and jurisprudential foundations of al-Qa'ida's jihad.[54]

As a result of these doctrinal and other attacks by leading Muslim clerics and other public intellectuals, coupled with declining support

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years, he has been a vocal critic of bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida's as a result of the calamities that have befallen the Muslim world since 9/11. Bin 'Uthman's critique has generally been more strategic in nature than religious. See for example, "Former Libyan Fighting Group Leader Responds to the Announcement That His Group Has Joined Al-Qa'ida. Bin-Uthman to Al-Zawahiri: Dissolve 'the Islamic State of Iraq' and Halt Your Operations in Both Arab and Western Countries," 2007, and bin 'Uthman, 2010.

In a major ideological blow to al-Qa'ida, bin 'Uthman also helped to broker an agreement between the Libyan government and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group in which the LIFG revised their doctrine and renounced jihad in exchange for freedom.

[52] See Shahzad, 2010b, and Said, 2010. Abu Ghaith is the author of a book titled *Twenty Guidelines on the Path of Jihad*, which was released on November 15, 2010. Abu Ghaith's and bin 'Uthman's principal line of attack on al-Qa'ida is the charge that after pledging allegiance (*baya'*) to Mullah 'Umar, bin Ladin violated Islamic law by failing to abide by Mullah 'Umar's instructions not to attack the United States and that bin Ladin therefore deserves punishment. Giving it even greater weight, Abu Ghaith's book includes a preface written by the former head of al-Qa'ida's shariah committee, Abu Hafs al Muritani. Both Abu Ghaith and Abu Hafs are believed to have opposed the 9/11 attacks because it constituted a breach of shariah obligations, as just described.

[53] In late 2010, al-Adl reportedly called upon al-Qa'ida's leaders to conduct a comprehensive review of the operations al-Qa'ida has carried out, including the 9/11 attacks, for the purpose of "assessing the past stage, learning the lessons, and drawing up a strategy for the future" (see Isma'il, 2011, and Said, 2011). In an early November 2010 letter to the Cairo newspaper *Al-Yawm Al-Sabi*, al-Adl denied any remaining ties to al-Qa'ida, but some reporting suggests that al-Adl may now be in North Waziristan and in command of al-Qa'ida's international operations. See al-Mamluk, 2010, and Shahzad, 2010a.

[54] In September 2007, Saudi former Sahwa cleric Salman al-Awda published an open letter to bin Ladin calling upon him to repent for his actions (al-Awda, 2007). For his part, in July 2009, Yusuf al-Qaradawi published a book titled *Fiqh al-Jihad* (*The Jurisprudence of Jihad*) that directly repudiated al-Qa'ida's Salafi-jihadi interpretation of scripture and jurisprudence. The book was serialized in a seven-part series in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Masry al-Youm* in July 2009. George Washington University professor Marc Lynch described Qaradawi as "probably the single most influential living Sunni Islamist figure" (Lynch, 2009).

from within the Muslim world over civilian casualties, al-Qa'ida's leaders and ideologues increasingly have been pushed into a defensive position and have felt compelled to defend their Salafi-jihadi doctrine and to justify civilian casualties resulting from its operations in its messaging.[55] Al-Qa'ida Central also has developed a stable of religious scholars and ideologues who can play the role of al-Qa'ida's public intellectuals and help to shoulder the growing burden of providing the necessary doctrinal apologetics that are needed to minimize blowback.[56]

These doctrinal debates and ideological revisions—especially those involving former jihadi clerics and leaders—are perhaps most consequential for the morale of jihadis and jihadi sympathizers who would be more likely to be swayed by criticisms that al-Qa'ida's reading of Islamic doctrine is aberrant. In any event, these growing debates within al-Qa'ida's movement and between movement ideologues and others represent a persistent vulnerability for al-Qa'ida.[57]

Resource Mobilization. To ensure the continued health and growth of the movement, al-Qa'ida seeks to mobilize and increase its

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[55] For example, in October 2007, bin Ladin disavowed the "mistakes" committed by al-Qa'ida members in Iraq that had claimed the lives of innocent civilians (bin Ladin, 2007). In late 2007 and early 2008, al-Zawahiri conducted an "open interview" in which interested parties could send their questions to him via jihadi websites; among the more prominent topics al-Zawahiri was asked to address were al-Qa'ida's reading of Islamic doctrine and its explanations for civilian casualties (al-Sahab Media Institute, 2008a, 2008b).

In March 2008, al-Zawahiri countered Sayyid Imam's revisions with a book of his own, titled *The Exoneration: A Treatise on the Exoneration of the Nation of the Pen and Sword of the Denigrating Charge of Being Irresolute and Weak*. Sayyid Imam and al-Zawahiri continued to trade missives after the first round.

[56] In addition to bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri, among the most prominent of these figures are Azzam al-Amriki (also known as Adam Gadahn), Abu Yahya al-Libi, Shaykh Atiyatallah, and, until his death in 2010, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid.

[57] The importance of popular intellectuals in promoting social movements is detailed in Baud and Rutten, 2005. In the al-Qa'ida and Islamist context, see Wiktorowicz, 2004c, but the topic also has been discussed in the work of Thomas Hegghammer, Lawrence Wright, Marc Lynch, Jarret Brachman, and some others. The importance of opinion leaders in the diffusion of attitudes is a well-accepted principle in American public opinion analyses. See Neuman, 1986; Brody, 1991; and Zaller, 1992. The crucial role of local European leaders in shaping attitudes was demonstrated in Egner, 2010. Geddes and Zaller (1989) showed that support for the authoritarian regime in Brazil followed the basic model described in the American public opinion literature.

organizational resources, primarily in the service of mass-casualty terrorist attacks but also for specific functions such as propaganda, fundraising, recruitment, indoctrination, planning, training, and conduct of terrorist and military operations.[58] The following is a brief summary of some of the different sorts of networks that have constituted al-Qa'ida Central's organizational resources.

Leadership Networks. Notwithstanding the toll of drone attacks that have thinned al-Qa'ida's leadership ranks, one category of resources available to al-Qa'ida Central is the leadership cadres that have been cultivated by bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri, which have helped to enhance the robustness of the movement beyond their leadership.[59] These leadership cadres have included operational commanders, such as Abu Layth al-Libi, Abdullah al-Sa'id, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, and Ilyas Kashmiri; strategists, such as Sayf al-Adl, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, and Muhammad Khalil al-Hukaymah;[60] and ideologues, public intellectuals, and propagandists, such as 'Azzam al-Amriki (the American Adam Gadahn), Abu Yahya al-Libi, Shaykh Atiyatallah, and Mansur al-Shami.[61]

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[58] As of summer 2010, official estimates suggest that perhaps 50–100 al-Qa'ida personnel are deployed alongside Afghan Taliban forces in Afghanistan, while 300–500 personnel are in the Pakistani tribal regions. Other al-Qa'ida cadres are in Iraq and Yemen as part of the branded al-Qa'ida affiliates there, and al-Qa'ida cadres are reported to be in Somalia advising and assisting the Salafi-jihadi al-Shabaab, the Muslim Youth Movement.

[59] According to the former Libyan Islamic Fighting Group leadership figure Nu'man bin 'Uthman (2007), as of late 2007, al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad faction dominated al-Qa'ida's decisionmaking. In recent years, in light of the death and capture of many senior Egyptian cadres, al-Qa'ida has made notable efforts to promote so-called "Libyan Afghans," such as Abu Layth al-Libi, Abu Yahya al-Libi, Abdullah Sa'id al-Libi, and 'Atiyah Abd al-Rahman al-Libi (also known as Shaykh Atiyatallah), into important operational and propaganda positions. See Hamitouche, 2007. In addition, Kashmiris such as Ilias Kashmiri have assumed important operational roles in the al-Qa'ida organization: Kashmiri reportedly is commander of al-Qa'ida's elite "Brigade 313."

[60] Recent reporting suggests that Sayf al-Adl was released from Iranian custody and may have rejoined al-Qa'ida cadres in North Waziristan to resume command of al-Qa'ida's operations. See Mahmud al-Mamluk, 2010.

[61] In addition, al-Qa'ida has established networks with the leaderships of its regional affiliates, and reportedly maintains contacts with former al-Qa'ida jihadis in various countries.

Fundraising Networks.[62] Following 9/11, a number of al-Qa'ida funding networks were effectively cut off, forcing the organization to develop new mechanisms for funding its activities.[63] The topic of finances also has been a recurring one in al-Qa'ida Central's internal correspondence,[64] and in recent years the organization's appeals for "money jihad" appear to have become increasingly shrill over time as a result of al-Qa'ida Central's apparently deteriorating financial condition.[65] The current sources of the al-Qa'ida network's funding are quite

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[62] A wide range of analyses of al-Qa'ida's financing are available, including Roth, Greenburg, and Wille, 2004; Kohlmann, 2006; Council on Foreign Relations, 2002; Comras, 2005; Prados and Blanchard, 2005; Costa, 2005; Passas and Gimenez-Salinas, 2007; Guido, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009; Spittel, 2010; and Gomez, 2010.

[63] President Bush signed Executive Order 13224 on September 23, 2001, targeting individuals and institutions that provided support to al-Qa'ida (Bush, 2001). As described by the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "In general terms, the Order provides a means by which to disrupt the financial support network for terrorists and terrorist organizations by authorizing the U.S. government to designate and block the assets of foreign individuals and entities that commit, or pose a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism." The order has resulted in the designation of 82 entities and individuals (U.S. Department of State, 2010). An estimated $100 million in assets was initially frozen (Meyer and Williams, 2001).

Among the more prominent sources of funding that were frozen after 9/11 were bin Ladin's own personal assets and those of the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, which was designated a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia subsequently dissolved the al-Haramain foundation as part of an effort to consolidate Islamic charitable activities under the government (Jehl, 2004).

[64] In his July 2005 letter to al-Zarqawi, for example, al-Zawahiri stated:

> The brothers informed me that you suggested to them sending some assistance. Our situation since Abu al-Faraj is good by the grace of God, but many of the lines have been cut off. Because of this, we need a payment while new lines are being opened. So, if you're capable of sending a payment of approximately one hundred thousand, we'll be very grateful to you. (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2005)

[65] For example, in a statement released June 10, 2009, al-Qa'ida leadership figure Mustafa Abu al-Yazid stated:

> In many of the Koranic verses (all except one), God the Great and Almighty ordained that the jihad of wealth comes before the jihad of self because of the importance of the jihad of wealth. The jihad of wealth is the foundation of the jihad of self. If money (which enables a mujahid to buy arms, food, beverages, and equipment for jihad) is not available, how would he perform jihad? . . . We in the Afghan arena lack a lot of money. The weakness of the operations is due to the lack of money. Many of the mujahidin are

varied and appear to include money collected by fundraisers seeking donations (including zakat, i.e, obligatory alms-giving donations collected by sympathetic imams in mosques, and voluntary contributions), moneys that can be gained via the informal hawala banking system, funds that continue to be diverted from charitable organizations, profits gained by businesses run by members, and criminal activities, such as kidnapping and drug trafficking.[66]

Operational Networks. Beyond efforts to extend its operational reach through its branded regional affiliates, in the post-9/11 period al-Qa'ida increasingly has sought to forge cooperative links with other ideologically compatible jihadi groups.[67] In the Afghan-Pakistani theater, for example, beyond the Afghan Taliban, al-Qa'ida's web of relations reportedly includes close links to the Tehrik-e-Taliban—Pakistan (TTP); the Uzbek Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU); the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU); the Uyghur Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP); the Haqqani Network; Kashmiri groups, such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI); and other regional jihadi organizations, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). These networks provide al-Qa'ida with additional mechanisms for various types of cooperation and for enlarging the circle of al-Qa'ida sympathizers.

Propaganda Networks. As described earlier, due to its difficulties ensuring that mass media organizations will carry its releases in unedited form,[68] al-Qa'ida has developed a sophisticated propaganda

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not carrying out jihad due to lack of money, or because there is no money at all. Even many of the martyrdom-seeking brothers, who want to sacrifice themselves for the sake of God . . . we cannot prepare them due to lack of money. (al-Yazid, 2009)

According to David S. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing, "We assess that al Qaida is in its weakest financial condition in several years, and that, as a result, its influence is waning" (Cohen, 2009).

[66] Al-Qa'ida's regional affiliates are believed to be responsible for their own fundraising and other financial activities (Gomez, 2010).

[67] Al-Qa'ida reportedly has been quite active in promoting its Salafi-jihadi ideology among these groups, clearing the doctrinal path for closer cooperation.

[68] For example, in October 2007, al-Qa'ida complained about Al-Jazeera television's failure to broadcast bin Ladin's October 2007 "A Message to Our People in Iraq," in its original, unexpurgated form.

operation that includes a media production organization (al-Sahab Media Production Institute), a distribution organization (al-Fajr Media Center), and a number of al-Qa'ida-affiliated jihadi web forums where audio, video, and written content can be posted.[69] In addition, many of al-Qa'ida's various regional branches produce their own magazines and other propaganda, and there exist a number of jihadi media groups, such as the Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) and Mujahiddin Electronic Network, that, while not formally a part of the al-Qa'ida organization, help to promote al-Qa'ida's message and program.

Recruitment Networks. Although the heightened threat environment for the organization appears to have raised concerns about penetration by security services and may have dampened the organization's appetite for recruits in the Pakistani tribal areas,[70] al-Qa'ida Central has long recognized the importance of recruitment to ensuring the survival and growth of its movement.[71] As described in the accumulating scholarly literature, al-Qa'ida's approach to recruitment appears to be to rely on a variety of processes, from preaching (*da'wa*) and recruitment by al-Qa'ida sympathists to self-radicalization, to screen and connect would-be jihadis to the movement.[72] Most recently, al-Qa'ida appears

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[69] Most recently, al-Qa'ida and its sympathizers are said to have made use of new media, such as the YouTube video-sharing site and social networking sites such as Facebook. See for example, al-Shishani, 2010.

[70] In July 2009, for example, al-Qa'ida released a book by Abu Yahya al-Libi titled "Guidance on the Ruling of the Muslim Spy," which observed that Western spies were multiplying "like locusts," and provided the theological and jurisprudential justification for punishing these spies. See al-Libi, 2009.

[71] For example, a captured document on al-Qa'ida's structure and by-laws reads in part: "We shall care about the role of Muslim people in the Jihad and we shall attempt to recruit them for Jihad as they are the main fuel for combat." Al-Qa'ida has assigned to its Military Committee the responsibility for recruiting new members. See Combating Terrorism Center, "Al-Qa'ida's Structure and By-Laws," no date.

Nonetheless, Sageman suggests that since 9/11, al-Qa'ida's leaders have generally not incorporated new recruits into its ranks, which, he argues, has diminished al-Qa'ida's inability to grow (Sageman, 2009, pp. 18–19).

[72] For an appreciation of the many social processes involved in radicalization and recruitment into terrorism, see for example, Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst, 2002; Sageman 2004, 2008, 2009; Bakker, 2006; Hegghammer, 2006; Horgan, 2007; West Point Combating Terrorism Center, *Cracks in the Foundation,* 2007; Dalgaard-Nielsen,

to have focused its recruitment appeals on Europeans and Americans, with some apparent success.[73]

Opportunism and Adaptation. Finally, and as discussed above, the social movement theory framework argues that group leaders engage in decisionmaking to promote movement objectives in various ways but can face a variety of opportunities and constraints in the larger sociopolitical environment.

Al-Qa'ida's doctrine and program have generally marginalized al-Qa'ida from would-be supporters, led to an increase in the security-related and other constraints its faces, and limited its growth opportunities. Unlike some other terrorist organizations that have associated political front organizations (e.g., the Irish Republican Army and Sinn Fein, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood), the Salafi-jihadis of al-Qa'ida generally view democratic politics as a form of polytheism, and accordingly eschew peaceful political participation in favor of the single-minded pursuit of violent jihad against the movement's far and

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2008a, 2008b; European Commission Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, 2008; and Ranstorp, 2010.

[73] According to a recent press report about al-Qa'ida's recruitment activities in Europe:

> Today, however, al-Qaeda and its affiliates have developed extensive recruiting networks with agents on the ground in Europe, counterterrorism officials said. The agents provide guidance, money, travel routes and even letters of recommendation so the recruits can join up more easily. . . . German officials said they have discovered multiple recruitment networks that work for al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other groups, such as the Islamic Jihad Union, which has been issuing many of the online threats against the German government. But they said the recruiting networks often operate independently, making it difficult for the security services to detect or disrupt them. "In Germany, we don't have a uniform structure that recruits people," another senior German counterterrorism official said in an interview. "We have a wide variety of structures." (Whitlock, 2009)

A 51-page handbook titled "A Course in the Art of Recruitment" authored by "Abu-Amr al-Qa'idi" was released on al-Qa'ida-affiliated jihadi web forums in September 2008. The handbook appears to have been a guide for one-on-one recruitment of new members for operations in their home countries. While clearly inspired by al-Qa'ida, it is not clear that the manual had any formal standing within the organization. For a description of the five-step recruiting strategy advocated in the manual, see Fishman and Warius, 2009.

Finally, it is worth noting that Anwar al-Awlaki, a *Salafi-jihadi* cleric who holds U.S. and Yemeni citizenship, has recently been active in inspirational efforts to mobilize young American Muslims into jihad, including postings on his Facebook page and YouTube videos of his sermons.

near enemies. Moreover, unlike groups like Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah, al-Qa'ida has rejected strategies such as the provision of social services and other amenities to gain supporters.[74]

As a result, al-Qa'ida Central and its regional affiliates face a generally hostile environment populated by state intelligence and security services, law enforcement organizations, and military forces, all of which aim to uncover and capture or kill al-Qa'ida personnel. And as discussed earlier, al-Qa'ida also faces an increasingly unsympathetic court of Muslim public opinion.

The consequence of this is that al-Qa'ida's political opportunities generally revolve around events and incidents that it can exploit via well-timed and targeted attacks or propaganda.[75]

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. Although not included explicitly in the factor tree (they are implicit under the discussion of strategic leadership), presence, tactics, and deeds also matter. The intent of an organization such as al-Qa'ida is, of course, to take actions and accomplish deeds that will reinforce the story it seeks to tell. The 9/11 attack was an example of this, as was the later attack in Madrid. These clearly had motivational effects on segments of the population. In the longer run, however, al-Qa'ida's presence, tactics, and deeds have often proved counterproductive, as discussed above. Furthermore, while al-Qa'ida may be seen as having "accomplished something" with certain deeds, spectacular deeds have been few, and al-Qa'ida's stock has waned. As reportedly was learned from bin Laden's documents after his recent killing, he continued to focus—and indeed to obsess—about what large-scale, large-body-count deeds might be accomplished, particularly on the ten-year anniversary of 9/11.[76]

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[74] As stated in al-Qa'ida internal documents: "Our path is a path of fighting Jihad and we do not handle matters of aid or things like it." See Combating Terrorism Center, "Interior Organization," 2002.

[75] Some of al-Qa'ida's recent statements, moreover, have been somewhat bizarre and off-message, straying from the core Salafi-jihadi theme of undertaking armed jihad to relatively tangential issues such as global warming and aid for the victims of the flooding in Pakistan's Sindh province.

[76] This was been widely stated in news accounts from the Associated Press on May 11, 2011.

Al-Qa'ida's Vulnerabilities

We now turn to the question of the al-Qa'ida vulnerabilities that are revealed by the lens of social movement theory. Proceeding in the same order as before, we summarize what appear to be some of al-Qa'ida's key vulnerabilities.

Ideational Vulnerabilities. Al-Qa'ida's Salafi-jihadi ideology is an exclusionary one that tends toward violence against fellow Muslims, marginalizes the movement from potential supporters, and is self-limiting in terms of recruiting new members. Moreover, clerical and other attacks on al-Qa'ida's theological, jurisprudential, and strategic reasoning and the rejection of al-Qa'ida's doctrine of jihad by the mainstream leadership of groups such as Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group reveal the limited appeal of al-Qa'ida Central's ideology and constitute evidence that it is incapable of inspiring and leading a truly global movement.

Vulnerabilities in Strategic Objectives. Following the erosion of the Islamic State of Iraq's position and its failure to reignite sectarian warfare, al-Qa'ida's strategic objective of an Islamic Caliphate appears more distant and unrealistic than ever. Moreover, the catastrophes that have befallen the Muslim world since 9/11 and announced U.S. timetables for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq and Afghanistan[77] seem likely to be a strong check on al-Qa'ida's future prospects for mobilizing support from the Muslim masses.

Vulnerabilities in Decisionmaking. Al-Qa'ida Central's strategic assumption that the United States could be lured into intervening in Muslim lands if the scale of an attack on the United States was of sufficient magnitude seemingly proved to be correct.[78] Nonetheless, its appraisal of the broader strategic environment, and especially its expectations that the Muslim world could be mobilized into jihad against the U.S. "far enemy" following a U.S. intervention and that the United

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[77] U.S. forces will be withdrawn from Iraq by the end of 2011, and a drawdown of U.S. and NATO combat forces from Afghanistan has been announced for late 2014.

[78] Again, we note that this view is more closely associated with the strategic thinking of al-Zawahiri and some others than with bin Ladin.

States will continue these operations in the face of losses in blood and treasure, proved to be quite flawed.

Al-Qa'ida Central's strategic decisions to merge with extremist splinters of some other jihadi groups (e.g., Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Libyan Islamic Fighting Group) and to create loosely linked regional branded affiliates (e.g., al-Qa'ida in Iraq, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, and al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb) may have reduced the al-Qa'ida network's vulnerability, relative to the hierarchical structure that existed before 9/11. However, the concentrations of al-Qa'ida fighters in locales such as Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, the Maghreb, and Somalia present their own vulnerabilities to the overall networked organization. In addition, the emirs of these regional affiliates generally have focused their attacks on fellow Muslims and other "near enemies" rather than the United States, further eroding the al-Qa'ida brand within the Muslim world. That said, the emergence of "home-grown" terrorism in the West seems likely to remain a vexing challenge for the foreseeable future.

As a result of the factors just discussed, the resonance of al-Qa'ida's framing efforts also has declined. Al-Qa'ida's efforts to boost its ideological bench depth and propaganda efforts, and to more directly address criticism on issues such as Muslim civilian deaths, may reduce attrition by al-Qa'ida members having second thoughts about its religious authority, but they seem unlikely to be found persuasive by the Muslim masses or to reverse al-Qa'ida's declining stock in the Muslim world. In addition, the publicly announced timetables for a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan seem likely to further diminish the resonance of al-Qa'ida's narrative and its appeals to Muslims to assist in defensive jihad in those Muslim-majority states.

Vulnerabilities in Resource Mobilization. Al-Qa'ida has sought, with what appears to be only limited success, to reestablish operational, funding, recruitment, propaganda, and other networks that constitute its principal organizational resources. On the other hand, al-Qa'ida's increasing focus on building cooperative relations with militant groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan represents a new and dangerous development.

Vulnerabilities in Political Opportunities and Constraints. While al-Qa'ida has sought to make the best of its diminished circumstances since its loss of sanctuary in Afghanistan following 9/11, as described above, its strategic decisionmaking, framing, and resource mobilization efforts have failed to effect a reversal of fortune. Rather, al-Qa'ida has marginalized itself within the militant Islamist community and the Muslim masses at large. Historically quite limited, al-Qa'ida's political opportunities to rebuild its movement appear to have further diminished.

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an illustrative application of social movement theory as a diagnostic tool for analyzing the dynamics of generating support for terrorist and insurgent groups, using al-Qa'ida Central's transnational Salafi-jihadi movement as an example.

The analysis noted that al-Qa'ida Central leaders failed to generate the mass mobilization and uprising of the Muslim world against the United States that they hoped to see in the wake of a military intervention in Afghanistan after 9/11. Rather, they have tried to adapt to the far more hostile post-9/11 environment by attempting to rebuild the organization's operational and other networks, while undertaking efforts to extend al-Qa'ida's strategic reach and to improve its propaganda capabilities to promote its ideology and agenda.

As a result of constraints on its ability to successfully plan and conduct attacks against the West, al-Qa'ida Central has strengthened its relationships with militant groups in the Pakistani tribal regions and attempted to extend its strategic and operational reach through strategic mergers and branding of local al-Qa'ida affiliates, while attempting to inspire attacks by supporters in the West. Its affiliates' tendency for violence against fellow Muslims seems only to have marginalized these groups from the local populations.

In the interests of promoting the larger objective of expanding the fields of jihad against their enemies, al-Qa'ida Central's leaders also have attempted to manipulate the frames, narratives, and symbols of

their transnational Salafi-jihadi ideological package through a steady stream of propaganda releases. It has become increasingly apparent to Muslims, however, that al-Qa'ida's affiliates primarily have targeted and killed Muslims, and the al-Qa'ida "brand" increasingly seems to be one of indiscriminate violence against innocent civilians. Moreover, al-Qa'ida has increasingly been challenged by former leaders and clerics from within the Salafi-jihadi movement and by popular mainstream clerics as well, and this intra- and inter-movement contention has helped to erode al-Qa'ida's claims both to sacred authority and to a legitimate strategic purpose. As a result, al-Qa'ida's framing and propaganda activities have proved woefully inadequate to the task of making up for the organization's violent excesses and arresting a decline in support from the Muslim world.

Al-Qa'ida has thus squandered any opportunity it might have had to achieve its strategic objective of building a radical Islamist movement that enjoys mass Muslim support, and the prospects for its quixotic vision of an al-Qa'ida-inspired Islamic Caliphate now appear more remote than ever. The evidence also suggests that al-Qa'ida's fundraising, recruitment, and other networks have been under substantial pressure and that concern about penetration by spies has increased the insularity and limited the growth of its Pakistan-based cadres. From a social movement perspective, al-Qa'ida is a movement that appears to be in decline.

That said, as described in this chapter, al-Qa'ida has met with some success in establishing closer links with a range of Islamist militant groups in Pakistan and Central and South Asia, and it may be shifting to a growth strategy based on enlarging and leading a field or web of organizations that share al-Qa'ida's basic ideology and strategic aims. Put another way, al-Qa'ida may be in the early stages of developing a violent social movement using a somewhat different model, one focused on mobilizing Pakistanis into an al-Qa'ida-instigated and -led insurrection against Pakistan's government and military.

The nature and extent of al-Qa'ida Central's links to terrorist operations in the West since 9/11, and its current capabilities for undertaking such attacks, remain hotly contested. Nonetheless, as attested by successful attacks in Bali in October 2002, Istanbul in Novem-

ber 2003, Madrid in March 2004, London in July 2005, Mumbai in November 2008, and the attempted bombing of a U.S. airliner on Christmas 2009, al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and sympathizers have continued to target Western interests with mass-casualty attacks. Moreover, recent growth in the number of "homegrown" terrorist plots in the West suggests that al-Qa'ida also has met with some success in inspiring such efforts.[79] Finally, the relatively modest numbers of foot soldiers and other resources required to conduct such attacks virtually assures that al-Qa'ida-style attacks will remain a threat to the United States and the West for some time to come.[80] While al-Qa'ida may have utterly failed as a social movement, al-Qa'ida the terrorist group and its remaining networks remain quite dangerous.

In the next three chapters, we examine three cases of insurgent groups—Afghanistan's Taliban, Turkey's Kurdish People's Party (PKK), and Nepal's Maoist insurgent movement—through the dual lenses of the factor trees and social movement theory.

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[79] See for example Shahzad, 2011.

[80] For example, according to the English-language al-Qai'da in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) magazine *Inspire*, the total cost of "Operation Hemorrhage," the September 2010 effort to disrupt international air freight by shipping computer printers filled with explosives, cost a total of $4,200, plus the working hours of six people for three months (al-Malahem Media Production, 2010).

Public Support for the Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan

Introduction

Purpose

This chapter examines public support during a period in 2009–2010 for the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. Our research for this case began with the initial factor tree (Figure 2.2) and the supplementary social-movement theory lens (Figure 2.3), both of which are described in Chapter Two. We assessed the effectiveness of those for the case of the Taliban and suggested improvements to the conceptual modeling. Those were reflected, along with improvements suggested by other cases, in the study's final factor tree (Figure 2.4). For convenience to the reader, the discussion in the last part of this chapter is organized in the terms of that final factor tree.

Methodology

This chapter is unique within the monograph for its experiments with quantitative methods. The basis for the analysis was a combination of first-person information as expressed in press reporting and results of public-opinion surveys.

  Press Accounts. We began by identifying a specific kind of press reporting, that containing testimonials and quotations from local sources (e.g., Afghan villagers, insurgents, and tribal leaders) in the largely Pashtun areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan. Reports were selected based on their access to these sources rather than for the journalists' opinions or reporting quality. We refer to "press accounts,"

but the intent was to approximate first-person information. The data were drawn from two Pakistani newspapers, *Dawn* and *The News International*, as well as the *New York Times* and *Asia Times Online*. Translated versions of Afghan-language reporting were also included. Of the 72 source documents, 42 were from Pakistani news sources, 13 were from *Asia Times Online*, ten were from the *New York Times*, and seven were translations. Thus, the Pakistani newspapers provided the most extensive reporting available in English. The reporting period centered on the "surge" phase beginning in early 2009 in Afghanistan, when U.S. and allied governments raised their force levels and increasingly implemented counterinsurgency doctrine.

For this particular case, the documents' content was coded with a data-mining and content-analytic software tool, *QDA Miner*,[1] which served as a digital highlighting pen and allowed quantitative analysis. This was in part an experiment to assess usefulness.[2]

Public-Opinion Polling. We drew our polling data primarily from ABC/BBC/ARC, the Gallup Organization, the Asia Foundation, and Glevum Associates. The appendix lists surveys from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq describing relevant questions, with codes that relate them to the public support factor tree. We used the survey results as a cross-check, recognizing shortcomings of the press-account data (or of any one source of data). Thus, we looked for surveys that overlapped, affirmed, or contradicted information from the press-account discussion.

Background

Afghanistan has many circumstances that could generate public support for insurgency: foreign occupation, the presence of militant organizations, a lack of economic opportunity, poor public safety and secu-

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[1]   This is a trademarked product of Provalis Research.

[2]   The data-mining approach proved interesting and helped systematize research, a conclusion reached also in 2010 by Todd Helmus, Brian Jackson, Kim Cragin, and ourselves in analogous work. After completing work on the Taliban, however, we concluded that it was not necessary in this study to continue using the rather demanding methods in our subsequent casework. We preferred broader scope (more cases) rather than more apparent precision with fewer cases. Further, we observed that people could readily misinterpret the quantitative results as being more reliable and rigorous than was actually the case.

rity, ethnic and sectarian rivalry, weak governance, regime opposition, and more. Not all of these play an equally important role, and relative importance varies geographically, temporally, and demographically. The Taliban has exploited each in different ways; for example, justifying defensive jihad against occupying forces by invoking the anti-Soviet jihad as a cultural point of reference, or arbitrating local disputes through sharia courts where governance is almost nonexistent. Thus, the case should provide insights about the appropriateness of Chapter Two's initial factor tree and the elements of social movement theory suggested in Chapter Three. We discuss these matters in the next two sections, respectively, after which we draw overall conclusions and present an improved factor tree highlighting aspects particularly noteworthy for the case of public support of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Empirical Content Analysis

Structuring the Data

For the portion of our work based on press-account data, we collected and coded data in terms of the factors and subfactors of the initial factor tree (Figure 2.2): motivations for supporting the group or cause, perceived legitimacy of violence, acceptability of costs and risks, and availability of mobilizing mechanisms. We also looked for evidence of the items suggested by social movement theory. And, of course, we looked for factors that we had not previously identified as important.

Relevant passages of text in press accounts were highlighted and coded with respect to all second- and third-tier factors within the factor tree. Passages were considered relevant if they discussed the public's support of or participation in the insurgency, especially when that involved violence. Relevant passages were coded at the level of a complete thought/statement on a given factor, which ranged from one to several sentences. In many cases, multiple, distinct instances of a single factor were coded within the same source document. Also, some passages reflected multiple factors at work, and these were coded as such. Thus, a typical coded document would have several different factors highlighted, with some overlapping. Coded content could then be searched by factor, and analyzed.

Frequency of Factor Mentions and Co-Occurrences

Frequency of Mention. Table 4.1 shows the frequency with which factors were mentioned in our sample of press reporting, including both raw counts and percentages. As an example from the first lines of the table, 36 items were coded as relating to "attractions," a subset of the larger category of motivations, which includes a total of 232 items

Table 4.1
Mention Frequency, by Factor and Subfactor

Factor or Subfactor	Counts	Percentage Within Group	Percentage Overall
Motivation for supporting the group or cause	232	100	48
Attractions	36	16	8
Felt need to act	90	39	19
Identification with group	81	35	17
Social pressures and incentives	25	11	5
Perceived legitimacy of methods	56	100	13
Religious, ideological, or ethical basis	41	73	9
Cultural propensity for violence	3	5	1
Necessity or effectiveness	12	21	3
Acceptability of costs and risks	95	100	19
Charged emotions	15	16	3
Intimidation	35	37	7
Personal risks and opportunity costs	25	26	5
Social costs	20	21	4
Countervailing social pressures	0	0	0
Availability of mobilizing mechanisms*	36	100	8
(all mentions)	36		8
Other factors		100	12
Leadership and organization*		67	8
Exogenous factors		33	4

* Reflected in final factor tree under "effectiveness of organization."

(shaded rows). Figure 4.1 depicts even more data overlaid on the initial factor tree of our study. It includes data for lowest-level factors and uses the valence symbols + or – to distinguish between positive and negative mentions. For example, the node representing a religious, ideological, or ethical basis for the perceived legitimacy of violence shows 24 instances of support for violence and 17 instances of opposition.

Co-Occurrences of Mentions in Press Reporting. Finally, we noted that several factors were correlated in that references to one factor often were discussed alongside or explicitly attributed to another. *QDA Miner* provided a means to identify co-occurrences by counting the number of instances in which text coded for one particular factor overlapped with text coded for another factor. The most common of these co-occurrences are presented in Table 4.2. With this background of data, let us now turn to discussion.

Factors Affecting Public Support

In what follows, we draw on factor-mention data and supplement them with relevant survey information. Before proceeding, we need to mention a caveat, because the allure of numbers can be insidious:

> *The reader should not make too much of the numerical frequencies— i.e., a factor mentioned twice as often as another is not necessarily twice as important. Further, a factor barely mentioned at all may be, in some respects, more important than either of the first two.[3]*

That is, the frequencies are interesting and suggestive, and will be referred to in what follows, but should not be over-interpreted.

As shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, *nearly all of the hypothesized factors of the initial factor tree (even second-level factors) were observed.* Let us discuss these by the major factors: motivations, legitimacy of violence, costs and risks, mobilization mechanisms, and other, respec-

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[3]   Factors might not be mentioned much because, e.g., the comments are not consciously aware of them, take them for granted, do not understand their significance, or regard them as inappropriate and even embarrassing to mention. Also, reporters decide what questions to ask and, along with their editors, which answers to report.

Figure 4.1
Factor Tree Portraying Frequency of Factors in Press Accounts in Press Reporting, Afghanistan

NOTE: Or connections apply in lower-level branches (not shown).

RAND *MG1122-4.1*
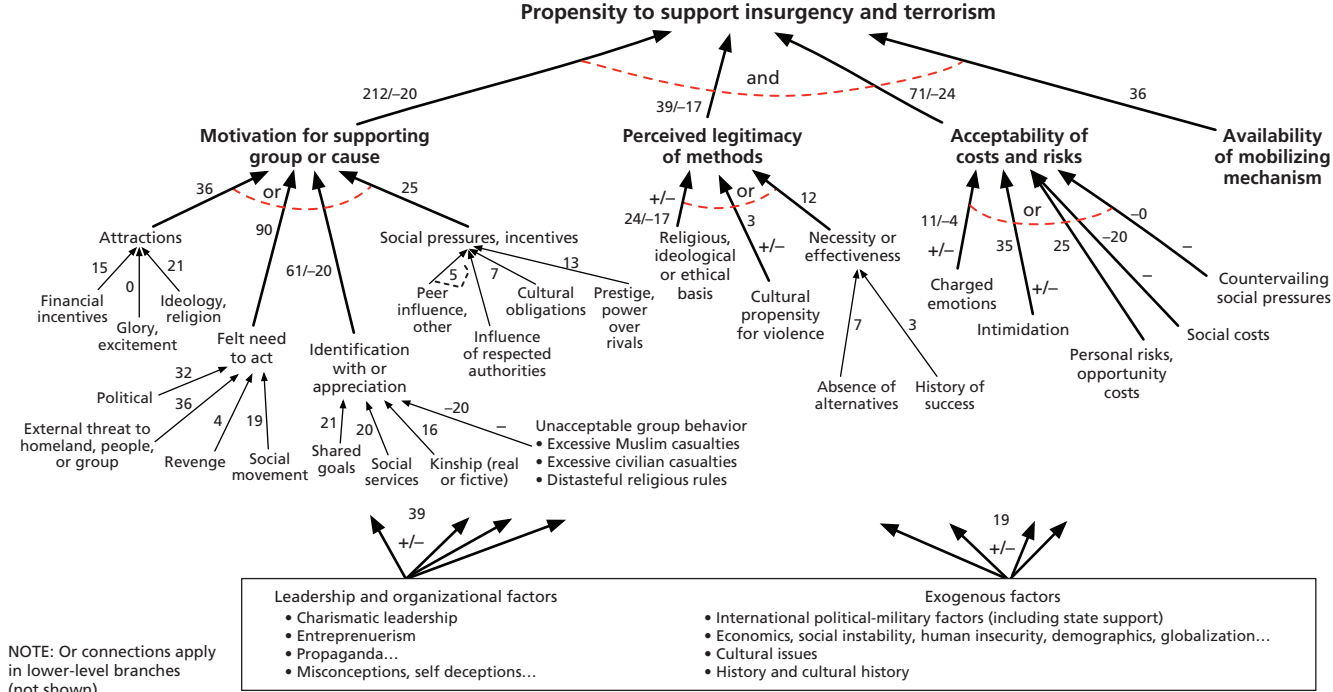
Table 4.2
Co-Occurrences of Factors in Press Accounts in Press Reporting,
Afghanistan

Pairing	Factor #1	Factor #2	Number of Co-Occurrences
(1)	Identification with group	Felt need to act	17
(2)	Religious, ideological, or ethical basis	Identification with group	13
(3)	Leadership and organizing factors	Identification with group	11
(4)	Availability of mobilizing mechanisms	Religious, ideological, or ethical basis	10
(5)	Charged emotions	Felt need to act	9

tively. The reader is reminded that the data were for the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan, not Afghanistan as a whole.

Motivations

Roughly half of the mentions relating to public support for the insurgency referred to motivations (Table 4.1).[4] Some of the primary observations are as follows:

- Within the class of mentions related to motivations, the felt need to act (i.e., duty) and identification with the group together accounted for three-quarters of the mentions.
- The primary reason mentioned for the "felt need" was the external threat to the homeland, people, or group (i.e., the occupation), seen especially among Pashtuns. Political considerations were also mentioned.
- The reasons for identification with the insurgent group were variously coded as shared goals, respect for social services, and kinship (real or fictive).

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[4] This high proportion may reflect a tendency to describe personal experiences and grievances, as opposed to unrecognized, external, psychological or inappropriate-to-mention factors influencing their decision process. Nonetheless, the motivations expressed seemed genuinely influential.

- "Negative identification" also appeared, coded as unacceptable group behavior.

The press-account data corroborated other motivations, shown in the original factor tree as attractions (e.g., financial incentives, glory and excitement, and ideology/religion) and social pressures (influence of peers and respected authorities, cultural obligations, and prestige or power) (Figure 4.1). These, however, were not nearly so prominent as the items mentioned above. If only the press reporting data were considered, they might be downplayed. However, survey data suggest that would be a mistake, as discussed next.

Survey data generally provided a good deal of supplementary information and added nuances. For example, the motivation factor reflected resentment toward U.S. forces after almost a decade of occupation. Pashtuns complained that combat operations to evict the Taliban have not delivered security but have inflicted civilian casualties and caused displacements, destruction of property, loss of harvests, and intangible offenses to people's honor and dignity (UNAMA Human Rights, 2010).[5] Attitudes, however, varied strongly with region. A late-2009 poll showed that only 42 percent of Afghans in southern and eastern Afghanistan supported the presence of U.S. forces, whereas 78 percent did in the rest of Afghanistan.[6] In a related vein, although overall support for the Taliban across Afghanistan was low (around 10 percent) (ABC News/BBC/ARD, January 2010), it was much higher (but not overwhelming) in the Pashtun-Taliban heartland of Helmand, where one of four report the Taliban having strong support (Langer, 2010) and a 2009 survey reported 31 percent of respondents saying that the Taliban acted in their best interests at least some of the time.[7] For Afghans who believe that NATO forces were not acting in

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[5]   The oft-discussed issue of civilian casualties (not explicit in the factor tree) should always be seen in this larger context. It is only one of the many consequences of the occupation and counterinsurgency that engender support for the Taliban.

[6]   ABC News/BBC/ARD, January 2010.

[7]   The survey was of 16 districts in Helmand, Paktika, and Kunduz, with 19 percent saying that the Taliban acted in their best interests all or most of the time; another 11 percent

Afghans' best interests, the main reasons cited were collateral damage and lack of respect for homes, leaders, and religion (Gallup Associates, 2010)—the kinds of concern that can translate into a felt need (duty) to defend.

Survey data had much to say about political frustrations related to the felt-need-for-action factor. Much of this related to the Karzai government. Although various demographic groups (Tajiks, urban Afghans, and residents of Kabul) prefer the Karzai government, Pashtuns strongly prefer leadership through local elders (ABC News/BBC/ARD, December 2010). Despite President Karzai himself being a Pashtun, many Pashtuns resent him for practicing nepotism among his own Popalzai tribe.[8]

Another political grievance among common Afghans is financial corruption. Corruption is endemic in many underdeveloped countries, but most polls list it as the third most cited problem in Afghanistan, behind insecurity and unemployment (IWA, 2010, p. 26; U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, January, 2010). Afghanistan was rated in 2010 as the second- or third-most corrupt nation in the world (Transparency International, 2010).[9] Although the press-account data did not highlight corruption, survey information indicates that corruption motivates support for the Taliban. In Kandahar Province in 2010, 63 percent of respondents agreed that corruption makes them look at alternatives to the current government. Eighty-four percent said corruption is the main reason for conflict, and a majority believed that the Taliban are incorruptible (Glevum Associates, March 2010). Such concerns can be

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answered "some of the time" (Gallup Consulting, 2010). We thank Tom Rieger of Gallup Consulting for kindly providing these results.

[8] For example, his brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, upset the balance of power in Kandahar by cutting deals with local political rivals from the families of former governor Gul Agha Sherzai and the late mujahiddin commander Mullah Naqib. At one point in late 2009, 65 of the 68 senior administrative posts in Kandahar were filled by members of these families, according to an Afghan analyst (Siddique, September 2009).

[9] The corruption index is imperfect and controversial, but is often cited; it attempts to measure perceived corruption of a particular kind—not just modest "service payments" to many people in the course of normal activity (a common practice in many parts of the world), but "the perceived abuse of entrusted power for private gain."

manifested through the factor trees' felt need (duty) to act, the group identification with which it is sometimes co-occurs (Table 4.2), and the absence-of-alternatives factor under perceived legitimacy. We concluded that corruption should be seen as a cross-cutting factor—one among a number of shared grievances—that should be reflected as such in our final factor tree (what became Figure 2.3).

Shared goals are also well represented in some of the survey data. For Afghans who view the Taliban as a legitimate competitor to the government, shared goals appear to stoke the allegiance of disenfranchised Afghans to the Taliban. For example, President Karzai's Popalzai nepotism has alienated the rival Ghilzai tribe, and many senior Taliban leaders in southern Afghanistan reportedly are disgruntled Ghilzai tribesmen (Siddique, September 2009).

Kinship issues also arise in surveys. In Kandahar Province—the first province ever captured by the Taliban—85 percent agreed with the statement "the Taliban are our Afghan brothers" (Glevum Associates, March 2010). An overwhelming 94 percent said they would prefer negotiations with the Taliban (Glevum Associates, March 2010).

The survey data also corroborate the importance of identity. A 2010 Asia Foundation survey reported that the two leading reasons cited for sympathizing with insurgent groups were related to identity and kinship: members of armed opposition groups were see as Afghans (25–26 percent) and Muslims (20–23 percent) (Asia Foundation, 2010).

"Unacceptable group behavior" was also observed indirectly, when those in the Asia Foundation's survey who did not sympathize with the insurgents gave the following as reasons: the groups were viewed as oppressors (21 percent); the groups were killing innocent people (15 percent); the groups did not want security (15 percent); and the groups were against the government (14 percent). This seems, however, not just to reduce identification with the group but to affect other factors as well, causing us to represent such behavior as a cross-cutting factor in our study's final factor tree (Figure 2.3).

Another aspect of identity relates to shared values (see Figure 4.1). Gallup's survey found higher support for the Taliban in areas where substantial percentages believed that sharia law should be the only

source of Afghan law, where Taliban efforts to provide justice were deemed effective, and where insurgent groups were already believed to be providing safety and security.[10] Similarly, press accounts also associated Taliban support with the lack of governance and the Taliban's provision of services, though even more so with the Taliban's goals of expelling occupying forces and changing the current political regime.

Perhaps most strikingly, when comparing the press-account data with surveys, Gallup's survey of 16 districts (Gallup, 2010) found that the top reasons that respondents cited for others joining the insurgency included (although with varied importance across even Pashtun districts) (1) religion, (2) the need for money and jobs, (3) a desire to help their community, and (4) vengeance. These results are "not inconsistent with" those from the press reporting but seem to put a much higher weight on these factors. This was particularly true of the financial factor. About one in four of those surveyed by Gallup cited money or jobs as the main reason that other individuals joined insurgent groups. In another poll from 2010, over 80 percent of respondents in Kandahar Province said most Taliban would stop fighting if given jobs (Glevum Associates, 2010). This difference in apparent significance was a good example of why multiple sources of information are valuable.

After much discussion, we reached a number of conclusions:

- The lower-level details of the hypothesized factor-tree structure should be reconsidered because it attempts to separate factors that are too strongly related (a point made also in Table 4.2). One consequence of this was that some of the "smaller" apparent influences in Figure 4.1 were probably being undervalued visually.
- There are major differences across province and district, underscoring the dangers of thinking in aggregate terms rather than in terms such as what factors influence public support within different target populations.
- There were some discrepancies across data sources (which is the reason for using more than one class of data). In particular, finan-

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[10] Districts in Paktika province, particularly Barmal and Mata Khan, frequently exhibited the hardest-line attitudes, and highest support for the Taliban and other insurgents.

cial considerations, corruption and other grievances, and vengeance should be assumed more important than from the press-reporting data alone.

- As anticipated with our caveat about not taking the relative mention frequencies too seriously, it is more important to observe whether the postulated factors are all relevant, whether other factors are omitted, and how the factors should be connected to each other, than to assess "significance weights" based on one or another set of data.

Perceived Legitimacy of Violence

The press-account data on legitimacy of violence were interesting and somewhat surprising. The related mentions definitely worked in both directions (for and against the notion of legitimacy). The most important subfactor was religious, ideological, or ethical basis for violence. However, about a third of the mentions rejected the legitimacy of violence (e.g., as un-Islamic). This observation caused us to modify the symbology of our final factor tree to highlight that both positive and negative influences are likely to be present. A potentially contentious factor was the cultural propensity for violence, which had very few explicit mentions in press accounts.[11] The necessity or effectiveness factor was observed more frequently, primarily through expression of there being no alternatives. It should be noted that the history of success against the Soviets was not a distant memory for Afghans, and some Afghans have experienced recent failures with alternatives such as *lashkars*, *arbakais*, and *jirgas*. Describing *shuras* as being mere photo opportunities, one elder in Kandahar told representatives of the UN Mission in Afghanistan that "there are far too many meetings-in-

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[11] The factor is not intended to be a judgment about the virtues of the country in question, or whether the average person is violent, but rather a measure of whether violence "comes rather easily" to the relevant segment of the population. It is difficult to quarrel with the concept that Afghanistan has seen extraordinary and brutal violence for decades, to the point where—for many—it is accepted as part of reality (even if abhorred by most). See Filkins, 2008, for remarkable front-line reporting in Afghanistan over a number of years, including the period of Taliban control, a period with warlord battles, and the current period of insurgency. The tragic aspects of this culture of violence are discussed in Tripathi, 2011.

name. ISAF and the government ignore what we say because we are from the districts . . ." (UNAMA Human Rights, August 2010).

Another aspect of this that emerged in press accounts were comments along the lines of "nowhere else to go," or "sided with the Taliban by default," or "the only political party in town." In these cases, the Taliban were not the alternative to the government—they *were* the government. To oppose the Taliban would be an insurgency in itself.

Survey data again add to the story. Religion was the most common reason given for the legitimacy of violent resistance, which may not be surprising considering the correlations between the religious basis for violence and, as shown in Table 4.2, Taliban identity/Taliban mobilization efforts. Most Afghan *mawlawi* were educated in the same Deobandi *madrasas* as the Taliban, so they would be more likely to share beliefs about the duties of defensive jihad, and Afghans would be more likely to believe them due to their provenance. A late-2009 Gallup study of 16 districts in southern, eastern, and northern Afghanistan said, "While only 9 percent specifically mention the return of Mullah Omar to power as a reason for why people join insurgency groups, 25 percent say it is for religious reasons" (Gallup Consulting, 2010).

According to ABC News's "Where Things Stand" polling, the perceived legitimacy of attacks on U.S. forces is closely associated with local conflict levels: Between 2009 and 2010, the proportion of Afghans believing such attacks to be justified increased from 28 percent to 40 percent, in provinces where conflict has been the most intense; and perceptions of the legitimacy of violence rose from 29 to 36 percent in areas where violence was less intense but has been worsening (ABC News, December 2010). In Helmand, 55 percent say attacks against U.S. forces are justified. These increases in the perceived legitimacy of violence were concurrent with the surge of U.S. forces in these areas, although it cannot be determined from these data whether large-scale combat operations were the cause of anti-U.S. sentiment or the result of growing Taliban influence there.

Acceptability of Costs and Risks

Press-account data on the acceptability of costs and risks appeared as 19 percent of the mentions. All of the subfactors appeared as well—

particularly Taliban intimidation (35 percent of the group). The result of Taliban intimidation is less "public support" than acquiescence. The importance of that factor was expected, based on the earlier review by Christopher Paul (2009a) discussed in Chapter Two. Another significant subfactor evident in the raw data analysis, however, was the belief that the Taliban were winning or eventually would come to power. This factor was not explicit in the original factor tree (i.e., we falsified an aspect of the model). As an expedient for the purpose of data analysis, this was coded under personal risks and opportunity costs—a reasonable step to take, but not fully satisfactory because the label "personal risks and opportunity costs" conveys a different sense, such as the possible financial cost of giving up some employment to support an insurgency actively, or the possible loss of employment due to being associated with the insurgency. Thus, we added to our revised factor tree the explicit factor of assessing the likely victor as part of a pragmatic decision about whom to support.

Other, lesser, contributors to the frequency of costs-risks mentions included charged emotions, social costs, and countervailing pressures, such as disapproval of support for insurgency of parents, village, or respected elders. We noted from the results and rethinking the difficulties of coding that it was difficult to disentangle the various subfactors at this level. Further, we were not seeing much explicit data on the role of charged emotions, and, where we did (related to complaints about civilian casualties), the influence was more complex than merely to affect the acceptability of costs and risks. We later moved the role of emotions and psychology in its various forms to be one of the "general" factors shown at the bottom of the revised factor tree, as shown in Figure 4.4 at the end of the chapter.

Survey results were, once again, quite helpful. The Asia Foundation's 2010 survey found that among those who believed people in their area did not have the freedom to express their political opinions, 40 percent cited the presence of Taliban in the area as the reason; other leading reasons were fear for personal safety (61 percent) and bad security conditions in the area (46 percent). In a similar vein, Gallup's 2009 survey (Rieger, 2010a) found that about four in ten of those surveyed

believed that no or only a few people in their district were willing to stand up to insurgency groups.

Effectiveness of the Organization: Public Support Through the Lens of Social Movement Theory

The last top-level factor of the original factor tree was "Availability of mobilizing mechanism" (not often mentioned explicitly in press reporting, but discussed at length and attributed great importance when it was). By the end of the study, we concluded that this should be replaced by "Effectiveness of the insurgent organization" and that the factors suggested by social movement theory should be regarded as its major subfactors. This section, then, traces the resurgence of Taliban movement with respect to the subelements of leadership, ideological package, frames and framing, resource mobilization, opportunism and adaptation, and presence, tactics, and deeds. The conclusions were drawn during the case work for this chapter, but we have repackaged them to fit with the final structure.

Leadership. A point of contention exists between the strategic objectives of al-Qa'ida and the Taliban. Al-Qa'ida seeks to usher in a *global* Islamic awakening, expel "infidel" forces and "apostate" governments from what it considers historically Muslim lands, and establish an Islamic Caliphate. In contrast, the Taliban's stated objectives are to expel occupying forces, restore security, and reinstate sharia in Afghanistan alone (Grey, 2010). The Taliban leadership council (*rahbari shura*) has taken pains to distance the Taliban from al-Qa'ida's transnational aspirations and its exclusive commitment to violent jihad, and thus align their organization for political reintegration. In an April 2010 interview with the *Sunday Times*, two senior Taliban leaders speaking on behalf of Mullah Omar said he was prepared to participate in political negotiations (Grey, 2010). This was the culmination of months of political signaling. For example, it was reported that a Taliban delegation headed by Mullah Baradar met with al-Qa'ida senior leaders in May 2009 to convey Mullah Omar's message that al-Qa'ida should avoid hostilities against Pakistani security forces (Shahzad, 2009b). In September 2009, Mullah Omar publicly promised that the Taliban "does not interfere in the affairs of others," and he offered "positive

bilateral relations with all neighboring countries within a context of mutual respect," including "comprehensive collaborations in economic development" (al-Mujahid, 2009b). Then in October 2009, the Taliban's official website, *Sawt al-Jihad*, posted the following statement contradicting al-Qa'ida's transnational program:

> We announce to all the world, our aim is obtainment of independence and establishment of an Islamic system. We did not have any agenda to harm other countries, including Europe, nor do we have such agenda today. (Roggio, 2009b)

Not all Taliban accept this limitation. Some have argued that the semi-autonomous Taliban organization known as the Haqqani Network has adopted al-Qa'ida's aspirations for a caliphate. David Rohde, a *New York Times* reporter who was held captive by the Haqqani Network, reflected on their objectives:

> Over those months, I came to a simple realization. After seven years of reporting in the region, I did not fully understand how extreme many of the Taliban had become. Before the kidnapping, I viewed the organization as a form of "Al Qaeda lite," a religiously motivated movement primarily focused on controlling Afghanistan.

> Living side by side with the Haqqanis' followers, I learned that the goal of the hard-line Taliban was far more ambitious. Contact with foreign militants in the tribal areas appeared to have deeply affected many young Taliban fighters. They wanted to create a fundamentalist Islamic emirate with Al Qaeda that spanned the Muslim world. (Rohde, 2009)

The Haqqani Network indeed has provided safe haven to al-Qa'ida senior leaders in areas such as North Waziristan, and al-Qa'ida appears to derive more sympathy from the Haqqani Network than Mullah Omar's Taliban. For example, the following statement by a Haqqani military commander was released in reaction to the aforementioned statements by Mullah Omar and *Sawt al-Jihad* contradicting al-Qa'ida's program. This statement emphasizes that al-Qa'ida and the Taliban are

united, and defensively notes that there is no such thing as extremist vs. moderate wings of the Taliban:

> Al-Qaeda and Taliban all are Muslims and we are united by the brotherhood of Islam. We do not see any difference between Taliban and Al-Qaeda, for we all belong to the religion of Islam. Sheikh Usama has pledged allegiance to Emir al-Mumineen [Mullah Omar] and has reassured his leadership again and again. There is no difference between us, for we are united by Islam and the Sharia governs us… Now [our enemies] are also trying to dis-unite the Taliban, saying that there are two wings, one extremist and another moderate. However, the truth is that we are all one and are united by Islam. (Zadran, 2009)

Another extremist strand is the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan under the leadership of Hakimullah Mehsud, who has announced his intention to extend his attacks to India (Mehsud and Rehman, 2009), and Qari Hussain Mehsud, who trained the New York City Times Square car bomber Faisal Shahzad (Roggio, 2010a).

Conflicting strategic viewpoints among various Taliban factions regarding al-Qa'ida's transnational aspirations and commitment to violence may undermine the Taliban's narrative and raison d'être, described below.

Ideological Package and Framing.

Ideology. Given the splits in leadership, the Taliban has no single ideological package. Rather, Taliban ideology is a complex product of fundamentalist Islamic thought, tribal and ethnic identity, and Cold War–era geopolitics. It also has evidenced several periods of radicalization, from the Pul-i Khishti anti-communist protests in 1970, to the militarization of the *madrasas* into Taliban fronts (*jebhe-ye tolaba*) in the 1980s, to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in early 2001 (Roy, 2002). Various analyses have described the latest radicalization of the Taliban through the influence of the Salafi-jihadi movement led by al-Qa'ida. According to an anonymous U.S. intelligence official quoted in *The Long War Journal*, "The radicalization of the Taliban and their conversion away from Deobandism to Wahhabism under Sheikh Issa al Masri and other Al-Qai'da leaders is a clear sign of Al-Qa'ida's

preeminence" (Roggio, 2009a). The main evidence of this radicalization is the Taliban's adoption of suicide attacks and its involvement in transnational attacks—both being al-Qa'ida signatures. There were only five suicide attacks in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2005,[12] whereas in 2010 the rate of al-Qa'ida-style "complex" suicide attacks was approximately four per month.[13] Also, certain elements of the Pakistani Taliban were implicated in assassination attempts on former Pakistani President Musharraf and Prime Minister Gilani, and the siege of Pakistani Army General Headquarters in Rawalpindi (Roggio, 2010b).

How has al-Qa'ida radicalized the Taliban, and to what extent? The first possibility is that al-Qa'ida's Salafi-jihadi propaganda, especially the creedal, doctrinal, and jurisprudential tracts produced by the likes of al-Qa'ida ideologues Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Yahya al-Libi, has resonated with the Taliban. However, the differences between Deobandi and Salafi or Wahhabi thought are esoteric, and the Taliban do not make such distinctions in their own propaganda. Moreover, it seems unlikely that esoteric ideological distinctions would play a direct role in the radicalization of the Taliban, considering how most Afghans are illiterate, including reportedly Mullah Omar himself. Another possibility points to al-Qa'ida's reputation and influence with specific elements of the Taliban and their allies—namely, the Haqqani Network, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, and the Pakistani militant groups. For example, the respected Egyptian ideologue Issa al-Masri, who was involved in the Red Mosque uprising in 2007, has been "instrumental in shaping the view amongst jihadists that Pakistan and Afghanistan constituted a single theater of war, and that the Pakistani state was as much an enemy as the US" (Roggio, 2010c). A third possibility is that al-Qa'ida's radicalizing influence is not primarily one of ideology or influence, but instead operational integration. For example, Taliban fighters have operated under al-Qa'ida leaders Khalid Habib and Abdullah Sa'id al-Libi via Brigade 055, and they have joined forces with Pakistani militant groups under the banner of al-Qa'ida's Brigade 313 (Roggio, 2010b). Thus, al-Qa'ida's operational

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[12]   UNAMA, September 2007.

[13]   UN Security Council General Assembly, September 2010.

leadership of Taliban forces could be radicalizing them. The fact that only certain elements of the Taliban have adopted suicide tactics and participated in attacks on Pakistani targets suggests that al-Qa'ida has not thoroughly radicalized the Taliban, and the extent of this plays a crucial role in the Taliban's strategic objectives and decisionmaking.

Let us next turn to framing.

Framing. A turning point in the Taliban movement was their capture of Kabul in September 1996, but a less well-known and perhaps more significant transformation was when Mullah Omar held a rally in Kandahar at the Mosque of the Cloak of the Prophet Mohammad in December 1995 (Inskeep, 2002). The shrine housed a cloak supposedly worn by the Prophet himself, and the last person to wear that cloak was Ahmad Shah Durrani, the founder of the modern Afghan state, crowned in 1747 near Kandahar. Tapping into this cultural point of reference, Mullah Omar donned the cloak before thousands of cheering supporters and declared himself "Commander of the Faithful" (*Emir al-Momineen*)—the historical title of the caliphs. This act distinguished Mullah Omar's movement from warlordism by providing it religious sanction and significance. Framing the Taliban movement within this religious narrative, Mullah Omar identified his potential audience as all Muslims in Afghanistan (and beyond, potentially) as opposed to any particular tribe, ethnicity, or aggrieved party. A photo of a man believed to be Mullah Omar is shown in Figure 4.2.

Since the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, the Taliban have bolstered this religious narrative with historical parallels to the anti-Soviet jihad. Taliban propaganda now invokes Afghans' opposition to Soviet aggression in order to justify violence. It must be recognized that this previous war against foreign occupation was considered a legitimate and successful jihad by almost all Afghans (and many Arabs who joined them). To denigrate the Taliban's current jihad would be to impugn the anti-Soviet jihad as well. The anti-Soviet jihad is yet another important cultural point of reference that resonates with many Afghans. In an interview, a Taliban commander named Gul Mohammed emphasized this theme as a rallying cry for public support:

Figure 4.2
Mullah Omar (Unconfirmed)

SOURCE: National Counterterrorism Center.
RAND *MG1122-4.2*

> Don't consider the present movement as Taliban only. This is
> a mass mutiny against the foreign presence, and all common
> Afghans are solely responsible for that. . . . Americans crashed our
> gates and the sanctity of our houses. They disrespected our tradi-
> tions and gave Christian missionaries a free hand to operate in
> Afghanistan. We just explained these features to the masses, who
> are our brothers and sisters. . . . The more they oppress Afghans,
> the more the reaction generates against the Americans. The same
> happened with Soviet Russia [in the 1980s], and ultimately it was
> defeated in Afghanistan and collapsed. (Shahzad, 2006)

The Taliban harness this "mass mutiny" against foreign occupa-
tion primarily through appeals to the religious requirement to defend
Islam. The foundation of the Taliban's religious justification for vio-
lence is the legitimacy of defensive jihad against non-Muslim invaders.
Virtually all Islamic scholars agree that defensive jihad is permissible
in Islam, but the Taliban invoke the more controversial concept that it
is an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) for all Muslims to come to the aid of
any Muslim under invasion. Here is Mansur Dadullah describing the
requirements of this duty in an interview with al-Jazeera:

I have a message to the Afghan people and all Muslims: they must continue to wage jihad, wherever they may be—whether it is jihad of the pen, of the tongue, of the sword, or of money. What is important is that they continue with the jihad, because it is an individual duty incumbent upon all Muslims. (al-Jazeera TV, 2007)

This amounts to a call for religious rulings, foreign fighters, and donations in support of the Taliban, whose primary mobilizing mechanisms are described below.

Resource Mobilization. The Taliban movement initially relied upon Mullah Omar's ability to marshal religious students (*talib*) against the country's warlords. Mullah Omar's main asset for mobilizing resources was the *madrasa* system, which provided thousands of recruits who would serve as fighters and religious police. Many recruits were Pashtun refugees who found safety in the Pakistani *madrasas* after the Soviet invasion (Roy, 2002). Beginning in 1994 as just a small band of religious students and refugees, these Taliban moved town-to-town, executing criminals and unpopular officials, enforcing sharia, and drumming up a cult of personality around Mullah Mohammed Omar. The fact that these were religious students resonated with Afghans who had little sense of common identity beyond their tribe and viewed the warlords as corrupt and unjust.

The Taliban turned to their Pashtun strongholds when they faced imminent demise in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. By October 6, 2001—the day before U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan officially commenced—the Taliban were already seeking safe haven among Pashtun tribes along the Pakistani border and enjoining the support of key tribal leaders, as well as jihadist groups. As reported in the *Asia Times Online*:

Ethnic Pashtun Taliban are also cementing support among the Pashtun population on both sides of the border with Pakistan. Pashtun tribes of Afghan origin have been told by the Taliban that any indifference on their part could lead to the establishment of a non-Pashtun secular government in Afghanistan, and if this happens, the tribal leaders will be inviting the wrath of God. This

approach is paying off, with support for the Taliban in Pakistan's tribal belt increasing…

Militant organizations such as the Lashkar-i-Taiba, the Jaish-i-Mohammed and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen are also sending their men. To reinforce their internal strength, the Taliban are banking heavily on outside Pashtun support, particularly from the tribes settled in key strategic areas along the Pakistan-Afghan borders. (Shahzad, 2001)

Since their fall from power in 2002, the Taliban have staged a resurgence from these Pashtun strongholds by supplanting a weakened tribal system with a violent social movement that crosses historical tribal and geographical boundaries. In an interview with the *Asia Times Online*, Owais Ahmad Ghani—the governor of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)—explained the Taliban's outmaneuvering of the tribes and tribal *malik* in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan:

The militant organizations, they are highly organized because of their background, they are battle-hardened and heavily armed and very well funded. And very importantly, while tribal influence is limited to its own area, its own people, the militant organizations have cross-tribal linkages, cross-border linkages, international linkages. And while tribes are bound by their tribal traditions and customary laws [*riwaj*], the militant organizations are not. So they have out-gunned, out-funded and out-organized the tribal *malik* and his tribe, and that's why that system could not respond. (Shahzad, 2009a)

Pakistani *madrasas* and refugee camps remain key Taliban recruiting pools, just as in 1994. Although millions of Afghans have been repatriated since 2002, more than 1.7 million refugees remain in Pakistan, where they are permitted to stay until 2012 (Rummery, 2009). (Almost 1 million are estimated to be in Iran as well [Shahzad, 2007].) As for the *madrasas*, a local politician in Quetta described Taliban recruitment efforts there:

> In every *madrasa* in Balochistan there are one or two Taliban recruiters. . . . If you want to sign on for *jihad*, the easiest thing is to stay at one of these madrassas and someone will for sure contact you. These recruiters keep a vigil on your activities, and once they realize that you are a genuine fighter, they will certainly talk to you and put you in touch with the Taliban commanders. (Ansari, 2003)

Another important mobilizing mechanism is the Taliban's media apparatus, which has been the target of repeated U.S. efforts to counter or silence it (Dreazen and Gorman, 2009). Since at least 2009, U.S. defense and intelligence agencies have focused in particular on unlicensed FM broadcasts from the Pakistani border. The Taliban broadcast threats and decrees via radio, thus providing them with a persistent presence among the local population even when they cannot physically occupy the battlespace. The Taliban also broadcast news reports about potentially controversial U.S. military operations, often shaping public perception of these events before the U.S. can respond (due in part to a reportedly cumbersome information operations approval process) (Garfield, 2007, pp. 23–32).

In addition to radio, the Taliban have embraced the Internet as a means to disseminate propaganda, and output has skyrocketed, as depicted in Figure 4.3. Al-Qa'ida played a significant role in establishing the Taliban's web capabilities, supporting the Taliban through its Al-Sahab Foundation for Media Publications through the mid-2000s. The Taliban now appear to independently produce media via their Media Relations Office, and distribute it via their *Sawt al-Jihad* website and numerous jihadist web forums. The Taliban also publish a bimonthly magazine, *Al-Sumud*.

Some of the Taliban's savviest media efforts to mobilize public support have come in the form of its rulebook (*layeha*). First released by Mullah Omar to shura members during Ramadan 2006, the initial rulebook included 29 rules dealing with military discipline and the chain of command. Some rules appeared to be designed to garner public sympathy, even if only through publication, rather than actual enforcement:

Figure 4.3
Monthly Taliban Propaganda Releases via the Internet, January 2008–July 2010
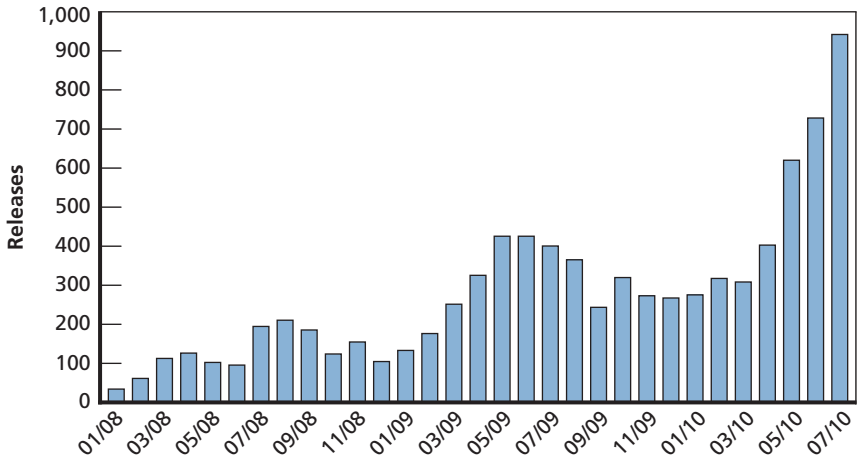
> If any fighter or commander is disturbing innocent people he should be warned by his leader. If he doesn't change his behavior he should be expelled from movement.
>
> It is strictly forbidden for mujahideen to raid houses and take weapons by force from civilians without the permission of the district or provincial commander.
>
> Mujahideen have no rights to take the money or personal belongings of the people. (Quoted in Dickey, 2006)

Mullah Omar updated this rulebook in May 2009 in order to address the U.S. military's new counter-insurgency strategy, with some guidelines seemingly designed to undermine the government and "win hearts and minds":

> Refuge can be granted to members of the puppet government on the condition they quit their job and stop receiving payment. . . .

Refuge can be granted to a person who offers to serve the cause of the mujahideen while remaining part of the enemy's side.

Group commanders and mujahideen are not authorized to intervene in the affairs of the local population. If the local inhabitants seek mediation and arbitration, then provincial or district leaders of the mujahideen can resolve the disputes.

Kidnapping for ransom is strictly banned. The leaders of the area must take steps to stop this practice immediately.

Mujahideen should behave well with the general public and make efforts to bring their hearts closer to them.

Mujahideen must avoid discrimination on tribal, ethnic, and geographical bases. (al-Mujahid, 2009a)

The Taliban updated the rulebook again in May 2010. This latest incarnation *explicitly* describes the need to win hearts and minds, albeit through sharia: "The Taliban must treat civilians according to Islamic norms and morality to win over the hearts and minds of the people." However, the rulebook also says that civilians who work with international forces or the Afghan government can be killed because they are "supporters of the infidels" (Associated Press, 2010).

Opportunism and Adaptation. As previously discussed, the leadership council of the Taliban does not share al-Qa'ida's exclusive commitment to violent jihad and is amenable to a political solution. However, the Taliban insist there can be no reconciliation until the departure of occupying forces, and Taliban officials have indicated concerns about their personal safety and offers of amnesty (Azami, 2011). The Karzai government has been formally and publicly pursuing reconciliation since January 2010 and has formed a council headed by former President Burhanuddin Rabbani to facilitate negotiations for peace and reconciliation (Maroney, 2010). The conditions articulated by both the Karzai and Obama administrations require the Taliban to renounce violence, sever ties with al-Qa'ida, and accept the Afghan constitution (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010). President Karzai

also has called for cooperative security and economic arrangements with neighboring countries, in recognition of the Pakistani government's role in strategically supporting and opposing the Taliban's continued violence (Karzai, 2011). For its part, the Pakistani foreign ministry agreed in January 2011 to create with Afghanistan a joint working body on peace and reconciliation efforts (Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

Regardless of the timeline and conditions of reconciliation set by the Karzai and Obama administrations, the Taliban will remain for many Afghans not a potential partner with the government but instead the only alternative to it. Reconciliation involves not just reconciling the Taliban with the government, but also reconciling the Afghan public to the government.

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. The Taliban have been conducting their insurgency for many years and can therefore point to many deeds along the way, including their period of control in Afghanistan. What was perhaps most relevant in this case, however, was the consistent presence and related intimidation by the Taliban.

Conclusions

This chapter has applied the factor tree and social movement theory as diagnostic tools for analyzing public support to the Taliban insurgency. The empirical analysis largely confirmed the higher-level aspects of the proposed factor-tree depiction of Chapter Two (Figure 2.2), but suggested quite a number of restructurings and re-labelings at lower levels, as well as the fact of major context-specific differences in the salience of factors. Figure 4.4 presents our final factor tree for the case of Afghanistan, as described in this chapter. This uses the final factor tree of the study (Figure 2.3), but with thick arrows to indicate factors with noteworthy significance, very light arrows indicate factors that were not very noticeable in this case, and red lettering of an item in a bulleted list or parenthesis indicates particularly significant items.

The factor tree analysis revealed a multitude of factors at work— some of them distinct, some of them cross-cutting.

Figure 4.4
Factors in Public Support for the Taliban in Afghanistan, 2009–2010

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

RAND *MG1122-4.4*
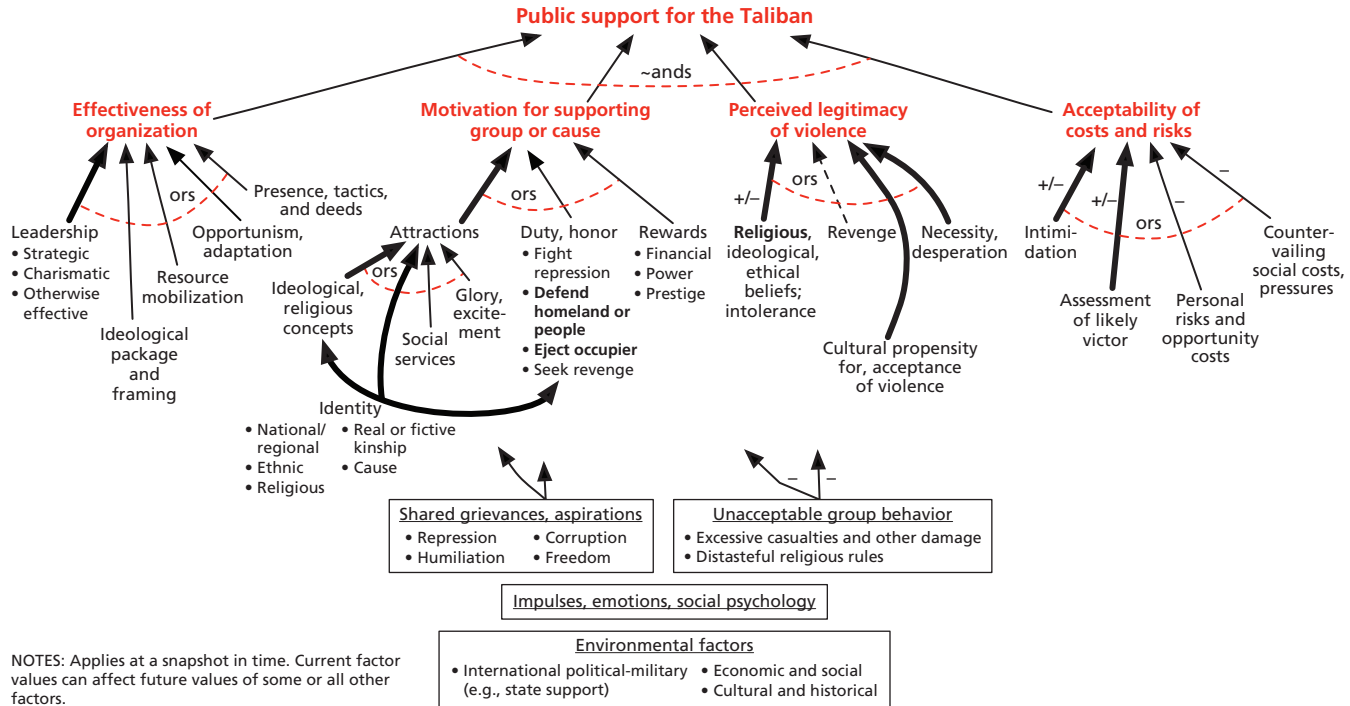
Key insights from the social movement lens include the Taliban's ability to tap into cultural points of reference, such as the anti-Soviet jihad and the Cloak of the Prophet, as well as the strategic and ideological points of contention between al-Qa'ida and various elements of the Taliban. Moreover, the Taliban continue to mobilize support through their religious narrative, effectively harnessing media and social networks to shape public opinion.

Lastly, both diagnostic tools suggested a few ways to significantly reduce violence in Afghanistan through cross-cutting issues that could undermine multiple causes of support: namely, de-legitimizing the Taliban's religious authority and justifications for violence, reducing negative perceptions of the intent and effects of the U.S. "invasion," and creating political opportunities for some elements of the Taliban.

Public Support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey

Introduction

Background and Purpose

This chapter reviews reasons for public support of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, the PKK). What became the PKK began as a small clandestine cell of Marxist and nationalist radicals in 1973; it turned into a complex terrorist organization that to this day maintains a few thousand armed fighters and manages to muster at least a few percentage points for its legal party in general elections. It issued a manifesto of Kurdish independence in 1978 (see also the chronology in this chapter's appendix).

The discussion that follows is organized largely round the top-level factors of Figure 2.2: motivation for supporting the group or cause, perceived legitimacy of violence, acceptability of costs and risks, and availability of mobilizing mechanisms. We treat the latter, however, as dealing with the organizational effectiveness of the PKK (the factor highlighted in the study's final factor tree), as seen through the lens of social movement theory. We end with a version of the study's final factor tree (Figure 2.4) specialized to the PKK case. This incorporates organizational effectiveness into a single integrated factor tree that also includes refinements motivated by the cases described in Chapters Three, Four, and Six.

Methodology

In studying the PKK, we drew on influential histories of the PKK and Kurds in Turkey; Turkish news accounts; websites that are affiliated with or are updated by the PKK; formal indictments against the PKK leader and the PKK's urban organization; and published memoirs of people who were PKK members or commanders who fought against the PKK.[1] Much of the material was available only in Turkish.

Factors Affecting Public Support

Motivations for Supporting Group or Cause

Kurdish Identity. The most important factor that prepared the ground for emergence of nationalist terrorist groups was the denial of Kurdish identity. Even in the early years, laws did not prevent Kurds from participating in political activities, but any mention of Kurdishness or Kurdish identity during these activities sometimes led to prosecution, harassment by security forces, and stigmatization by the mainstream political parties and the press. This was especially true before PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured in 1999. His capture and the European Union's recognition of Turkey as a candidate member country opened the way for a series of legal reforms that brought increased freedom regarding the Kurdish language and culture. Restrictions on Kurdish publications have been removed. The Political Parties Law still forbids use of languages other than Turkish for political activities, and Kurdish cannot be taught in regular schools, but Kurdish is somewhat tolerated in certain cases. For example, a Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) deputy Ahmet Türk was prosecuted for using Kurdish in the Parliament, but charges were dropped in February 2011 due to Türk's parliamentary immunity.

Heavy-Handed Security Measures. The Turkish State's heavy-handed measures against Kurdish activists are seen as the key factor that pushed some Kurds to support the PKK insurgency that started in

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[1]   We did not conduct quantitative content analysis, as illustrated in Chapter Four for Afghanistan.

1984 (Oran, 2010a, pp. 209–224). Kirişçi and Winrow (2003, p. 113) quote Abdülmelik Fırat, the grandson of Kurdish rebel Sheikh Said (the leader of rebellion in 1925), who argues that the "government's repressive policies in the eastern parts of the country played a greater role in enhancing Kurdish national consciousness than the propaganda work of the PKK" at the early stages of the insurgency. Extrajudicial killings of Kurdish citizens in the 1990s, at the hands of confessants (ex-PKK members working for the state security apparatus) "have given the PKK a powerful propaganda argument which it has cleverly used" (Bruinessen, 1996, p. 22).

A report published by Turkish Police Academy's International Terrorism Center (UTSAM) (quoted in Bayrak, 2010) also notes that

> Anger at the state, some mistakes of the past, forcing people out of villages, threats from soldiers and public humiliation have caused immense resentment among the people. Joining the PKK and taking up arms has been shown by the PKK as the only way to get out.

Before Öcalan was captured, ill treatment and abuse have often included "cases of torture, disappearances and extra-judicial executions" that were "recorded regularly" (European Commission, 1998, p. 14), arbitrary detainment, and violence under detention. According to the UTSAM report, frustration that results from economic hardships and lack of good future prospects has been another factor in the decision to join the ranks of the PKK (as discussed in Esentur, 2007, pp. 71–79; Dikici, 2008, p. 125).

The PKK's Uniqueness for Those Motivated. The PKK largely eliminated other Kurdish political groups before 1978 (Çağaptay, 2007, p. 46); since 1991, it has taken control of legal Kurdish parties by a blend of intimidation and propaganda. The PKK-controlled political parties give the party a legal front that mobilizes considerable public support. These draw sympathizers who actively promote the PKK's messages and goals, encouraging Kurdish politicians to advocate increasingly radical positions. More moderate legal Kurdish parties have often been closed.

Ideological Motivations. Kurdish nationalism is a core element of PKK ideology, although the ideology has other aspects as well. Ideology is definitely central to PKK members, who have to go through thousands of pages worth of party training material, most of which are made up of Öcalan's speeches (Özcan, 2005, p. 405). Except for consistently stressing Kurdish identity, however, the PKK has showed a good deal of "ideological flexibility" over 30 years in order to appeal to masses, although for the most part preserving its Marxist-Leninist core. For example, the PKK has changed its story on Islam. Öcalan argued in his 1978 "Path to Revolution in Kurdistan-Manifesto" that "Islam is a Trojan horse used by every invader in Kurdistan." According to the manifesto, Islam is used to erase national consciousness of the Kurdish people, and it is an obstacle to the fight for national liberation. Öcalan eased his anti-religious tones toward the end of 1980s, however, to increase support among pious Kurds (Bruinessen, 1994). Indeed, the PKK even founded Islamic front organizations. In another revision of its ideological path, the PKK distanced itself from Marxism-Leninism at the party congress in 1995 and claimed that it did not have a separatist goal (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, p. 25). In 2006, Öcalan called for a "democratic nation" based on people's organizing into "thousands of associations" for protecting cultural rights, the environment, and workers' and women's rights. Öcalan wrote in 2006 that he "too once wanted to found a nation state with force and violence . . . but I find . . . nationalism and Reel Socialism, which turned into state capitalism, harmful" (Öcalan, 2006).[2] It seems that ideology is a central feature for *members* of the PKK, but it is less clear that members are drawn by the rather incoherent ideology in the first place (except for its Kurdish-nationalist core). Rather, they must learn the rest of the ideology as a matter of doctrine.

Shared Group Glory. Many recruits are reported to have joined the PKK in search of adventure, or to share group glory. In order to attract more adventurous people in its first years, the PKK promoted its violent nature during its recruitment efforts and targeted students with

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[2] "Reel Socialism" refers in Turkish leftist-tradition parlance to socialism as it was practiced in the Soviet Union.

one-on-one propaganda that could last 24 hours straight (Özcan, 1999, p. 36; Marcus, 2007, p. 34). In one instance, PKK members deliberately heated up theoretical discussions against more crowded rival groups and started shooting randomly to create panic on the other side:

> It whipped aggressiveness of the KR [Kurdistan Revolutionaries][3] member, boosted his self confidence in conducting armed action, and impressed adventure seekers on the other group. This attitude was very effective on idle youth. Soon small groups of adventurous types gathered around KR. (Ersever, 1993, p. 45)

The excitement theme arises also in Marcus's research, who quotes an ex-PKK member:

> You get these ideas in your head, like Rambo, and you want action and the state pressure pushes you toward the PKK. [PKK ideology is simple and offers] lots of opportunities for action, heroism, and martyrdom. (Marcus, 2007, p. 171)

Financial Incentives and Other Suggested Factors. We did not see much mention of financial incentives, kinship (i.e., family relationships rather than ethnicity), or prestige or power factors. Ideology rather than religion was important. Nor was there much discussion in terms of duty and honor per se. Rather, the salient attraction was primarily Kurdish nationalism—i.e., identification, ideology (at least for members), glory and excitement, and—as discussed later—intimidation.

Perceived Legitimacy of Violence

Pervasiveness of or Necessity of Violence. Kurdish society is not a stranger to bloody feuds between different tribes and families. Violence, indeed, has been quite common. The PKK's violence has sometimes been seen as an extension of (even an "apotheosis of") tribal violence, as in the PKK's wholesale killing of women, children, and old people in *korocu* ("village guard" villages). That interpretation of the wholesale killing being traditional is disputable, but the background

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[3] The PKK was known as the Kurdistan Revolutionaries before 1978.

of violence is not.[4] Marcus (2007, p. 116) argues that some Kurds saw PKK violence on civilians as an unavoidable consequence of "the PKK's legitimate fight." Supporting the PKK's methods presumably becomes easier in a societal background that has included so much violence.

That said, the PKK's attacks on civilians had an ambiguous effect on the public support it received in 1980s. Marcus (2007, p. 116) states that reports of mass civilian murders by PKK in the 1980s were viewed as "state propaganda" by people who had little confidence in the state. In other cases, the perception of local people was that the PKK "only attacked village guards and their families" (Akyol, 1987).

Ideology. For the PKK, violence against civilians was acceptable[5] and continues to be so. Nevertheless, Öcalan, in order to avoid public backlash from PKK attacks on civilians, blamed the state (Perinçek, 2009, p. 68) and later dissidents who "abused the PKK's resources" (Öcalan, 1999) for mass murder of civilians in PKK attacks. Since 2004, the PKK has usually shifted its focus from attacking civilians to security forces. Nonetheless, the group has launched several urban bombings that have killed dozens of civilians, such as the suicide bomb attack in a crowded market building in Ankara in 2007, which killed seven people.

Revenge. Taking revenge against the state is a ubiquitous theme in pro-PKK websites. Similarly, an armed PKK youth branch, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), claims that its urban bomb attacks take revenge of the "State's attacks against the Kurdish people and Öcalan" (Rojaciwan, 2010). PKK sympathizers call for the PKK to take revenge during funerals of PKK members killed while fighting the Turkish military (Fadıl, 2010).[6]

Necessity of Violence. As discussed above, the PKK has eliminated other Kurdish nationalist parties and treats violence, and even terrorism, as acceptable and an inevitable consequence of the struggle.

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[4]   Bruinessen (1999b) reviews the nature and uses of violence in Kurdish conflict.

[5]   Öcalan said, "Let's kill and become the authority" following the PKK's attack on Pınarcık Village in 1987, in which 30 people, including 16 children, several women, and village guards, were killed (Bal and Özkan, 2007).

[6]   PKK sympathizers put a banner that read "APO, the PKK, Revenge" on the funeral vehicle that belonged to Adiyaman municipality.

Acceptability of Costs and Risks

Risk calculations have often entered into Kurdish citizens' decisions on whether to support the PKK, particularly in rural areas. Intimidation has played a central role. In earlier years especially, many villagers in Southeast Turkey had to choose between enrolling in the village guard system created by the state and risking retribution by the PKK, or refusing to enter the system and be exposed to harassment from security forces or to forced evacuation (*Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, 2010). In its third congress in 1986, the party enacted a "recruitment law," at which point PKK members started abducting children to its ranks (Marcus, 2007, pp. 114–119).

The capacity and willingness to use intimidation without reservation enabled the PKK to prevent support to the state and to gain the population's support, voluntary or involuntary. After 1984, PKK exerted a considerable pressure on villagers in Southeast Turkey and gained important influence over them by punishing anyone who opposed it with death. The PKK extorts money from Kurds and Turks in Europe (Haut, 1998) and elsewhere (Moor and Flower, 2010).[7] Intimidation is also a very efficient tool for finding and purging "traitors," as defined by Öcalan, who—before his capture in 1999—were summarily executed on his orders (Çürükkaya, 2005).

Countervailing Pressures? PKK's Opposition to the Tribal Structure. The strong tribal structure of Kurds has sometimes worked against the PKK, which ideologically opposes tribal leaders. The PKK's first attack was on prominent Kurdish tribal leader and Justice Party deputy Mehmet Celal Bucak. This attack singlehandedly mobilized the sizeable Bucak tribe against the PKK. Using the tribal structure to its advantage, Turkey then launched its village guard program to pay, arm, and equip villages that were exposed to PKK attacks and its recruitment drives after 1985. This said, the tribal structure has also given the PKK one of its most persistent propaganda themes; it gained public sympathy partly because of its vocal opposition to tribal lords who concentrated material and political power in their own hands (Ersever, 1993, p. 10). Thus, regional tribalism has been both a motiva-

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[7] Australian police conducted raids against PKK sympathizers suspected of forcing Kurds to contribute cash for the PKK, in August 2010.

tion for support of the PKK and the source of countervailing pressures against it.

Effectiveness of the Organization: Public Support Through the Lens of Social Movement Theory

How, then, does the PKK organize, plan, and marshal resources to support its objectives? What follows reviews this factor through the lens of social movement theory, as an elaboration of what was called "availability of mobilization mechanism" in Figure 2.2. We organize by leadership and organization, ideology and framing, mobilization of resources, and opportunism and adaptation.

Leadership and Organization. For a PKK member, Öcalan (Figure 5.1) would easily fit into Weber's charismatic leadership type, described by Weber as "deriving its legitimacy not from rules . . . but from a devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person" (Conger and Kanungo, 1987, pp. 637–647). Three of the eight duties of a member of the Democratic

Figure 5.1
Abdullah Öcalan
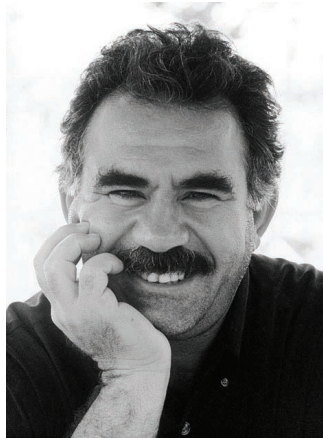
SOURCE: Photo by Halil Uysal, Archive of the International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Ocalan— Peace in Kurdistan." Used under the Creative Commons Attribution license.

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Confederation of Kurdistan (KCK), an organization that encompasses the PKK, are to "regard freedom of President APO [Öcalan] as his reason to live, to internalize the APOist [Öcalan's] thought and fight against everything that contradicts it, and to implement policies and tactics determined by the Party leadership," where "leadership" refers specifically to Öcalan.[8]

PKK Fronts and Legal Activities. The PKK organized itself under three principal components: the party (the PKK), an armed force, and a front organization for mobilizing the population. The front organization, which is responsible for PKK propaganda, will be detailed later. The PKK-affiliated Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) organizes rallies, where support for PKK is voiced by participants. Because the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe has more than 800,000 people and enjoys freedom of expression, PKK publications and mass media institutions have been able to proliferate there (Romano, 2002, pp. 136–137).

As mentioned earlier, the PKK's violence and intimidation, guided by the group's radical leftist and nationalist ideology, has been a key factor in the support of the population. The lack of alternative mobilizing mechanisms is also an important factor. In early years especially, PKK violence secured public support by eradicating rival or nonviolent Kurdish groups to become a monopoly, putting immense pressure on the local population to forcibly gather support, and stirring the feelings of Kurds to increase attractiveness of the group as a resistance organization. This strategy was applied on the background of disillusionment of Kurds with the state, the extreme poverty of the Southeast, and lack of political and cultural freedoms for the Kurdish identity.

As seen through the lens of social movement theory, PKK leadership diagnoses the political situation regarding Kurds, puts forward a prescription, builds an organization to follow that prescription, identifies different segments of Kurdish society and other actors relevant to party purposes, and finally disseminates messages tailored to each of those segments. To discuss this, the next section focuses on the KCK,

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[8]   The word "leadership" specifically refers to Öcalan himself and no one else. He reportedly uses this term to give an institutional sense to his decisions (Özcan, 2005, p. 405).

founded in 2005,[9] which aims to set up a parallel administration in Turkey's Southeast and which states, in its founding charter, that the PKK is its "ideological power." The KCK is allegedly responsible for organizing violent protests that wreaked havoc in Turkish cities in 2009. A wave of police operations since 2009 resulted in a penal case with 151 people (103 of them arrested, including some elected Kurdish mayors) to stand trial (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2010).[10]

Ideological Package and Framing. Even today, Öcalan retains much of the anti-capitalist, anti-Western, and socialist ideology that pushed him to start his movement in the 1970s. Spending over a decade in prison since 1999, he developed a new theory that rejects state-based solutions to the Kurdish problem and promotes grassroots self-organization of Kurds on the basis of ecological and pro-gender equality principles.

Diagnosis of the Kurdish Question. Öcalan originally argued that Kurdish grievances resulted from colonization by the "exploiter Turkish state." He divided Kurdish people among collaborators to be eliminated, proletarians to be educated, villagers to be used in the armed conflict, and intellectuals and students who would be cultivated to lead the Kurdish nation.[11] In the early years, the Turkish government's suppression of publications and political movements voicing demands for Kurdish identity rights made it easier for the PKK to argue that moderate behavior was useless (Barkey and Fuller, 1998, pp. 45–46). His KCK structure since 2007 follows a different perspective, dividing the population among women, young people, intellectuals, and laborers.

Prescriptions. Whereas in the 1980s Öcalan demanded a separate state run by the PKK, he later dropped this idea and formulated a concept of a "Democratic Republic" that calls for self-organization of Kurds into a myriad of committees and congresses for self-rule and autonomy from the state, along with explicit recognition of Kurdish identity rights in the Constitution and his release.

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[9]   KCK's name was Koma Komalên Kurdistan (KKK) between 2005 and 2007.

[10]   PKK was quick to frame operations as an infringement against freedom of expression.

[11]   Again, the word "leadership" specifically refers to Öcalan himself and no one else.

Framing and Targeting of Messages. The PKK fine-tunes its propaganda to different segments of Kurds, but it also employs common propaganda themes to lure them into its ranks.

Kurds in Turkey. Ubiquitous in declarations of the PKK and its affiliated organizations are two messages: The party must be accepted by the state as the only valid interlocutor for Kurds, and Öcalan must be freed.

Kurdish Women. As part of its campaign to turn grievances into violent action, the PKK appeals to Kurdish women who live in a male-dominated social setting.[12] PKK frames male oppression of women as an extension of state oppression, which "makes a woman merely an object" (Roj Publications, 2005).[13] The KCK has a separate organization that theoretically encompasses all Kurdish women (Koma Jinen Bilind, KJB), as well as an armed unit composed of hundreds of women.

Kurdish Youth. The goal of KCK's youth branch is to "organize the youth around a common identity in the workplace, school, and at the neighborhood" (Gundem-Online, 2007). The call to resort to violence is a constant message to the youth in KCK propaganda. KCK's Executive Council president and the PKK's commander in chief Murat Karayılan called "the Kurdish youth to be present in all aspects of the struggle for freedom" and added that "they must join the guerilla [or the HPG, People's Defense Forces, the PKK's armed wing] if they want to be at the most strategic front" (Karayılan, 2009). The KCK is allegedly responsible for organizing youth in violent protests against security forces, which have resulted in thousands of children being detained or arrested on charges of PKK membership in Southeast Turkey in the last few years, fueling further anger against the police.

Kurdish Alevis. The PKK tried to cultivate Kurdish Alevi support in the mid-1990s, without much success. Nevertheless, the KCK struc-

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[12] An unnamed expert quoted in the UTSAM report argued that "the society's view of girls is very clear. Only boys are counted; to them, the girls aren't there. . . . They don't have any place in the family; they are forced into marriage" (Bayrak, 2010). Female PKK militants quoted in the UTSAM report stated that they would rather lose their lives in combat rather than go back to their old lives.

[13] Moreover, "Taking up weapons of women is a fight against classification, colonialism, and violence of the state" (Roj Publications, 2005).

ture has a place for an Alevi branch that seeks cooperation from the left-leaning Kurdish Alevis.

Islamists and Religiously Conservative Kurds. The PKK's main contenders in the region are the Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP), in power since 2002, and the Turkish Hizbullah, which was an extremely violent organization before its leader was killed and his successors renounced violence after 2000. To counter the influence of Islamist parties, which spread with charities and communities that resonate with piousness of Kurds, the PKK occasionally tries to give religious justifications for its messages (Milliyet, 2008),[14] a tactic first adopted in PKK's second conference in May 1990 along with decision to prepare a general Kurdish uprising.

Kurdish Intellectuals, Authors, and Artists. The PKK exhalts intellectuals and artists that support both the PKK's goals and methods, whereas it is quick to stigmatize any artist who deviates from the party line, even those artists who promote their Kurdish identity. A female Kurdish singer, Rojin, was quickly labeled as a "state Kurd" and her concerts in Southeast Turkey were "banned" by the PKK, because she appeared many times on "TRT Şeş," Turkey's state television station that broadcasts in Kurdish.

Kurdish Diaspora in Europe. The PKK diligently spreads its message in the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, which is composed of hundreds of thousands of Kurds from Turkey who settled especially in Germany and France during different waves of worker migration. After the 1980 military coup that cracked down on mostly leftist groups, many Kurdish intellectuals, activists, and militants took refuge in Europe, accelerating politicization of the Kurdish masses. PKK managed to recruit the biggest number of supporters among these Kurds; it mobilized students and workers and set up publishing houses (Bruinessen, 2000).

Turkish Leftists. The PKK attempted to mobilize radical Turkish leftists for its cause and set up the "Turkish Revolutionary People's Party" (DHP) in 1992, but these efforts did not yield significant results

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[14]   The PKK is accused of employing pious looking men to make press statements against military operations against the PKK and using organizations such as "Kurdistan Patriotic Imams' Union" to disseminate its propaganda (Indictment Against Öcalan, 1999, p. 10).

(Indictment Against Öcalan, 1999, p. 10). The PKK sometimes makes alliances with other terrorist organizations, such as the TİKKO (Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army, a weak terrorist group) and DHKP-C (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front), but also occasionally enters into turf wars against them. In 1998, the PKK formed a broad-based alliance with Turkish radical leftist groups in Europe (Indictment Against Öcalan, 1999).

Mobilization of Resources.

Organization. Öcalan's prescription requires him to organize Kurdish masses along the parallel administration known as the KCK. This means manpower and media are more important than financial backing or state support, although these two must also be provided to a degree.

Manpower and Different Levels of Support Expected by PKK from Kurds. The Democratic Confederation of Kurdistan (KCK), according to its charter, encompasses the PKK. The KCK identifies and exploits the underlying reasons for support of the PKK briefly listed in the first section to translate grievances into action. The charter that reestablished the PKK defines a party member as "a person who . . . prioritizes unifying his will with that of the party . . . by bringing himself to the level of APOist [Öcalan's] style, tempo, and manners" ("Draft for Reestablishment of the PKK," 2005). The KCK demands unconditional and complete support from every person, Kurdish or not, in Southeast Turkey.

Direct and Indirect State Support. Using a foreign state's soil and tolerance of legal and illegal activities has always been essential for the PKK. Currently, the PKK is based in the Qandil Mountains in northern Iraq and enjoys logistic and training opportunities there.

Financial Resources. The PKK reportedly raises $50–100 million annually, down from $200–500 million in 1990s (Jonsson and Cornell, 2008). The PKK successfully made a transition from relying on state support for material resources to self-financing through diaspora funding and drug trafficking (Jonsson and Cornell, 2008), despite a significant reduction in revenues. As stated before, the ideological appeal to mobilize masses is more important to the PKK, which

is not as much dependent on establishing a social welfare network as insurgent parties in other states.

Media. PKK operates a wide variety of TV channels and sells a wide range of publications in Europe. It makes ample use of the Internet to recruit and inform its sympathizers of its activities.

Opportunism and Adaptation. The PKK has adapted over the years and continues to do so. As noted earlier, Öcalan moved away from support of Soviet-style socialism as it became evident that the Soviet model had collapsed; he greatly moderated the PKK's anti-Islamist tone in an effort to improve its appeal; and he no longer calls for a separate state.

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. The PKK has continued to take specific actions, such as targeted attacks to show its power, but the more important point here is the ubiquitous presence and influence of the PKK in much of the relevant region.

Conclusions

Public support for the PKK stems from ideological framing of grievances. It is not so much that the PKK has a clear and consistent political ideology (it does not), but rather that it has been successful in framing the grievances in a somewhat ideological manner that focuses on Kurdish identity. State repression and the lack of means of political expression were more important factors of public support during the PKK's founding years and during the 1990s. After 2000, however, the PKK leader's "ideological entrepreneurship" assumed a more important role, and messages to different segments of Kurdish society had a multiplier effect on Kurds' remaining grievances. Intimidation has never ceased to be an effective method of mobilizing resources (votes, party activism) and denying those resources to rival political parties. Intimidation has also played a major role over time. The PKK is feared, and the consequences of not supporting it are dire.

Interestingly, even though most of the restrictions on Kurdish language and expressions of Kurdish nationalism are now gone,[15] public support for the PKK does not seem to have diminished. Tezcür (2009) argues that "explanations based on resource mobilization, political opportunity structures, and cognitive framing fail to provide a satisfactory answer," to the continuation of the Kurdish question. He goes on to argue that democratization will not necessarily facilitate the end of violent conflict as long as it introduces competition that challenges the political hegemony of the insurgent organization over its ethnic constituency. Under the dynamics of competition, the survival of the organization necessitates radicalization rather than moderation.

The PKK is more dependent on manpower (sympathizers, fighters, voters) and media to disseminate its propaganda than it is on financial well-being and support from foreign states, although these are needed to a degree. A significant reduction in state sponsorship and support along with loss of revenues has not prevented it from mobilizing a sizable number of Kurds.

As indicated in Table 5.1, our review of the PKK case tends to confirm a large fraction of the factors hypothesized in the original factor tree (Figure 2.2). Ethnic identity loomed especially large (dominating what is coded as "ideology"), as did the role of a charismatic leader and the role of intimidation by the PKK. Another factor legitimizing violence was the absence of alternatives—not just in the sense of the government being too powerful to confront in other ways, but also because the PKK has largely destroyed or neutralized competitor nonstate organizations. The substructure of Figure 2.2 under "Motivation" did not appear particularly apt, however, because, e.g., it did not adequately highlight political and ethnic issues. That affected our study's final factor tree.

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[15]   The election threshold remains in place. That bars parties from gaining seats in Parliament unless their vote rate countrywide is at least 10 percent in the general elections. Pro-Kurdish parties gained around 4 and 6 percentage points in 1995, 1999, and 2002. They overcame this obstacle by nominating independent candidates in the 2007 general elections. The threshold does not apply to such independents, who later rejoined their party after being elected.

Table 5.1
Public Support Factors Observed in the PKK Case

Structure from Initial Factor Tree				
Top-Level Factor	**Second-Level Factor**	**Third-Level Factor**	**Observed for PKK Case**	**Comments**
Motivation for support	Attractions	Financial incentives		
		Glory, excitement	Yes	
		Ideology or religion	Yes	Primarily the ideology of Kurdish identity
		Political, external threat		Kurdish identity
	Felt need for action (duty to act)	Revenge	Yes	
		Social movement		
	Identification	Shared goals		Kurdish identity
		Social services		
		Kinship		Kurdish identity
		Unacceptable group behavior (–)	Yes	
	Social pressures	Peer influence		
		Respected authorities		
		Cultural obligations		
		Prestige, power		
Perceived legitimacy of violence	Religious, ideological, or ethical		Yes	Ideological
	Cultural propensity for violence		Yes	
	Necessity or effectiveness		Yes	PKK has destroyed rivals

Table 5.1—Continued

Structure from Initial Factor Tree

Top-Level Factor	Second-Level Factor	Third-Level Factor	Observed for PKK Case	Comments
Acceptability of costs and risks	Charged emotions			
	Intimidation		Yes	Major factor
	Likelihood of insurgent victory			Intermingled with intimidation
	Personal risks and opportunity costs			
	Social costs			
	Countervailing social costs and pressures		Yes	Tribal resistance to PKK
Effectiveness of organization	Leadership and organization		Yes	Cult of Öcalan
	Ideological package and framing		Yes	Kurdish identity and rights
	Resource mobilization		Yes	
	Opportunism and adaptation		Yes	Flexible ideology
	Presence, tactics, and deeds		Yes	Ubiquitous presence

Figure 5.2 shows the relative importance observed for various factors as represented in the final factor tree of our study (Figure 2.4).

Using the integrated factor tree, which combines insights from social movement theory, offers a more complete explanation for the public support the PKK receives. The PKK is sometimes viewed as the consequence of Kurds' grievances, and other times it is explained as the reason for these grievances. Political grievances are not enough by themselves to start a campaign as violent as that of the PKK. The party's leadership has a very influential role in defining when, where, and against whom violence should be used. Social movement theory rightly

Figure 5.2
Factors in Public Support of the PKK in Turkey

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

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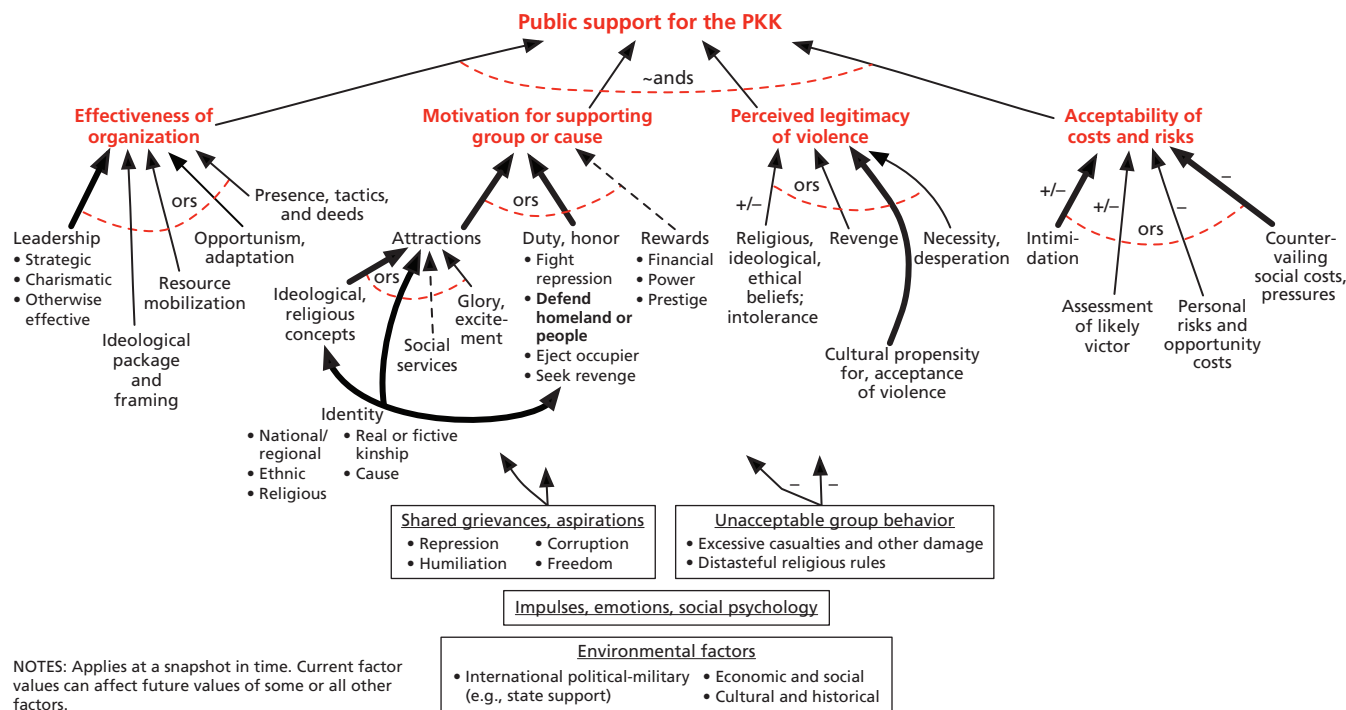
focuses attention on the PKK leadership cadre and its strategy when explaining the various aspects of the violence. Factor trees offer a versatile way to organize the underlying real and perceived grievances that the PKK was able to exploit. They show that not all insurgencies feed on the same type of grievances, and they help to map the circumstances under which an insurgency operates. In the Turkish case, repression of the Kurdish identity prepared the ground for the PKK, but the particularly violent nature of the insurgency can only be explained by a proper focus on its ideologically and politically motivated leadership.

Appendix to Chapter Five: Selected Events in the PKK Insurgency

Table 6.3 itemizes important events in the history of the PKK insurgency in Turkey.

Table 5.3
Selected Events in the PKK Insurgency

Date	Event
October 27, 1978	PKK publishes manifesto declaring independent socialist state of Kurdistan
November 27, 1978	Founding Congress of PKK
September 12, 1980	Turkey military coup, with subsequent political crackdowns; PKK leaders leave country
August 20–25, 1982	Second PKK Party Congress (in Syria); decision to start guerilla war for Kurdish state
August 15, 1984	PKK armed insurgency begins; Turkish state subsequently deploys forces to Kurdish areas and creates Kurdish militia known as the Village Guards
Mid-1990s	Peak violence; insurgency and counterinsurgency
August 1, 1998	PKK declares ceasefire
February 15, 1999	Öcalan arrested (in Kenya) and returned to Turkey
September 1, 1999	PKK declares cease fire (lasts until 2004); forces go into Iraqi mountains

Table 5.3—Continued

Date	Event
February 2000	PKK declares end of war and intention to use peaceful methods
April 2002	PKK declares its mission fulfilled; announces new political organization KADEK, succeeded in 2003 by KONGRA-GEL
2002	AK party rises to power in Turkey; restrictions on Kurdish language and culture are reduced
June 1, 2004	PKK resumes insurgency
2004–2008	Considerable violence
April 2005	KONGRA-GEL reassumes name PKK (or New PKK); later, KCK emerges, which includes PKK
2009	Turkey opens Kurdish-language TV and holds elections, with pro-Kurdish party winning majority of votes in Southeast Turkey
April 13, 2009	PKK declares ceasefire after request by Öcalan
September 2009	"Kurdish initiative" by government, including more freedom of expression, partial amnesties
December 2009	Democratic Society Party (DTP) disallowed by Turkish Constitutional Court; leaders are arrested for terrorism; insurgency re-erupts despite ceasefire
2010	On-and-off ceasefires; Öcalan says that he is abandoning efforts to stimulate dialogue between the government and PKK, leaving PKK commanders in charge of conflict
May 2011	Major Turkish-wide protests by BDP; thousands arrested by Turkish authorities
June 2011	Pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) wins numerous seats in Parliament, but a number of those elected remain in Turkish jails

SOURCES: Wikipedia (2011); BBC News (2011).
NOTE: The number of casualties over nearly 30 years has been in the tens of thousands.

Public Support for the Maoists in Nepal

Introduction

Purpose

This chapter assesses and suggests refinements of the methods mentioned in Chapters One and Two by discussing the case of Nepal's Maoist insurgency through 2010. This case is of interest for a variety of reasons, including being less familiar than many, dealing with a recent insurgency in Asia, and having an outcome in which insurgents became part of the government. After brief discussion of methodology we provide some broad background. We then use the model described in Chapter Two as the organizing basis for reviewing the case. We end with some conclusions, including suggestions for the conceptual modeling that were incorporated in the study's final version, and a version of that model specialized to the Nepalese case.

Methodology

For this chapter's research, we drew largely on the work of Nepalese scholars (written in English), material from the website of the United Communist Party of Nepal, other scholars, and publications of the International Crisis Group. Some use was made as well of Nepali-language news articles.

Background

Nepal's civil war left approximately 13,000 people dead and thousands missing. It involved one of history's most successful insurgency movements—the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), or CPN-M (we

119

use "CPN-M" and "Maoists" interchangeably). The growth and success of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal has left many confounded—both insiders and outsiders. Often hailed as a "Zone of Peace," Nepal never appeared as a candidate for a violent communist insurgency, nor were the people of this kingdom ever recognized as rebels (Marks, 2003). Nonetheless, starting with only a few dozen fighters in 1996, the CPN-M had amassed an estimated 30,000 fighters by the time of a peace settlement in its favor in 2006 (Eck, 2010). By 2008, it was heading Nepal's first postwar democratically elected government (Lawoti, 2010). How did the CPN-M manage to successfully recruit fighters and elicit public support within such a short period of time?

Behind its façade of being a "Shangri-La" kingdom, Nepal has historically suffered from various economic, social, and political shortcomings. In early 1990, Nepal was considered one of the poorest developing countries, ranking 113 out of 130 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Human Development Index (HDI), with a gross domestic product per capita of $896, life expectancy at birth of 52.5 years and an adult literacy rate of 25.6 percent (UNDP, 2010).[1] At that time, public opinion identified the root of Nepal's poor and unequal development in its undemocratic political system, characterized by strong identity-based power politics. Hence, while the world was witnessing the fall of the Berlin Wall, Nepal was undergoing its own revolution in 1990 when pro-democratic movements pressured King Birendra to start an era of constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy in Nepal.

Although democratization was initially seen by many Nepalese as a panacea, its faltering implementation resulted in meager results. Nepal's first decade of democratization was marked by political turbulence, as three parliamentary elections were held and nine governments came to power (Vaughan, 2006). Being deeply embroiled in

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[1]   The HDI is a composite index based on three indicators: life expectancy at birth; purchasing power parity (PPP)–adjusted income and educational attainment, as measured by adult literacy (2/3 weights); and combined gross primary, secondary, and tertiary school enrollment rate (1/3 weight). The value of this composite index ranges from 0 to 1. A country with a value closer to 0 indicates that a country is performing poorly along the above-mentioned three dimensions.

personalized internal party battles, Nepal's political leaders appeared to be apathetic to rising unemployment and showed little interest in the population's growing disillusionment with the lack of state services and performance. Corruption was also soaring, and, most importantly, the fruits of democracy were being served to only a handful of Brahmin and Chhetri caste groups.[2] Political parties, the main drivers of democracies, were being increasingly perceived as "tools of a high caste, corrupt and nepotistic Kathmandu elite" (International Crisis Group, 2003).

Although the ballot box is often said to be the coffin of revolutionary movements, Nepal's transition to democracy failed to immunize it from armed rebellion (Joshi and Mason, 2007). Nepal's leftist parties successfully led the pro-democratic movements in alliance with the Congress Party and entered the electoral arena in the new democratic order. However, growing disillusionment with the new system led one party in particular, the United People's Front Nepal (UPF) to split into two factions—the recognized and unrecognized. It was the unrecognized faction, led by Puspa Kamal Dahal—usually known as Prachanda—that decided to boycott elections and to later launch an armed uprising in March 1995. In February 1996, that party, the Unity Center, was renamed the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), or CPN-M (Thapa, 2004).[3] The same year, the CPN-M presented the Congress-led coalition government with a list of 40 demands that called for an end to the domination of foreign powers, such as India; a secular state, with the monarchy stripped of its privileges; and a wider range of social and economic reforms. Announcing that the government had failed to respond to its demands and that only a communist state could prevent Nepal from falling into an abyss, the CPN-M declared the "People's War" on February 13, 1996 (Hutt, 2004).

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[2]   Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (Hutt, 2004) notes that in most parts of Nepal the government agencies are the only providers of essential resources. In such a scenario, many Nepalese politicians have used their positions to form "distributional coalitions" through which they have maintained their power base and crushed opponents.

[3]   Table 6.3 at the end of this chapter outlines the political rise of CPN-M.

Until 2001, the Nepalese government was unwilling to recognize the Maoist insurgents as a serious threat to its power base. The government expressed ambivalence about labeling the Maoists as a "law and order" problem or "insurgents." Moreover, since the Maoists were establishing their bases in the distant, far-western region of Nepal in Rukum and Rolpa, the central government did not feel the need to address the increasingly turbulent and fragile situation in the villages there. Occasionally the government responded with police operations, such as "Operation Romeo"[4] and "Operation Kilo Sera II,"[5] but none were aimed at completely uprooting the movement. It was only in 2001, when the Maoists stepped up their campaign of violence and started affecting the center of the kingdom, that the Nepalese government attempted to control the flaring insurgency.

Since 2001, the entire Nepalese polity has been affected by the Maoist insurgency either directly or indirectly. In June of 2001, the already fragile state witnessed the Royal Family Massacre, which brought in an unpopular monarch, King Gyanendra.[6] Concomitantly, the political parties struggled to coordinate their response to the increas-

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[4]   Operation Romeo, in 1995, was the first offensive campaign launched by the government against the Maoists. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba sanctioned the operation in response to the unrecognized Maoist party's active recruitment in Rolpa and Rukum districts. According to the *Human Rights Yearbook: Nepal, 1995* (Informal Sector Service Center, 1995, as cited in Thapa with Sijapati, 2004), nearly 6,000 locals fled their villages, and hundreds of innocent people were put into prison without a warrant, many of whom were also tortured.

[5]   Operation Kilo Sera II was sanctioned by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala in 1997. This operation was a "search and kill" mission and was carried out by the Nepalese police in and around all Maoist-controlled areas. It is estimated that in this operation 662 Maoists and 216 police officers were killed. During this operation, many people accused the police of killing innocent people as well as engaging in looting, rape, and torture.

[6]   The Royal Family Massacre occurred on June 1, 2001, on the grounds of the Narayanhiti Palace. According to widely circulated rumors, Crown Prince Dipendra was angry with his family about a marriage dispute. He shot at members of the Royal Family during a monthly family get-together. Ten Royal Family members, including the king and queen, were killed, while five other members were injured. Next, Crown Prince Dipendra shot himself but survived in a coma for four days. Consistent with the Nepalese Constitution, Crown Prince Dipendra was still crowned king, but he died soon after, on June 4, making him Nepal's shortest-reigning monarch. On the same day of his death, the late king's brother, Gyanendra, was crowned King of Nepal.

ingly powerful Maoist insurgency. In November 2001, in an attempt to control the rising Maoist insurgency, King Gyanendra declared a state of emergency, and instituted the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Ordinance (TADO), which publicly identified Maoists as "terrorists" and deployed the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) against them. Moreover, several constitutional articles relating to freedom of thought and expression, press, movement, peaceful assembly, and protection against preventive detention were suspended (Hutt, 2004). Following these amendments, in October 2002, King Gyanendra dismissed the government, citing its ineffective response to the Maoist problem as well as its inability to hold elections. The king then selected the new prime minister and required him to form a cabinet.

All three cabinet governments that were formed from 2002 to 2005 failed to steer the nation toward peace. They not only failed to control the Maoist insurgency but increasingly lost the support of the public. In 2005, declaring the need to defeat the Maoists, King Gyanendra assumed direct power, initiating a triangular political struggle between the monarchy, political parties, and Maoists (Thapa, 2010). Over time, the monarchy increasingly realized its limited influence. For its part, the Nepalese public was disgruntled with the ongoing unaccounted human rights abuses and the disruption of daily life. The political parties feared a coup whereby the monarchy would reinstate itself, while the Maoists continued to maintain their stronghold. This political impasse finally came to an end when the two main contenders in opposition—the Maoists and the political parties—came to a mutual agreement and signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in November 2006 (BBC News, 2010).[7] Since then, the CPN-M has gained significant control over the Nepalese polity. It has succeeded in achieving two of its previous demands: abolishing the monarchical system and having Nepal declared a republic. In the April 2008 elections, the Maoists succeeded in winning the largest bloc of

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7   Table 6.3 at the end of this chapter outlines a detailed timeline of events in Nepal from 1990 to 2008.

seats to the new constituent assembly, though they failed to achieve an outright majority (BBC News, 2010).

Since the above-mentioned demands of a republic and secular state do not exactly fit in with public perceptions of communism, a brief discussion of how to understand the Maoists of Nepal is warranted here. Overall, there is mixed evidence as to how to interpret the Nepalese Maoists. On one hand, the CPN-M has professed its outright dedication to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Even in practice, the CPN-M has implemented policies typically associated with communism, such as the institutions of People's Courts, and the implementation of collective farms and communal living in the Maoists' "model villages" in the far-western regions of Nepal, such as the Jajarkot district (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2010). On the other hand, the Nepalese Maoists have focused their propaganda more on subsuming public grievances than on advocating covenants of their ideology and publicizing programs that they envision to implement in a communist Nepal. The Nepalese Maoists have also strategically not touched upon some issues, such as religious practices, knowing that such issues are popular locally. It appears that only time will tell whether the Nepalese Maoists are truly communists or strategists vying for power. To date, the Maoists have not gained full control of the Nepalese parliament, and hence they have been ambivalent about their stance. While this question about the future of Nepal under the CPN-M is certainly important, in this chapter we assess the factors that have led the public to support the Maoists in the past in one of history's most successful left-wing communist/Maoist movements.

Factors Affecting Public Support

We reviewed the case using the four top-level factors in our starting-point model, Figure 2.2: (1) motivations for supporting the group or cause, (2) perceived legitimacy of violence, (3) acceptability of costs and risks, and (4) availability of mobilizing mechanisms. We approached the latter using the lens of social movement theory and came to regard the factor as "effectiveness of organization," as reflected in the study's

final factor tree (Figure 2.4). The following sections discuss these factors one by one, although not following the order of Figure 2.2's lower-level structure. We distinguish between factors that were influential in generating initial support and those that were instrumental in sustaining support. The appendix gives a selective chronology of events that may prove useful to readers.

Motivations for Supporting the Group or Cause

Grievances. As discussed earlier, Nepal had many problems in the 1980s, which led a new democratic system being set up in 1990. The new system, however, failed to include members of the society who remained outside the reach of development programs. Most of the fruits of development and growth were accrued by a small, privileged class of people belonging to the Bahun-Chhetri-Newar (BCN) castes, as can be seen in Table 6.1, and those living in and around the urban centers of Central and Eastern Development Regions of Nepal (Murshed and Gates, 2005). Nepalese who are not members are of these castes or who do not live in these regions, as well as women in general, felt increasingly marginalized. Moreover, the political system, characterized by pervasive corruption, power-centric intraparty and interparty conflicts, poorly institutionalized political bodies, and ineffective lead-

Table 6.1
Caste/Ethnic Differences in Nepal in 1996

Caste/Ethnic Group	PPP GDP per Capita ($)	Adult Literacy (%)	Life Expectancy (years)
Bahun	1,533	58	61
Chhetri	1,197	42	56
Newar	1,848	55	62
Limbu	1,021	35	53
Muslim	979	22	49
Ahir	1,068	28	58
Occupational castes	764	24	50
Other	1,130	28	55

SOURCE: Murshed and Gates, 2005.

ership, resulted in an increasing weakening of the state (Hachhethu, 2008). Thus, various economic, sociocultural, and political shortcomings created fertile grounds for the emergence of civil war in Nepal.

Repression. When the insurgency began in the mid-1990s, the Nepalese state used repressive tactics that proved counterproductive; the state was unable to elicit sympathy and support of the general public, especially outside Kathmandu. At the onset of the insurgency, the police killed more innocent people than guerrillas in Operation Romeo and Operation Kilo Sera II (Tiwari, 2010). Over time, matters only worsened, especially during when a state of emergency was declared in 2001 and various constitutional rights were suspended. For instance, in the first month after the declaration of the state of emergency, 3,300 people were arrested merely on the suspicion of being members or sympathizers of the Maoists (Pettigrew, 2004). More people mobilized around the rebel cause to avoid abuse at the hands of the state, and many victims joined the Maoists for protection from state brutality (Regan and Norton, 2005). Figure 6.1 shows the number of people killed by the Maoists (lower curve) and state (upper curve)

Figure 6.1
People Killed by Maoists and State During the Maoist Insurgency, by Year
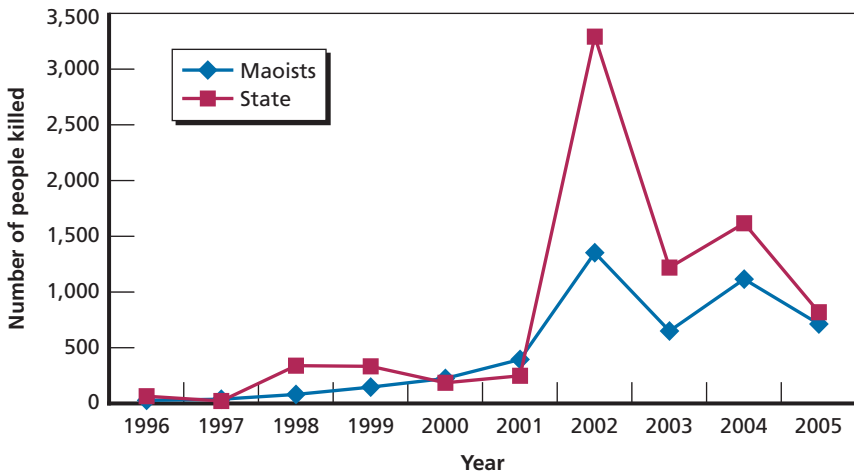
SOURCE: Based on data from Lawoti (2007).

over time. The sharp increase occurred after the Maoists broke their first four-month-long ceasefire in November 2001. King Gyanendra promulgated the TADO, under which the Maoists were identified as "terrorists" and the Royal Nepalese Army was deployed to fight them. By this time, the CPN-M had established its People's Liberation Army and put it on an offensive stance. It and the Royal Nepalese Army were engaged in an open tussle to seize and control territory. The dip in casualties in 2003 occurred when the Maoists became willing to engage in negotiations and both sides entered into the second ceasefire. From 2005 onward, the trend in deaths was downward because the Maoists had started dialogues with the Seven Party Alliance to end the civil war.

Duty and Honor (e.g., for Collective Revenge). Heavy-handed police measures in the initial years of the insurgency provided vital fuel for the Maoist movement. Many villagers joined the movement to avenge the death of their kin. After joining the movement, many were indoctrinated in Maoist rhetoric that positioned all Maoists as kin and the state as the enemy. Hence, as more Maoists were killed, Maoist cadres' desire for vengeance grew. Thapa and Sijapati (2004) quote one Maoist:

> Yes, my brother has been killed. But we have another 1,000 brothers of the same kind. We will all come together and take revenge. We will not spare those responsible for our grief. (Quoted in Thapa with Sijapati, 2004)

Humiliation and Frustration. Ill treatment and abuse by the state gradually increased support for the Maoists. In the absence of viable alternative avenues for addressing grievances, many people in Nepal became frustrated and humiliated, and this propelled many to either join or support the Maoists. As an illustrative testimony from one of the chroniclers:

> The army killed a friend of my mother's when she was cutting grass for her buffalo in the forest. They heard something moving and they just shot, they didn't bother to check who it was and so my mother's friend died. Nowadays we are very frightened of

going into the forest, we can be killed, looted or raped at any moment . . . there is nothing we can do. (Pettigrew, 2004)

Glory and Honor. To convince people to join the armed rebellion, the Maoists used various means of indoctrination, one of which was mass gatherings in villages. In most of these mass gatherings, the Maoists recounted successful battles through skits and paid homage to Maoist "martyrs," glorifying their courage and sacrifices and observing a moment of silence for them. This emphasis on martyrdom, as Eck (2010) notes, creates a "symbolic capital," which in many ways glorifies and legitimizes the use violence, thereby rendering the act of participation in the insurgent movement as a matter of honor.

Social Movements, Including Ideology. The Maoists define their struggle as a "class struggle" with the avowed intent to turn Kathmandu into a "red fort" and hoist the hammer and sickle flag "atop Mount Everest." They define the essence of their cause as the need to end "despotic monarchy," "change the feudal regime" in Nepal, and give "voice to the people" (Crane, 2002). By linking people's dissatisfaction to the structural weaknesses in the political system, the Maoists have subsumed public grievances through promises of emancipation in a communist state.

Preexisting Political Ties. The Maoists benefited from preexisting political ties more so than from kinship ties. In the early years of expansion, the Maoists benefited from the discontent of some members of mainstream communist parties. Since such dissatisfied cadres were already trained in the communist ideology, they provided an ideologically sophisticated core that could provide local leadership (International Crisis Group, 2005).

Identity Processes. While Royal Nepalese Army personnel are primarily seen as outsiders, the Maoists have succeeded in highlighting their commonalities with villagers by treating them with respect. Such behavior has stimulated "identity" processes, with villagers finding it easier to identify themselves with the Maoists. Anecdotally, for instance, in one account from Shneiderman and Turin (2004), a villager noted how the people in his village were anticipating submitting to the Maoist demands out of fear. However, when the Maoists

addressed them humanely and respectfully, the villagers felt that the Maoists seemed to understand the predicament of their lives, and therefore the villagers began to ask questions such as, "If the Maoists are like us, does that also mean that we are like them?"

Provision of Social Services. As part of its overall strategy, the CPN-M attempted to build its own Maoist state, parallel to the official state. First, the Maoists attacked the representatives of the central government, such as the police force and government officials. Once such personnel fled, the Maoists set up their own "people's governments" in areas marked by the absence of the official state. The Maoists' "people's government" took up most of the functions of the local government, including administrative, economic, social, cultural, and educational matters. The Maoists also introduced a number of development projects and activities, such as collective livestock and poultry raising, loan distribution through cooperatives, and distribution of food at low prices to struggling for facing food security (Thapa with Sijapati, 2004). Through the medium of such "people's governments," the Maoists succeeded in both maintaining control of base areas and positing a viable alternative state.

Perceived Legitimacy of Violence

Lack of Opportunity for Political Expression (Absence of Alternatives). Within a few years of the institution of the multiparty system, people considered it to be nepotistic and ineffective in channeling public grievances toward the political stream. The main leftist party, UML, was accused of abandoning its leftist agenda. A few members of this party who wanted to forward the communist agenda were brutally targeted by the Nepali Congress Party and later abused by the police force (Hutt, 2004). In the absence of political freedom, Maoist leader Prachanda argued that "they compelled us and the Nepali people to take up arms" (Haviland, 2006).[8] At the onset of the insurgency, only

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8   Pushpa Kumar Dahal (i.e., Prachanda) is the undisputed leader of CPN-M. He was born in Kaski district and belongs to an upper-caste Brahmin family. He received a bachelor's of science degree in agriculture from the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Sciences in Chitwan. He joined the Communist Party of Nepal (Fourth Convention) in 1981. After several permutations of the various leftist parties, he became the leader of the unrecognized Com-

the Maoist leaders and their cadres appeared to be disgruntled with the political system, but over time more people became sympathetic toward the Maoist cause, especially after 2005, when King Gyanendra assumed executive powers and placed prominent political leaders under house arrest. After that, the Nepalese public witnessed a triangular political struggle between the monarchy, the political parties, and the Maoists, and the welfare of the Nepalese public was sidelined. The fragmented and weak nature of the state not only prevented it from coordinating a coherent and well-strategized response to the insurgency, it also drew functioned public support toward the Maoists in the hope of ending the civil war.

Personal Revenge. Unwarranted abuses and killings by state forces functioned to increase support for the Maoists. In the absence of any form of recourse to justice, many Nepalese decided to support the Maoists—not because of their ideology or promises of emancipation, but because they wanted to take revenge for the death of their families and friends. Thapa with Sijapati (2004) provide the illustrative testimony of eleven-year-old Dilli Biswokarma, whose parents were killed by the police. His two elder brothers left him to take care of their two younger siblings while they joined the Maoist militia:

> Dilli Biswokarma, Garyala, Rukum: I feel like drinking the blood of their heart
>
> Interviewer: Why?
>
> They killed my father and mother
>
> Do you know who killed them?
>
> (Dilli nods)
>
> Who?
>
> The police.

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munist Party of Nepal (Maoist). After remaining underground for several years, Prachanda made his first public appearance in 2006.

Acceptability of Costs and Risks

Personal Risks and Opportunity Costs. For typical rural youth, who were limited by caste/ethnic discrimination and limited educational and employment opportunities, the Maoist movement presented itself as an alternative. The movement provided them with a quick way to be counted and to belong to something. This phenomenon has been particularly strong among the several thousand students who fail the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams every year and are left feeling that they have no access to the formal system (Thapa, 2005). Many such students joined the movement as Maoist fighters. In addition, the Maoists promised a multitude of otherwise unavailable political, economic, and social goods if they were to come to power. The possibility of accessing such goods in the event of a Maoist victory appears to have outweighed personal risks (Eck, 2010).

Intimidation. The Maoists also have employed various intimidation tactics, such as high-profile demonstration killings with corpses left in public places, to spread fear and compel people to support their movement. For instance, despite leading a hand-to-mouth existence, many villagers provided food and shelter to Maoist insurgents for fear of inviting "people's action," which included public beatings or killings (Thapa with Sijapati, 2004). From the latter part of 2001, the Maoists also started using extortion tactics to get ransom money. By 2004, they were engaging in mass abductions of children, who reportedly were receiving weapon training and political indoctrination. The number of children abducted in this fashion was believed to be as high as 1,500 in a single action (Subba, 2010).

Excessive Civilian Casualties or Other Unacceptable Group Behavior (as a Negative Factor). As the insurgency progressed, the Maoists attacked public property, including airports, bridges, water pipes, and telecommunication facilities. They also routinely called for Nepal *bandhs* (a complete standstill of public life throughout the country), which severely affected the lives of the general public. Since senseless killing and destruction of property put in question their people-oriented ideals, there was a decline in sympathy for the Maoists. For instance, there was an outcry from all sections of society against the Maoists when they called a Nepal bandh at a time when 250,000 stu-

dents were to sit for their School Leaving Certificate examinations. As a result, the Maoists postponed the bandh (Kramer, 2003).

Effectiveness of the Organization: Public Support Through the Lens of Social Movement Theory

The preceding discussion has mentioned a variety of tactics used by the Maoists, often with considerable success. In this section, and with some inevitable redundancy, we discuss the effectiveness of the CPN-M through the lens of social movement theory. Doing so could be seen as an elaboration of the earlier factor, "availability of mobilizing mechanism" (Figure 2.2) with some of the cross-cutting features shown at the bottom of that original factor tree. Our discussion is organized, as suggested in Chapter Two, in terms of the topics suggested by our application of social movement theory: (1) leadership and organization, (2) ideological package and framing, (3) resource mobilization, (4) opportunism and adaptation, and (5) presence, tactics, and deeds.

Leadership and Organization.

Leadership. Leadership plays a fundamental role in any movement, since it helps identify and refine ideology, exploit opportunities by developing new strategies, and, most importantly, maintain control over the organization. Leadership certainly played a vital role in the growth of the Maoist insurgency. It has prevented the movement from facing a command and control crisis, unlike the case of the other mainstream parties in Nepal that seem to perpetually suffer from what Lawoti (2010) dubs the "break-up" disease. Pushpa Kumar Dahal (pictured in Figure 6.2), also known as Prachanda, is the CPN-M's top leader and has ultimate say in all matters governing the movement. As Lawoti (2010) notes, Prachanda has been very skillful in balancing different factions in the party by streamlining various issues to the official party line. While there does not appear to be strong evidence of a personality cult, Prachanda's strong influence and control over the movement is best evidenced by the movement's adoption of "Prachandapath" in 2001.

Organization. In addition to a strong leader, the CPN-M built a strong organizational base to engage in large-scale mobilization. Nepal's Maoists adopted the classic Chinese communist structure of

**Figure 6.2
Pushpa Kumar Dahal (Prachanda)**

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RAND *MG1122-6.2*

"three magic weapons": party, army, and united front. In this model,
the party has the overall responsibility for all activities and policies
concerning the "people's war." The People's Liberation Army, which is
under the full control of the party, is responsible for both offensive and
defensive strategies against the enemy. The central body of the united
front is the United People's Revolutionary Council Nepal (UPRC),
whose function is to consolidate the various forces dissatisfied with
the state (International Crisis Group, 2005). After 2001, the UPRC
also consisted of "people's governments" formed at the village, district,
and regional levels, established with the aim of having an alternative
"people's government."[9]

Given a solid ideology and a strong organization, the next step is
the formulation of a well-crafted strategy.[10] The Nepalese Maoist's strat-
egy is best summarized by Thomas Marks (2003), who outlines how
the movement has followed Mao's five essential lines of operation—
mass line, united front, military warfare, political warfare, and inter-
national action:

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[9]   Appendix 3 outlines the organizational structure of the CPN-M.

[10]   Much of this section is based on Marks, 2003.

1. *Mass Line:* The purpose of the mass line is to construct a counter-state to address the grievances of the population. To this end, the Maoists' principal targets were rural peasants and people of the hill tribes, especially in the Mid-Western Region of the country. To meet the objective of this strategy, the Maoists engaged in guerrilla warfare. Once the state apparatus abandoned the districts, the Maoists established their own "people's governments." Such "people's governments" were instituted within UPRC (Marks, 2003).

2. *United Front:* Since the onset of the insurgency, the main aim of the united front has been to bring together groups who share common interests but who may not necessarily support the goals of the party. To this end, the Maoists successfully identified various target groups and provided them with potential mobilization opportunities. Most of the caste-, ethnic-, and regional-based frontier organizations fall within this category, and such organizations position themselves as sister organizations of the movement (Upreti, 2009).

3. *Military Warfare:* The aims of military warfare were to create terror, punish "enemies," and protect illegally existing "alternative societies." All these purposes were to be fulfilled in three strategic military phases: strategic defensive, stalemate, and offensive. The strategic defensive phase was to be marked by actions against the "enemy" with the purpose of establishing base areas. During the strategic stalemate phase, mobile warfare was to be dominant. This phase, in particular, was to be marked by the formation of the insurgent group's main army—the Peoples Liberation Army. In the final strategic offensive phase, the People's Liberation Army was to seize territory while the enemy retreated. According to Baburam Bhattarai—second commander-in-line—as early as November 2001, the Maoists were ready to embark upon the strategic offensive phase (Marks, 2003).

4. *Political Warfare:* The purpose of political warfare was to use nonviolent methods, such as participation in legal political activity or negotiations (Marks, 2003). The Maoist leadership

was particularly interested in pursuing this tool when they felt that they could not conquer Kathmandu militarily. In an interview with the BBC, Prachanda gave due importance to this tool as he remarked, "Today's reality is to move forward both politically and militarily, with a balance of the two. Only with this balance can we gain something for the people and the people's democracy. That's why we are organizing on both fronts, political and military" (Haviland, 2006). In the political realm, the Maoists participated in three "peace talks," which they strategically used as opportunities to either strengthen their army or get important concessions, such as freedom for some of their imprisoned leaders (Globalsecurity.org, 2010).

5.   *International Action:* International action did not appear to be a salient strategy for the Nepalese Maoist insurgents. Although the Nepalese Maoists have been very active in participating in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), there is not significant evidence that suggests that the Maoists have either received considerable direct support from outside forces or taken steps to shift their revolution beyond Nepal's borders.[11]

Ideological Package and Framing.
Ideology. On February 13, 1996, the CPN-M announced the "People's War" with the slogan "Let us march ahead on the path of struggle towards establishing the people's rule by wreaking the reactionary ruling system of state" (Ogura, 2008). Highly influenced by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the Maoists see their revolution occurring in two stages. The first step entails a new democratic revolution marked by the destruction of feudalism and imperialism. The second step requires movement toward socialism "and, by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, marching to communism—the golden future of the whole humanity" (United Communist Party of Nepal [Maoist], 1995b).

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[11]   The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) is an international communist organization founded in 1984 that upholds a version of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

While this ideology was primarily premised on rural mobilization, the Nepalese Maoists soon realized that it was not sufficient to affect the center. Therefore, in 2001 the Maoists announced "Prachandapath," which was a fusion of the Chinese model of protracted war and the Russian model of armed insurrection (Upreti, 2009).

On the basis of its ideology, the CPN-M identified the overall objective as restructuring the feudal based socioeconomic and cultural order of the Nepalese state. Since the first step entailed a democratic republic, the Maoists' three main objectives were the abolition of monarchy, establishment of an inclusive democracy through a new constitution drafted by the people, and declaration of Nepal as a republican and secular state. The Maoists consider this first step as an interim yet essential step toward their ultimate goal of establishing a "new democracy," also referred by them as a proletarian democracy (Upreti, 2009). However, the Maoists have not yet declared what this "new democracy" would entail, nor how they plan to achieve it. As mentioned earlier, the CPN-M's participation in democratic government is unusual for self-proclaimed communists, but it has not yet had a dominating position; thus, we cannot yet assess whether intentions have changed since the earlier proclamations.

Framing. The primary mechanism through which the CPN-M gained and maintained public support was through the use of propaganda, which has included adroit framing for diverse audiences (discussed in part in the next section). The Maoists used mass gatherings and door-to-door motivators as the two primary strategies to target their clientele in villages. In most gatherings, the Maoists strategically used established cultural practices, such as dancing, music, and skits, to represent Maoists themes. Through such artistic performances, they were able to convey complex ideas about their ideology in a manner most accessible to poor illiterate farmers (Eck, 2010). For instance, the following is an example of one of the songs that Maoist cadres sang during cultural performances to convey the message that their ideology was inclusionary:

We are Madeshi [from the plains], we are Pahadi [from the hills],
We are Himali [from the mountains], we are Nepali
One caste, one class, all Nepali
Wake up Nepali, to build a new Nepal
Unite Nepali to build a new Nepal. (Mottin, 2010)

While such performances were targeted at the village level, the Maoist press published pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines to acquaint literate Nepalese with their propaganda and rebut anti-Maoist rhetoric. Occasionally, the Maoists also provided local and foreign journalists with well-crafted "guided tours" in their areas, which often resulted in sympathetic reporting on the Maoists (Onta, 2004). In addition to these various forms of propaganda, the Maoists also had other resources and strategies to mobilize the public, as discussed below.

Mobilization of Resources. For any movement to develop and sustain itself, it must mobilize sufficient resources to take action. In the case of Nepal's Maoist insurgents, such resources can be effectively classified into personnel, financial, military, and technology. While the first two provided the movement with much required manpower and public support, the latter two enabled it to feed its cadres and equip them to fight the enemy.

Personnel. Based on its ideology, the Maoists identified their natural constituency as the proletariat, farm workers, middle peasants, rich farmers, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie (United Community Party of Nepal [Maoist], 1995a). Given the high levels of inequality in Nepal, the Maoists had a strong contingent of masses that fell within the above categories. However, they also recognized that most Nepalese shared multiple identities and that a solely class-based insurgency would therefore not win sufficient support. Consequently, the Maoists identified various target groups who could be sympathetic to their cause and successfully convinced such groups that their serfdom would only end by defeating the feudal and imperialist state. The following target groups were influential supporters of the CPN-M:

1. *Nationalists:* At the onset of their movement, the Maoists adopted highly nationalistic rhetoric directed against India. In their 40-point memorandum submitted to the Congress-led coalition government in 1996, the Maoists' top three demands were directly related to India demanding the Nepalese government to stop prostrating itself to foreign powers. By referencing these initial demands, the Maoists portrayed themselves as the only group that had the best interests of Nepal at heart.

2. *Ethnic and Caste Groups:* Despite being a conglomeration of minorities, the 1990 Constitution maintained the hegemony of one religion (Hinduism), one language (Nepali), and one nationality (Hachhethu, 2008). Even though the two largest caste groups—Chhetri and Bahuns—comprised only 16 percent and 13 percent of the population, they dominated the other castes and ethnic groups in terms of economic and social well-being and access to the top positions in the civil service (Hachhethu, 2008). Such inequalities among ethnic groups have given rise to various ethnic and caste movements in Nepal, especially after the opening of the political sphere in 1990. The Maoists have successfully mobilized this ethnic capital by giving existing and new ethnic movements a political framework for their demands. In addition to framing the political struggle against the elite ethnic group as a form of class struggle, the Maoists also have shown their commitment to the "ethnic" cause by making repeated demands for the declaration of Nepal as a secular state, equal treatment to all languages in Nepal, ethnic- and regional-based autonomy, and right to self-determination, among others (Hachhethu, 2008). Between 1998 and 2000, the Maoists formed seven ethnic-based organizations, and it was through these that the Maoists were successful in penetrating and expanding their activities in the eastern hills and terai regions of Nepal (Hachhethu, 2008).

3. *Women:* Nepalese women have been an influential interest group for the Maoists. Due to the patriarchal nature of the Nepalese society, women have faced structural violence from all ends: family, society, and state (Manchanda, 2004). The

Maoists have successfully subsumed gender grievances within their movement by arguing that women and gender equality can only be achieved in a classless communist society (Thapa, 2010). From the start of their insurgency, the Maoist gave political visibility to such gender injustices by demanding in their 40-point memorandum an end to patriarchal exploitation and the extension of the right to ancestral property for women. To provide evidence of their commitment to gender emancipation, they also made it mandatory to include two women in every unit of 9 to 11 members, especially in the fighting ranks (Manchanda, 2004). To that end, it is believed that women constitute between 3040 percent of the Maoist military force (Sharma and Prasain, 2004). Over time, the popularity of the Maoists greatly soared among women of different backgrounds as they took action against people who demanded dowry as well as wife-beaters, polygamists, and rapists (Manchanda, 2004).

4. *Students:* The Maoists have successfully ingrained in students that the restructuring of the state and its education system go hand-in-hand, a position that is evident from the statement of one of the students:

> Unless the people's sons and daughters have access to the state power, then sons and daughters of the people will not have access to the educational facility. We have linked the issue of equal opportunity education with the capturing of the state power. In the words of Marx, we are clear that everything else except for state power is illusion. (Snellinger, 2010)

By forwarding such reasoning, the Maoist organization received overwhelming support from students for their student organization, the All Nepal National Independent Students' Union—Revolutionary (ANNISU-R). The ANNISU-R has played an influential role in spreading Maoist influence on campuses and forcing nationwide school closures, and also this organization has provided much-needed skilled manpower for the insurgency (Snellinger, 2010).

Financial. The Maoists have used two primary sources to fund their insurgency. Their first source of funds was bank robberies, donations, and extortion from people whom they labeled as "feudal" enemies. Their second source was taxes and seasonal donations in kind that they collected from their base areas. Besides these two sources, the Maoists were known also to tax natural resources, such as medicinal herbs and timber (International Crisis Group, 2005). Through these various means, the Nepalese Maoists reportedly succeeded in accumulating between US $64 million and $124 million by 2003 (Kumar, 2003).

Military Hardware. When the Maoists started their campaign, it was said that "they only had had two rifles, one of which was broken." As they stepped up their campaign, they started making their own muskets, taking weapons from local residents, and buying arms in the Indian black market. But the Maoists primarily enhanced their arsenal by capturing weapons from the security forces, both the Nepalese army and police (International Crisis Group, 2005).

Technology. According to a Nepalese journalist, "Nepal's Maoists are the first among all of the world's communist movements to make good use of communications technology." It is estimated that during the insurgency the Maoists were the largest users of satellite phones. The Maoists leaders also adopted email and the Internet as the primary means of communication. The Maoists maintain their own website in Nepali and English, which has helped them connect with the Nepali intellectual masses and the Nepalese Diaspora (International Crisis Group, 2005).

Opportunism and Adaptation.[12] In addition to employing a well-crafted strategy, the Nepalese Maoists have also brilliantly exploited political divisions and consequently created opportunities for themselves. As a Nepalese foreign policy analyst once remarked, "The elephant has two sets of teeth; one for show and one for eating"; many analysts deem that the Nepalese Maoists have engaged in ideological flexibility based on existing circumstances (International Crisis Group, 2003). For instance, even before their insurgency was launched, the

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[12]   Much of this section is based on Lawoti, 2010.

Maoists identified their main objective as the destruction of the feudal order, of which the monarchy was considered the greatest symbol. However, in the first half of the insurgency, the Maoists purposefully avoided making loud calls against the king, who had the power to deploy the Royal Nepalese Army.[13] In the absence of a well-equipped and well-trained army, the Maoists succeeded in creating both space and time to establish their own army and equip them with looted ammunitions from the ill-prepared police force. In the political sphere too, the Maoists strategically attacked only the cadres of the ruling party. The opposition party remained apathetic to the woes of the ruling party and ignored its calls for a coordinated response to the insurgency (Lawoti, 2010). To this end, the Maoists played the political parties against each other, which resulted in an ineffective government response to the insurgency while it could still be curbed.

Besides exploiting existing divisions, the Maoists also attempted to create several opportunities for themselves. The 2001 Royal Family Massacre left the entire state and its people in shock and bereavement. Perceiving the public's strong affection for the deceased King Birendra, the Maoists toned down their demand for a republic. In fact, and ironically, they proclaimed common grounds with King Birendra. In Prachanda's own words, "As for those genuine patriots who saw in the king and the monarchy [as] the means of safeguarding the country, there is no reason why they should feel terrified by the Maoist movement, towards which King Birendra had a liberal view" (Lecomte-Tilouine and Gellner, 2004). It was only when the deceased king's unpopular brother Gyanendra was made king that the Maoists begin highlighting their republican demands. They even went a step further by creating political fissures between the king and the political parties, who were worried by the constitutional monarch's increasing intervention in politics. At this point, the Maoists allowed the political parties to operate in rural areas, while selectively attacking the king's supporters.

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[13] The 1990 Nepalese Constitution established the King as the supreme commander of the Royal Nepalese Army. Hence, the King had the final say as to whether the Army was to be deployed or not.

In this manner, the Maoists succeeded in winning the support of the marginalized political parties while sidelining the king (Lawoti, 2010).

The Maoists have also displayed ideological flexibility at the international level. On the date of the declaration of their insurgency, the first three of the 40 demands raised by the Maoists were related to the unequal and discriminatory relationship existing between India and Nepal. However, when the Maoist top leadership took refuge in India, their anti-India rhetoric took a backseat. Nationalistic rhetoric was only used symbolically when the Indian government either arrested Maoist leaders or gave military aid to the Royal Nepalese Army. Ironically enough, the Maoists' agreement with the seven parliamentary parties were coordinated in India under the supervision of the Indian officials (Lawoti, 2010). In sum, the Nepalese Maoists have cunningly exploited windows of opportunity in pursuit of their goals.

The Maoists have been remarkably adroit and adaptive from their earliest years, sometimes agreeing to ceasefires and negotiations, sometimes participating in the political process, and—over time—succeeding in that process, which allowed an end to the insurgency itself.

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. Consistent with the adaptations, Maoist tactics have generally proven appropriate to their objectives. Further, their deeds have reinforced their credibility, whether in providing services when there was otherwise a vacuum of governance or in participating effectively in the political process after a negotiated agreement made that possible.

Conclusions

In seeking to understand the myriad of happenings, causes, and consequences, the original factor tree (Figure 2.2) did a good job of identifying the factors behind public support for Nepal's Maoist insurgents as described in the literature. Most of its factors proved applicable, as summarized in Table 6.2. Of these, ideology, grievances, state repression, revenge, provision of social services, duty and honor, intimidation, and absence of alternatives were repeatedly mentioned in the literature. Some factors, such as cultural propensity for violence and

Table 6.2
Public Support Factors Observed in the Nepal Case

Structure from Initial Factor Tree				
Top-Level Factor	**Second-Level Factor**	**Third-Level Factor**	**Observed for Nepal Case**	**Comments**
Motivation for support	Attractions	Financial incentives		
		Glory, excitement	Yes	Played up in recruiting, whether or not effective
		Ideology or religion	Yes	Maoism
	Felt need for action (duty to act)	Political, external threat	Yes	Incompetence, corruption, nepotism, caste discrimination, repression
		Revenge	Yes	
		Social movement		
	Identification	Shared grievances, goals…	Yes	Incompetence, corruption, nepotism, caste discrimination, repression
		Social services	Yes	
		Kinship (including fictive)	Yes	Ideology stressed "brotherhood"
		Unacceptable group behavior (–)	Yes	
	Social pressures	Peer influence		
		Respected authorities		
		Cultural obligations		
		Prestige, power		

Table 6.2—Continued

Structure from Initial Factor Tree				
Top-Level Factor	**Second-Level Factor**	**Third-Level Factor**	**Observed for Nepal Case**	**Comments**
Perceived legitimacy of violence	Religious, ideological, or ethical		Yes	
	Cultural propensity for violence			
	Necessity or effectiveness		Yes	Sense of no alternatives
Acceptability of costs and risks	Charged emotions			
	Intimidation		Yes	
	Likelihood of insurgent victory			
	Personal risks and opportunity costs		Yes	
	Social costs			
	Countervailing social costs and pressures			Primarily as result of violence and chaos
Effectiveness of organization	Leadership			
	Ideological package and framing		Yes	Included pre-existing links
	Resource mobilization			
	Opportunism and adaptation		Yes	
	Presence, tactics, and deeds			

religious reasons for perceived legitimacy of violence, did not appear to be applicable to Nepal's insurgency movement. The remaining factors were at least occasionally discussed by experts. Figure 6.3 shows the revised factor tree with which we ended our study, but with some notations, indicating which factors were particularly salient in Nepal. The thicker arrows show the more salient factors, and red indicates which elements within a given factor were most important.

This final factor tree incorporates the insights from social movement theory in its first factor (effectiveness of organization). These insights proved quite helpful in understanding the purposeful way in which the CPN-M manipulated the other factors over time. First, the CPN-M's success depended on a well-defined ideology, clearly outlined organizational structure, and unwavering leadership in a single individual. Second, the Maoists' well-crafted strategy was aimed not only at winning public support but also at countering threats emanating from the state and external forces. This three-pronged strategy rendered their movement viable. Third, by exploiting political divisions and contradictions, the Maoists succeeded in weakening their opponents, consequently resulting in loss of public hope in the state. In the absence of these three mechanisms, the Maoists would have failed to fully exploit public grievances and later on maintain public support.

One shortcoming of having only a single factor tree for the case is that a given tree is a static depiction that does not show how the salience of factors changes across periods. For instance, at the onset of the Maoist revolution, socio-economic-cultural grievances and lack of political freedom catalyzed the insurgency.[14] Later, these factors became less important in comparison to other factors, such as the state's ineffective response to the insurgency due to its weak and fragmented nature (i.e., there was a vacuum of state competence) and the Maoists' organized prescription to public grievances. Thus, future applications

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[14] As Eqbal Ahmad notes about insurgent groups, "By setting examples of defying and challenging established authority, they break the inhibitions of habitual or reflexive obedience"; the Maoists effectively transformed "private doubts into public actions" and mobilized support by establishing "new standards of defiance" and by providing alternatives" (Ahmad, 1982).

Figure 6.3
Factors in Public Support of the Nepalese Maoists

NOTES: Applies at a snapshot in time. Current factor values can affect future values of some or all other factors.

RAND *MG1122-6.3*
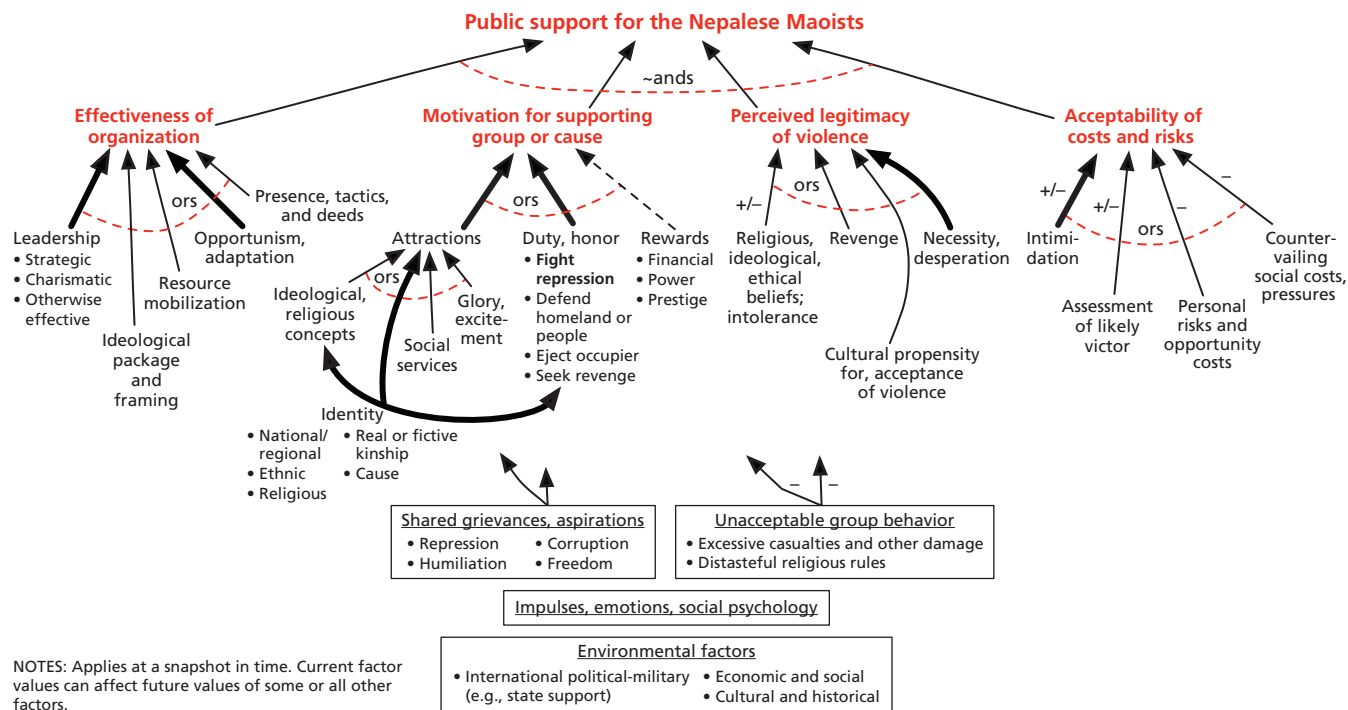
of the factor-tree approach should distinguish between phases with different trees as appropriate.

As a last comment, Nepal's case draws special attention to the state response to an insurgency movement. The success of Nepal's CPN-M was not a military victory; neither was it achieved through overwhelming public support. The Nepalese Maoists won support early on in part due to the state's repression; it later won a political victory due to the weak and divided nature of the Nepalese state—i.e., due to a near vacuum of governance. In time, of course, Nepal's case also will be informative regarding what happens when a leftist insurgent group actually controls state power. Where Nepal might be headed, however, is a question that remains to be answered

Appendix to Chapter Six: Timeline of Historical Events in the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal

Table 6.3 itemizes important events in the history of the Communist Party of Nepal.

Table 6.3
Timeline of Historical Events

Date	Event
1990	King Birendra promulgates new constitution; starts era of multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy
1991	Nepali Congress Party wins the first democratic elections
1994	Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M) is created
1994	No-confidence motion against the Congress government; new elections lead to Nepal's first communist government
1995	Communist-led government dissolves
March 1995	Unity Center holds "Third Plenum" in which the party changes its name to the Communist Party of Nepal; decides to boycott elections and take up arms
November 1995	Operation Romeo in Rolpa and Dang districts suppress pro-Maoist supporters
February 4, 1996	Baburam Bhattarai submits 40 Point Demand to Prime Minister Deuba

Table 6.3—Continued

Date	Event
February 13, 1996	CPN-M launches "People's War" by attacking seven targets in six districts
March 10, 1997	Nepali Congress's Deuba government collapses
March 11, 1997	Lokendra Bahadur Chand's government forms "Dhami Commission" to study the Maoist problem
October 7, 1997	When Nepali Congress-NDP-NGP coalition take over power, Surya Bahadur Thapa becomes prime minister
April 12, 1998	Girija Prasad Koirala forms a Nepali Congress minority government
May 26, 1998	Operation Kilo Sera II occurs in Maoist heartland of Rolpa and Rukum
May 17, 1998	Maoists announce campaign to establish base areas
December 30, 1999	A task force under Sher Bahadur Deuba is formed
March 20, 2000	Girija Prasad Koirala becomes prime minister and heads the ninth government of Nepal within 10 years
January 22, 2001	Government announces the formation of the Armed Police Force to fight the Maoists
June 1, 2001	Royal Family Massacre
June 4, 2001	Prince Gyanendra is crowned king
July 19, 2001	Prime Minister Koirala resigns, stating his inability to curb the insurgency and the failure of the Royal Nepalese Army to obey his orders
July 22, 2001	Sher Bahadur Deuba becomes prime minister
July 25, 2001	Government and Maoists declare ceasefire and begin talks
November 21, 2001	Prachanda announces that the talks have failed; end of Maoist ceasefire
November 25, 2001	Maoists attack the Royal Nepalese Army for the first time
May 7, 2002	State of emergency is declared; Maoists are labeled as "terrorists"; the Royal Nepalese Army is officially deployed to fight them; government promulgates Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Ordinance (TODA)
May 7, 2002	U.S. President Bush pledges support for Nepal to fight Maoist insurgency; a few days later India and UK extend support

Table 6.3—Continued

Date	Event
May 22, 2002	Prime Minister Deuba dissolves parliament, as it is unlikely to support an extension of the state of emergency; later, he also dissolves elected local bodies. Elections are scheduled to be held on November 3, 2002
October 3, 2002	Citing lack of security, Prime Minister Deuba proposes to postpone elections
October 2002	King Gyanendra ousts Prime Minister Deuba, citing his inability to hold elections on time; the king appoints Lokendra Bahadur Chand as prime minister
January 29, 2003	Government and Maoists declare second ceasefire and begin talks
April 30, 2003	U.S. places Nepal's Maoists on "the other terrorist organization" list
May–June 2003	Lokendra Bahadur Chand resigns as prime minister; the king appoints his own nominee, Surya Bahadur Thapa
August 27, 2003	Maoists officially announce the end of the ceasefire
May 2004	Prime Minister Thapa resigns following street protests
June 2004	King Gyanendra reappoints Thapa as prime minister
February 1, 2005	King Gyanendra dismisses Deuba government and imposes emergency; he assumes direct power; senior political and civil leaders are imprisoned or placed under house arrest
February 2, 2005	King Gyanendra appoints 10-member cabinet
February 22, 2005	India and UK suspend military aid to Nepal
April 29, 2005	Facing international pressure, the king uplifts emergency rule
September 22, 2005	Seven-party alliance formed among the following parties: Nepali Congress, Nepali Congress (Democratic), CPN-UML, People's Front Nepal, NWPP, Nepal Goodwill Party-Anandi, and United Left Front
September 22, 2005	Under the supervision of the Indian government, the Maoists and the Seven Party Alliance sign a 12-point agreement to combat royal rule in Nepal
April 2006	Following weeks of protests, King Gyanendra reinstates parliament; Girija Prasad Koirala is appointed prime minister and the Maoists call a three-month ceasefire
May 2006	Parliament agrees to curtail the monarchy's power; the government and the Maoists begin peace talks
June 2006	The government and the Maoists agree to bring the Maoists into an interim government

Table 6.3—Continued

Date	Event
November 2006	The government and the Maoists sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, under which the Maoists would join a transitional government and their weapons would be placed under UN supervision
April 2007	Maoists join the interim government (84 of 329 seats in interim legislature)
September 2007	Maoists quit the interim government demanding the need to abolish monarchy
December 2007	The parliament agrees to abolish the monarchy
April 2008	Maoists win the largest blocks of seats in the elections to the new constituent assembly
May 2008	Nepal is declared a republic

SOURCES: Lawoti and Pahari, 2010. BBC News, 2010.

Comparisons and Implications for Analysis of Strategy

In this chapter, we first summarize how our conceptual model fared overall and how the relative salience of factors compared across the various case studies. We then use a model of "persuasive communications" drawn from earlier work to let us relate our conceptual model of public support for insurgency and terrorism to issues of strategy. We end the chapter with some suggestions for those involved with such matters, whether under the rubrics of public diplomacy, strategic communication, or influence operations.

Model Assessment and Comparisons Across Cases

The initial conceptual model of public support for insurgency and terrorism introduced in Chapter Two (Figure 2.2) held up well across the new cases used in this study and was enriched by the additions stimulated by social movement theory (Figure 2.3). We made quite a number of further improvements in reaching a final version (Figure 2.4), but they were largely in the nature of refinements sharpening language or the sense of causal relationships among sometimes-entangled factors.

As expected, we found that the relative salience of factors varied across studies. That is, our conceptual model (Figure 2.4) is intended to be rather general, providing a starting point for an application to any specific context by suggesting what factors to look for. For that application, some of the factors (particularly lower-level factors that corre-

spond to different sources of motivation or different perceptions of cost and risk) will prove to loom larger than others, allowing a narrowing and simplification—but with recognition that the "other" factors may become more important over time, while factors seen at one time as primary may later fade somewhat in significance. These changes often occur as protagonists (e.g., insurgent factions, governments, or intervenors) change strategies and, in the course of doing so, exploit different ways to influence different segments of the population (a phenomenon that should be familiar to readers who contemplate domestic politics in their own countries).

Table 7.1 shows our attempt to compare across cases subjectively, with no pretensions of quantitative rigor. Table 7.1 indicates what we saw as the relative "noteworthiness" of factors across cases. We use the numbers 1, 2, and 3 as follows:

3 (dark gray): The factor was present and noteworthy for unusualness, significance, or both.
2 (gray): The factor was present but not necessarily noteworthy.
1 (white): The factor was not observed as present to a significant degree.

This scoring is not simply about "importance." In particular, some of the factors in gray (2) were significant but tend to be contributors in most or all cases and are not especially "noteworthy." Indeed, we show all of the top-level factors as being gray (2) because all seem to be necessary. We also show some factors as gray (2), even though they arose fairly prominently in one or more of our cases, because we felt that their prominence might have been an artifact of the data or of our methods (which varied across cases).[1] We should also caution readers not to "write off" factors indicated with white (1). Such factors can

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[1]   As an example, "fighting repression" is a common theme in motivating action and justifying violence. That theme, then, would not usually be noteworthy.

Table 7.1
Comparison Across Cases

Structure from Initial Factor Tree			Al-Qa'ida	The Taliban in Afghanistan	The PKK in Turkey	The Maoists in Nepal
Top-Level Factor	**Second-Level Factor**	**Third-Level Factor**				
Effectiveness of organization	Leadership		3	3	3	3
	Ideological package and framing		3	2	2	2
	Resource mobilization		3	2	2	2
	Opportunism and adaption		2	2	2	3
	Presence, tactics, and deeds		2	2	2	2
Motivation for support	Attractions		3	3	3	3
		Ideological, religious	3	3	2	2
		Identity	3	3	3	3
		Social services	1	2	1	1
		Glory, excitement	2	2	2	2
	Duty and honor		3	3	3	3
		Fight repression	2	2	2	3
		Defend homeland, people . . .	3	3	3	2
		Identity	3	3	3	3
	Rewards	Financial, power, prestige . . .	1	2	1	1

Table 7.1—Continued

Structure from Initial Factor Tree			Al-Qa'ida	The Taliban in Afghanistan	The PKK in Turkey	The Maoists in Nepal
Top-Level Factor	**Second-Level Factor**	**Third-Level Factor**				
Perceived legitimacy of violence	Religious, ideological ethical (+/–)		3	3	2	2
	Intolerance		3	1	1	1
	Personal revenge		1	2	2	2
	Cultural propensity for violence		2	3	3	1
	Necessity or desperation		2	3	2	3
Acceptability of costs and risks	Intimidation (+/–)		3	3	3	3
	Assessment of likely victor (+/–)		3	3	2	2
	Personal risks, opportunity costs (–)		3	2	2	2
	Countervailing pressures (–)		3	2	3	2
"Global"	Shared grievances		2	2	2	3
	Unacceptable group behavior (–)		3	2	2	2
	Other (impulses, actions . . .)		2	2	2	2

NOTES: 1, 2, and 3 indicate that the factor in question was, respectively, seldom observed, present, or notable (either for significance or unusualness) in our cases. The top-level factors are all given 2's because they all appear to be necessary, whether or not frequently mentioned explicitly in surveys or newspaper accounts.

be important in other cases, in the same cases at a later time, or in the same cases if assessed with different data sources.[2]

The primary observations are as follows:

- Attractions, duty and honor, and intimidation were noteworthy in all cases.
- Identity was noteworthy in all cases, manifesting itself through both attractions and perceived legitimacy of violence.
- Organizational effectiveness factors (the factors motivated by social movement theory) were noteworthy in all cases. *How* these factors were triggered, however, varied across case, as indicated in Table 7.2.
- In these cases, public support seems *not* to have been strongly affected by purely personal motives, such as gaining great wealth, or by exogenous events.

As a point of clarification on the last point, some insurgent supporters (e.g., logisticians, financiers) may also be involved in criminal activities, which entangles their motivations for supporting the insurgency with motivations of a more personal nature. Also, some insurgents (rather than mere supporters) receive pay for their actions. That source of income can be important to them (see Chapter Four).

Table 7.2 elaborates on the fact that *how* the factors associated with organizational effectiveness (i.e., the items stimulated by social movement theory) varies with case.

Leadership. Charismatic leadership appears to have been more closely associated with the PKK, al-Qa'ida, and the Taliban than with the Nepalese Maoists (which has had effective although not especially charismatic leadership).

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[2]   Each data source brings with it some problems of bias. Reporters, for example, ask some questions but not others. Most polling questions are ambiguous. Personal accounts may be self-serving or naïve. Scholars have perspectives. Within our study, for example, we found that polling data on support for the Taliban in Afghanistan modified the conclusions coming strictly from the press accounts (see Chapter Four). In particular, it showed economic factors to be more significant.

Table 7.2
Case Comparison for Factors Motivated by Social Movement Theory

Factor	Al-Qa'ida	Taliban	PKK	Nepalese Maoists
Leadership	Charisma, strategic thinking, and organizational talent	Charisma rooted in religious authority	Charisma of leader seen as at core of the movement	Effective leadership
Ideology	Religion as core element	Nationalism, religion, ethnic identity[a]	Kurdish nationalism with varied political concepts	The cause of overturning government to redress grievances
Framing	Muslim identity, grievances, religious duty, global jihad	Expulsion of occupier, identity, religious duty, preservation of traditions, restoration of sharia	Kurdish identity and grievances	Support of cause and need to fill vacuum of governance
Resource mobilization	Decentralization, effective unifying propaganda	Roots in madrasas, with later evolution	Developed over time	Developed over time
Dealing with political opportunities and constraints	Many adaptations, to extent permitted by core ideology	Tactical adaptations, reinvigoration	Numerous adaptations as Turkish government has evolved and Soviet socialism has lost sheen	Substantial adaptation leading to full participation in mainstream political processes
Presence, tactics, and deeds	High-visibility attacks as well as smaller ones; many have proved counterproductive	Daring attacks (e.g., to liberate prisoners) with consistent presence and intimidation	Small-scale attacks, intimidation, ubiquitous presence, political monopoly (in early years)	Helped topple government

[a] Portions of the Taliban are more religiously radicalized along Salafi-jihadi lines than others, and also more transnational in outlook due in part ot al-Qa'ida influence.

Ideology. Ideology of one sort or another was important in all cases: Salafi-jihadism for al-Qa'ida, nationalist hard-line Deobandism for the Afghan Taliban, Kurdish nationalism and socialism for the PKK, and anti-feudalism and Maoism for the Nepalese insurgents. All groups, however, tended to pragmatism in accenting or downplaying aspects of ideology at various times depending on circumstances. This has been least so for al-Qa'ida, since its extremist religious ideology is so central to its identity.

Framing. Al-Qa'ida has emphasized pan-Islamic global-Muslim identity, religious duty, and grievances. Taliban support has primarily been based on Pashtun identity and Afghan nationalism with respect to outsiders. The PKK has focused on building support from within the Kurdish community. The Nepalese Maoists exploited state repression while differentiating among subpopulations (e.g., nationalists, ethnic and caste groups, women, and students), creating a "big tent" movement and providing a political framework for meeting various ethnic demands. In addition, al-Qa'ida and the PKK appear to have done more to use intellectuals in mobilizing support.

Resource Mobilization. The Taliban's principal organizational resource appears to have been the hard-line madrassas out of which the core of the organization arose, whereas al-Qa'ida, the PKK, and the Nepalese Maoists have built their organizations over time—sometimes incorporating the splinters of prior organizations.

Using Political Opportunities and Dealing with Constraints. Both the PKK and Nepalese Maoists successfully used divide-and-conquer politics—building their movements in part by drawing in supporters of their defeated competitors. The PKK and the Nepalese Maoists also appear to have taken a page from the socialist playbook in emphasizing political front organizations to build mass support and position their organizations to participate in elections. Somewhat uniquely, the Nepalese Maoists engaged in peace negotiations with the government and were able to secure an election victory. In comparison, the Afghan Taliban is, at best, in the embryonic stages of negotiations with the Afghan national government, and al-Qa'ida exhibits no intent to moderate or negotiate.

Presence, Tactics, and Deeds. Across all of the cases, violence against civilians (terrorism) sometimes resulted in growing disaffection. In the case of al-Qa'ida, the killing of fellow Muslims in Iraq and elsewhere appears to have diminished support. In the case of the Nepalese Maoists, the 2001 Royal Family Massacre created shock and bereavement among the Nepalese due to the public's strong affection for King Birendra, which necessitated a toning-down of demands for a republic. In the case of the PKK, intimidation and coercive violence have undercut some of its popularity, but the PKK has nonetheless used both ruthlessly to enforce discipline and build support within the Kurdish community. For their part, the Taliban have sought to mute the impact of civilian deaths resulting from Taliban action by periodically releasing updated guidance on rules of engagement for their commanders.

Linking Conclusions to Strategy with a Model of Persuasive Communications

Let us now turn to implications for strategy. The remit for our study included offering insights for strategic analysis relating to public support for insurgency and terrorism. We do so by focusing primarily but not exclusively on what we have called persistent communications, which includes elements of what are sometimes referred to as public diplomacy, strategic communication,[3] and influence theory.

The first observation here is that, even if we know the factors to be influenced (those of our conceptual model), we must also understand the complex, layered process of affecting perceptions of those factors. That is, we need a model of "persuasive communications" to connect the fruits of this study's research to issues of strategy and policy.

Figure 7.1 presents such a model, building on earlier RAND research that included an in-depth examination of relevant literature (Larson et al., 2009a). It portrays how events and "messages" (construed broadly) can influence attitudes and behaviors, such as public support for terrorism or insurgent violence. The model abstracts from a diverse

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[3]   The term *strategic communication* has many interpretations and manifestations (Paul, 2009b, 2011).

Figure 7.1
Model of Attitude Diffusion: Public Support for Insurgency and Terrorism
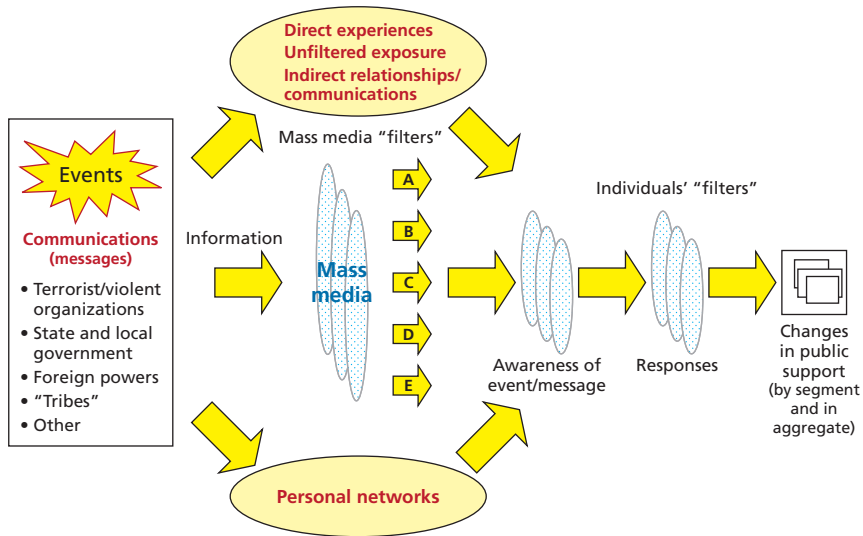
body of relevant theoretical and empirical social science research that has enriched Harold Lasswell's famous description of communication as involving "who says what to whom in which channel with what effect" (Lasswell, 1948) by explicating the processes and factors associated with the persuasiveness of communications that aim to change attitudes or behavior, and how attitudes diffuse through a society.[4] The relevance to this study is that by understanding the pathways associated with successful persuasion, adversaries' persuasive efforts can more easily be disrupted or countered by friendly efforts.

Although the model may seem to be rather straightforward at first glance, it is much richer than the sometimes-used image of strategic communication that sees the challenge as merely crafting the correct

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[4] There is an exceptionally rich literature on communication, persuasion, attitude change, and public opinion formation and diffusion that has included the work of such diverse scholars as Cantril, Key, Hovland, Downs, Campbell, Converse, Pool, McGuire, McCloskey, Page, Shapiro, Brody, Neuman, Zaller, Petty, Cacioppo, Cialdini, Chaiken, Woelfel, and many others and has greatly influenced contemporary mainstream thinking about persuasive communications.

message and transmitting it successfully.[5] Much more is involved, as Figure 7.1 indicates. Persuasive communications requires understanding the variety of information sources, the many modalities with which information flows, the filters applied along the way, the receptivity of target audiences to the messages, how they interpret them, and what changes actually occur in their behavior—not just in the aggregate, but by segment. Put another way, by focusing on the requirements of successful persuasion, the model can be used as both (1) a diagnostic tool for assessing the efforts of terrorist and insurgents to build support and (2) a strategy development and design tool for countering these efforts.

In the figure, the left-most portion relates to real-world events and to "messaging"[6] by diverse groups such as the insurgent or terrorist group, the national or local agents of governance, the United States and other intervenors, and other parties. The middle section depicts the information *channels* (e.g., direct experiences, mass media, or personal networks). And the right-most section describes how results (changes of support) are affected by individual awareness of the information and by their receptivity to and acceptance of the information provided by the events or messages. The model's output, then, is behavioral: whether there is more or less public support. That should be understood in terms of population segment, as well as in the aggregate.[7]

Building on this literature, one can identify some design principles for conducting persuasive communication campaigns:

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[5]   See Corman, Trethewey, and Goodall, 2007, for criticism of what the authors referred to as the outdated "message influence model" used in the early years after 9/11 by the U.S. government.

[6]   The "messages" of persuasive communications are to be understood broadly and may be conveyed by, e.g., tacit messages implied by actions, narratives in the speeches of high-level officials, and ideas conveyed less formally by thought leaders or even ordinary people.

[7]   It is again appropriate to mention that the fraction of the population most favorable to terrorism and insurgency may be quite small. A study by the Gallup Organization coded as "political radicals" individuals who (1) felt the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were "completely justified" and (2) indicated that they have an "unfavorable" or "very unfavorable" opinion of the United States, amounting to about 7 percent of the total population across the ten countries in the study (Mogahed, 2010).

- They are aimed at achieving specific desired objectives and effects, typically a change in a key attitude, belief, preferred policy, or behavior.
- They are directed toward key target audiences, whether an individual, a decisionmaking group, a military unit, a population subgroup, or the mass public of a nation.
- They make use of the most effective combination of information channels—i.e., those channels that are both most likely to reach the target audience and most likely to be viewed as unbiased and credible.
- They are mindful of audience characteristics, including preexisting attitudes and beliefs that may condition an audience's willingness to be influenced.
- They are timed to influence actors before they decide or act, in the case of leaders and decisionmaking groups, or before attitudes crystallize, in the case of mass audiences.
- They make use of messengers with compelling source characteristics, i.e., those whose professional or technical competence, likeability, credibility, trust or confidence make them effective spokespersons.
- They rely on messages with compelling message characteristics, i.e., those whose content, format, cognitive and emotional appeal, and other characteristics will most resonate with the audience.
- They facilitate adaptation by providing timely feedback on effects, so that information channels, messengers, themes, messages, and the like can be modified to increase their persuasiveness.[8]

Another possible principle, supported by at least limited research, is that when attitudes are highly crystallized, it may first be necessary to create a "cognitive opening" to enhance an individual's receptivity to an alternative belief system. Wiktorowicz (2005), for example, argues that creating such cognitive openings may be a precondition for recruitment into radical Islamist groups.

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[8]   Adapted from Larson et al., 2009a.

Real-World Events and Messages

As shown on the left side of Figure 7.1, real-world developments compete for the attention of a population or population subgroup (to simplify, we can think of the subgroups as being oppositional, passive, sympathetic, or extremist with respect to the insurgent or terrorist group). These developments (events or messages) may come from the violent organizations themselves, agents of state and local governments, foreign powers, tribes, criminal organizations, and so on. Exogenous events also occur and may convey "information" and arouse emotions serving one side or another, even if that was not intended. Routinely, however, the entities will exploit those exogenous events—reinterpreting real-world events in terms of their own competing frames.

Some examples may be useful:

1. Insurgents may signal a shift to peaceful political action with mass protests and creation of political front organizations; alternatively, they may announce a return to conflict and mount attacks. Or they may simply mount attacks, the only signal being the "propaganda of the deed."

2. The government may mount repressive sweeps. These not only serve direct purposes but send "messages" that may cow would-be sympathizers; often, however, the effects are the opposite, with sympathizers hardening their views and some previously passive or even oppositional individuals joining the insurgent cause.

3. The government may allow greater linguistic, cultural, or political expression as part of a shift in strategy. This signal of change may lead to splintering of the insurgent or terrorist group— driving wedges between those who are predisposed to political reconciliation and violent hard-liners whose maximalist aims foreclose the possibilities for compromise and cooptation. Insurgents may respond by claiming that the government is show-

ing its terminal weakness and vulnerability to revolution, or by rejecting compromise measures as being purely tactical and not to be trusted. [9]

Alternate Information Channels

Moving to the middle of Figure 7.1, most individuals become aware of real-world events via mass media (shown as channels A–E) or via influential individuals or opinion leaders within personal networks (the bottom path). The extended form of these personal networks can be thought of as "the Arab street."

In the case of mass media, individual choose the specific media sources they follow (A, B, C, D, and E in the figure), which have very different treatments of the news, news images, and related frames and narratives.

Personal networks (bottom portion) are also crucially important sources of information and interpretive frames. Individuals may give greater weight to religious leaders, tribal elders, or family members; or instead they may rely more on professional colleagues or on individuals that are educated and widely traveled.[10] Moreover, in the case of those who are already sympathetic to an insurgent or terrorist group and are on the path to radicalization and recruitment, personal networks may over time come to consist only of "true believers" with specific interpretive frames.[11]

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[9]   Gallup found that support for democracy in ten Muslim-majority countries was actually higher among "political radicals" (50 percent) than among "moderates" (35 percent); this suggests that political repression could be a source of grievance for "radicals" and that reform and democratization could help to reduce support for violence. Gallup coded as "political radicals" individuals who (1) felt the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were "completely justified" and (2) indicated that they have an "unfavorable" or "very unfavorable" opinion of the United States, amounting to about 7 percent of the total population across the ten countries in the study (Mogahed, 2010).

[10]   These personal networks overlap with those for radicalizing, recruitment, and fundraising, among others.

[11]   The term *true believer* is now just part of the normal vocabulary, but was introduced 60 years ago by Eric Hoffer in a book that is remarkably relevant to understanding people who today subscribe to extremist ideologies such as that of Salafi-jihad (Hoffer, 2002).

The items listed in the bubble at the top of the middle section deal with other information channels. Whereas most individuals become aware of events and messages via the mass media and personal net-work–based diffusion processes, a relatively small number personally experience events such as a terrorist attack or a government crackdown. This information is unfiltered by the mass media. So also, some individuals directly download a jihadist video, magazine, or manifesto. Web forums and other social networking tools allow relatively unfiltered communications and indirect relationships, which may, over time, supplant mass media and personal networks as a source of influence. Indeed, virtual networks of radicalized, like-minded individuals can not only expose potential recruits to the ideology, frames, and program of an insurgent or terrorist group, but can help radicalize and steer potential recruits toward group recruiting or other networks.

Individual-Level Factors

Even if individuals are aware of real-world events and messages, they vary markedly in the degree to which they pay attention and how they react, depending on cognition and beliefs.[12] For example, individuals differ in their interest about political affairs; the most interested also make the greatest effort to acquire information and tend to recall it subsequently.

Individual-level filters help individuals decide, based on preexisting beliefs, which messages to accept, reject, or merely keep in mind. Individuals are more likely to accept messages from trusted or respected individuals and messages that reinforce preexisting beliefs.[13]

Finally, even if an individual has taken a message on board, he may or may not behave differently as a result.[14] As suggested by the

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[12] See, e.g., MacNulty, 2007.

[13] Many factors affect credibility of the messenger (e.g., perceived likeability, trustworthiness, competence, or expertise), the message channel (e.g., government press versus opposition press), and the message itself (e.g., ease of understanding, consistency with preexisting beliefs).

[14] Indeed, the best of the social science models that attempt to predict behavior from attitudes explains less than 30 percent of the variance in outcomes. According to a 2001 meta-analysis of 185 studies using Icek Ajzen's theory of planned behavior, the theory accounted

factor trees, response can depend on a *combination* of motivations, perceived legitimacy of violence, acceptability of costs and risks, the availability of mobilizing mechanisms and means, and (as shown at the bottom of the factor trees, as in Figure 2.3), emotion-related considerations, such as may be stimulated by charismatic leaders or dramatic events.

Thus, while the factor tree and social movement theory lenses can provide clues regarding the macro-level factors behind radicalization and mobilization into insurgency and terrorism in the aggregate, it seems that micro-level factors—personal networks and individual and small-group processes—are crucial mechanisms in transforming members of the public from an oppositional or passive stance to one that is more sympathetic or even extremist.[15]

Macro-, Meso-, and Micro-Level Strategy Options

This analysis suggests that in addition to intelligence, law enforcement, and military efforts to capture or kill insurgent or terrorist group leaders and disrupt their operational networks, there is a need for strategy elements that address the macro- (societal), meso- (factional), and micro- (individual) level aspects of support for insurgency and terrorism, including both assessment and policy action.

Macro- or Societal-Level Options

The macro level of strategy actions for reducing public support for terrorist or insurgent violence can be thought of as akin to broad-spectrum antibiotics that enhance the overall ability of a population or society to resist insurgent and terrorist group appeals for support. These

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for 39 percent of the variance in predicting behavioral intentions and 27 percent of the variance in predicting actual behavior. Put another way, less predictable contextual factors account for over 70 percent of the variance in actual behavioral outcomes. See Ajzen, 1991, pp. 179–211, and Armitage and Conner, 2001, pp. 471–499. For a review of the relevant social science literature on influence at various levels of analysis, see Larson et al., 2009a.

[15]   For admirably rich treatments of the factors associated with mobilization, see Olesen (2009) and Klandermans (2004).

need to be informed by an understanding of the situation as suggested in Figure 7.1, by tracking (1) salient real-world events and the larger framing contests between the government and insurgent or terrorist groups; (2) the prevalence of various frames and themes in the mass media, personal networks, and social media such as web forums; and (3) the awareness, resonance, and attitude and behavioral changes in key target populations in response to real-world events, policy actions, and messages.

Qualitative and quantitative analyses can be used to track events and messages, their relative prevalence, and their relative appeal to target populations. For example, content analysis, citation analysis, and network analysis tools can be integrated to "map" the public and private discourse of an insurgent or terrorist group, as well as the commentary of critics and others outside the movement.[16] Coupled with qualitative analyses, such analytic activities can provide useful insights into the changing level of intra-movement contention, specific wedge issues and fault lines, the leading voices associated with competing positions, and key vulnerabilities to external criticism that may be ripe for exploitation.

Similarly, focus groups, public opinion attitude surveys, and other analytic efforts can yield insights into the ideological, propaganda, and programmatic appeal to various audiences and how different respondents fall into fairly distinct groups.[17] An ongoing means of doing so attempts to measure whether al-Qa'ida is gaining or losing supporters. Our analysis of available public opinion survey data in the appendix suggests, however, that the current public opinion record is quite incomplete in addressing the key factors related to support for insurgent and terrorist violence that we have identified in the factor tree, and that it is little better for tracking the sorts of dynamic factors identified by the social movement theory lens. Put another way, to the extent that the polls reviewed in the appendix are representative, the U.S. govern-

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[16] RAND recently completed a three-year effort to map al-Qa'ida's Salafi-jihadi discourse and identify contention that might be exploited.

[17] See the interesting work of the Gallup Organization in particular (Rieger, 2010a; Mogahed, 2009).

ment's ability to track the level of public support and opposition to al-Qa'ida violence and the factors that regulate that support appears at present to be quite limited.[18] Much more could be done to connect survey and focus-group efforts with theory.

Strategy Actions. As described in Chapter Three, many generic options exist for reducing support for an insurgent or terrorist group. These include weakening the resonance of the group's narrative, exploiting or disrupting its propaganda networks, exploiting or creating divisions, and strengthening the resonance of counternarratives. Effectiveness, however, depends on knowledge of group and its behavior and the adequacy of measurement, tracking, and assessment.

Meso- or Factional-Level Options

Intermediate between the macro and micro level, the meso level concentrates on the various factions, stakeholder, and subpopulation groups. Understanding insurgency and terrorism at the factional level is important for a variety of reasons.

First, each group may have different preferences about both proximate and underlying issues (e.g., whether to support the insurgents and what the final power structure should be centralized or decentralized, respectively). Second, each faction has its own limited political, economic, and/or military capabilities. The eventual outcome will frequently be achieved when one side accumulates the cooperation of enough factions and segments to tilt the balance.

As a result, understanding the relationships among factions is crucially important in developing effective counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategies, including a range of carrots and sticks. So also is being able to anticipate what is feasible.

Related Models to Help. A family of models called agent-based rational choice stakeholder (ABRCS) models has been used for about 25 years to simulate the bargaining and other interactions between stakeholders and to forecast policy outcomes on a range of issues, including insurgencies. Evaluations of these models suggest that they have a pre-

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[18] Richer work does indeed go on within individual theaters of operation, although it is seldom publicly available.

dictive accuracy of 90 percent or better in identifying real-world policy outcomes,[19] and the models have rather modest data requirements: the identity of individual factions that will try to influence outcomes, identification of each faction's preferred policy position, and estimates of relative capabilities and policy salience for each faction.[20] There is, moreover, strong reason to believe that this family of models can be particularly useful for strategic-level analysis and strategy development for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts.[21]

Micro- or Individual-Level Options

Macro-level options may be useful in damping overall support for insurgency or terrorism, but they do not address the individual and small-group processes that appear to be the primary mechanisms responsible for radicalization and mobilization. It would be desirable to have policies that are analogous to narrow-spectrum antibiotics that can be targeted to address particular strains of agents. As above, options for doing so require additional knowledge. Of particular interest is the ability to detect and interrupt the pipelines and processes that radicalize and mobilize individuals. While surveys can help to identify pockets of support for extremism that might then be targeted for more detailed inspection,[22] the challenge of detecting and tracking the micro-level processes and networks has been the domain of intelligence and law enforcement. Security organizations have developed a variety of approaches.[23]

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[19] See Feder, 1995, pp. 274–292.

[20] One of the key figures in this domain has been Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. For an overview of this family of models and other social science relevant to the analysis of influence in irregular warfare, as well as citations, see Larson et al., 2009b, pp. 107 ff.

[21] See Larson et al., 2008, and Baranick et al., 2004. Most recently, colleague Ben Wise has made major advances in this work with a Central Position Theorem and the RAND Compass tool, developed under RAND's Arroyo Center.

[22] See Rieger, 2010a, pp. 76–81.

[23] For example, as described by the director of France's Central Directorate of Domestic Intelligence (DCRI), the French approach to detecting al-Qa'ida-affiliated terrorists is as follows: "We use both intensive trawling methods to discover networks of jihadis going to Afghanistan, for instance, but also harpoon fishing, targeting fanatical but isolated indi-

Strategy Actions. In addition to traditional security activities to break up clandestine insurgent or terrorist networks, a number of other micro-level actions could be fruitful. These would very much seek to operate "well left of the boom," indeed well left of even training or preparing for booms.

As radicalization and recruitment are most likely to take place at the fringes of at-risk communities, perhaps the most interesting opportunities lie in community-based efforts to strengthen resistance to extremist appeals and improving the ability to detect radicalizing individuals or cells. Community policing, for example, can help to build trust between communities and policing organizations and increase the willingness of members of the community to assist police in identifying at-risk individuals and members of insurgent or terrorist recruitment networks and radical voices who are promoting the radicalization and mobilization of community members into insurgent or terrorist activity. More broadly, community outreach programs can help to provide training, tools, and resources for local communities to combat extremism at a local level. Engagement with local religious, business, and other community leaders can help to improve an at-risk community's ability to police itself and steer at-risk individuals away from harm. Sponsoring community-based programs led by former insurgents or terrorists can, as with anti-gang programs, help to divert youth away from an extremist path,[24] and sponsoring events featuring credible voices, such as popular athletes or musicians, can help to draw youth into these programs. Intervention programs can be funded to create intervention teams that can work with local at-risk communities and assist local leaders in increasing societal pressures against radicalization and protecting members of their community against predation by insurgent and terrorist groups.

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viduals. Our mission is to identify them and 'remove' them as soon as possible, before they commit some irreparable act." See "France: More European Jihadis in Af-Pak Zone Training Camps," *LeFigaro.fr*, February 7, 2011.

[24]   Peace and reconciliation or deradicalization programs could, for example, help to provide a pipeline of former extremists who are obligated to perform community service in the form of efforts to steer at-risk youth away from an extremist path.

Although we can only mention such matters in this monograph, it is important to observe that evidence is accumulating on the effects of community-based outreach methods and also about outreach methods in prisons, although much of it is based on experience from other domains, such as reducing gang violence.[25] Even mentioning such issues, however, raises the uncomfortable problem that addressing them involves other countries (e.g., the Middle Eastern and European countries from which many jihadis arise) or state and local agencies within the United States other than the Department of Defense or intelligence community. *Doing anything* on such to-the-left-of-the-boom matters would require whole-of-government efforts with many attendant challenges.

To conclude, a combination of macro- and micro-level policies targeting both the broad societal level and the local community level appears necessary if efforts to reduce active support for insurgent or terrorist violence are to be successful.

Suggestions for Applied Analysis of Strategy in a Context

Although our study was largely about using conceptual models to draw on social science relating to public support of insurgency and terrorism, we can offer some summary suggestions (essentially admonitions) to those who develop, compare, and choose among alternative counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies. For the given context in which a commander finds himself developing strategy, we suggest the following:

1. Review the applicable "whole of government" strategy to have it firmly in mind, seeing the public-support issue as part of that much larger context. Coordinate accordingly.

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[25] Some entry points to relevant literature are Mirahmahdi and Farooq, 2010; TTSRL, 2008; Brandon, 2009; and Hamm, 2008 (which deals with prisoner radicalization rather than solutions).

2. Identify the entities in competition (e.g., internal factions, government, alliance assisting in counterinsurgency, other foreign governments).
3. Characterize the insurgent group's strategy, in part by characterizing how it addresses each of the elements of the social-movement-theory portion of this study.
4. Develop specialized factor trees for each subpopulation so as to appreciate where potential actions could have both intended and counterproductive effects, depending on subpopulation and targeting. Plan efforts accordingly.
5. Focus on possible actions that are feasible, for which there can be congruence between reality and messages, and for which bad side effects are unlikely.

Implications for Further Research and Analysis

A study of this kind would be incomplete without suggesting the direction of further research and analysis.

We believe that many practical applications of the ideas and methods discussed in this study are possible today. Those would be theater-specific applications for a combatant command, the Department of State, intelligence agencies, or a related allied organization, such as NATO. Some related work is already ongoing within the Marine Corps based on our earlier research and subsequent interactions. More basic research is also needed because using social science to inform irregular warfare generally is still in its infancy. However, in our view, the highest payoff—even for relatively basic research—often comes from applied projects on rich, real-world problems. Ideally, the project then has a track for near-term practical applications that are "good enough" to be useful and a more research-oriented track that learns from the exposure to real problems and the challenges of dealing with them.

We see future work in at least four areas suggested by results of the current study and parallel efforts:

1. *Semi-Predictive Models and Risk Assessment.* Develop logic-model extensions of our factor-tree models, following the general suggestions discussed in earlier work (Davis, 2009a) and demonstrated with simple prototype desktop computer models (Davis, 2006) and well-developed portfolio-analysis methods (Davis and Dreyer, 2009) with the intent of (1) greatly improving the quality and coherence of knowledge elicited from subject-matter experts, (2) better defining the desired "states" of relevant factors, (3) better estimating relative likelihoods of success in affecting those factors favorably without bad side effects, and (4) allocating resources effectively.

2. *Monitoring and Assessment.* Review current approaches being taken to data collection, assessment, and empirical-statistical "modeling" and then recommend changes informed and structured with conceptual models. This could lead to substantial changes in metrics, data-collection priorities, and routine analysis (e.g., replacing the "specifications" away from simple-minded linear weighted sums to a more theory-informed structure). This would affect the structure and coherence of operational- and strategic-level assessments and the conclusions drawn, including conclusions about actions to mitigate risks and exploit upside possibilities.

3. *Applied Modeling to Understand Factional Dynamics.* Apply and refine modern versions of "factional dynamics models" (called, variously, expected-utility and agent-based rational choice stakeholder models) to anticipate political maneuvering and eventual equilibria in a theater of operations. Such work has a long history but, as shown recently in RAND work, can now be increasingly nimble, transparent, and helpful in advising strategic planners dealing with complex maneuvering for power among multiple government, insurgent, tribal, and other groups.

4. *Data.* Review current in-theater research that uses polling, focus groups, and related methods (to include review of respondent-level data) and then recommend changes to improve the linkage between questions and protocols on the one hand and conceptual models on the other. The intent would be to give

data collection and analysis more explanatory power and value. This work would require a mix of expertise and would best be accomplished by teaming two or more organizations.

5. *Further Validation and Theory Development.* Experience in our study confirmed the value of iterative work that simultaneously tests and enriches theory by drawing on concrete empirical data. Future work could benefit from a larger and more systematically defined set of cases examined with a common set of methods and types of data sources.

Polling on Public Support for Terrorism in the Islamic World[1]

We culled questions relating to attitudes about terrorism and U.S. missions in the Islamic world from 24 public opinion polls carried out by 17 different organizations for populations living in the Muslim World—particularly Iraq and Afghanistan, but also Pakistan and other countries that have experienced terrorist activity in recent history.[2] We wanted to examine to what extent the questions asked in these polls mapped to the top-level factors described in our factor tree on the propensity to support terrorism—motivation for support for terrorism, perceived legitimacy of tactics, acceptability of costs and risks, and mobilization mechanisms. The descriptions of the factors and some sample questions are presented below, along with a table showing the intensity of questions by factor.

Potential motivations for support for terrorism include financial incentives, glory or ideology, feeling the need to act for defense, revenge, or political reasons, feeling kinship or a sense of social service to a group, or feeling social pressures to act. Some questions reflecting these sentiments include whether respondents support free speech, religion, or assembly (CNN/USA Today Gallup Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004); support or opposing Coalition presence (ABC/BBC Iraq survey, 2004–2009); or what level of confidence respondents have in the abil-

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[1]   This appendix is based on work by Michael Egner and Sarah Olmstead.

[2]   Bibliographic information for these 24 polls is listed at the end of this appendix rather than in the book's main bibliography.

ity of the insurgents or jihadists to improve the "situation in Iraq" (Iraq Centre for Research and Strategic Studies Survey, 2003–2006).

Questions related to legitimacy of tactics include those related to the perceived necessity or effectiveness of terrorist tactics; potential cultural propensity for violence; and religious, ideological, or ethical basis for the legitimacy of violence. Examples of questions that fit this categorization are whether respondents felt it was justified for individuals to target and kill civilians (Gallup World Poll, 2002); whether respondents accept attacks on coalition forces, foreigners, or police (Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq, 2003–2005); or whether respondents feel al-Qa'ida's activities are acceptable (ABC/BBC Iraq survey, 2004–2009).

Questions on acceptability of personal costs and risks featured questions such as whether there are costs and benefits of cooperating with coalition forces (CNN/USA Today Gallup Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004), whether respondents have personal experience with crime (Opinion Research Business Public Attitudes in Iraq survey, 2007), and how safe they feel in the presence of U.S. forces (Iraq Centre for Research and Strategic Studies Survey, 2003–2006). Costs and risks are affected by charged emotions, intimidation, personal risks and opportunity costs, and countervailing social pressures.

In terms of questions related to the presence or availability of mobilization mechanisms, only two questions in any of the surveys appears to be relevant: "Is the Taliban growing stronger/weaker?" (ABC/BBC Afghan Survey, 05 - 09) and "Will Lal Masjid increase/decrease extremism?" (Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey, 2005–2007). The strength of the Taliban would be relevant less to legitimacy of methods or motivations to support the group than to the likelihood that a respondent has the opportunity to join or support the Taliban. Additionally, the question on Lal Masjid gauges whether the presence of the Lal Masjid mosque and its function as a religious school will help mobilize extremists and spread extremist sentiment.

The relevance of questions to the top-level factors of our factor trees were as shown in Table A.1 for all of the polls studied, the polls pertaining to Afghanistan, and the polls pertaining to Iraq.

Table A.1
Number of Questions, by Factor

Class of Polls	Motivation for Support	Legitimacy of Tactics	Acceptability of Risks	Mobilization Networks
All	102	70	21	2
Afghanistan only	19	21	3	1
Iraq only	56	22	13	
ABC/BBC Afghanistan and Iraq	26	16	7	1

Over all the polls, there were 102 questions related to potential motivations for terrorism, 70 related to legitimacy of terrorist tactics, 21 referring to the acceptability of personal costs and risks, and 2 related to mechanisms for mobilizing and recruiting terrorist groups. The polls focus heavily on motivations for joining terrorist groups as well as perceived legitimacy of terrorist tactics, particularly on the legitimacy of U.S. and Coalition presence and activities.

The breakdown of questions asked about the factors varies by region, as indicated by the top three rows of data in Table A.1. We can see that in Afghanistan, more polls asked about legitimacy of terrorist tactics than any other factor, whereas in Iraq more surveys focus on personal motivations for support of terrorism. There were also many fewer surveys carried out in Afghanistan than Iraq. The Iraq polls also did not contain any questions related to mobilization mechanisms.

One of the largest and most all-encompassing surveys in Afghanistan and Iraq were two surveys carried out for ABC, BBC, and ARD (a German news agency) by local in-country partners D3 Systems and KA Research Ltd (in Iraq) and Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (a D3 Systems subsidiary in Afghanistan). The survey was carried out yearly in Iraq from 2004 to 2009 and in Afghanistan from 2005 to 2009.

Despite being one of the main contributors to questions asked in Afghanistan, the emphasis in the ABC/BBC/ARD polls is on the motivations for support of terrorism. These questions asked, e.g., whether respondents' priority is getting U.S. and multinational forces out of

Iraq and Afghanistan or whether a worse outcome would be terrorism or the coalition not leaving. Questions were also asked about who is to blame for casualties and security problems: U.S. forces or opposition forces.

Overall, most public opinion surveys given on the subject of public support for terrorism seem to focus on motivation for support and legitimacy of tactics rather than personal acceptability of risks and costs or the availability of mobilization mechanisms. This may be because the first two factors have many more dimensions or subfactors, whereas the latter two are more self-explanatory. However, this would not explain the regional differences in questions emphasized.

Further analysis could be done with access to the full surveys by looking at respondent answers to questions within each factor and see if there were any differences in responses to questions asked in the same factor category. This might give a more accurate impression as to whether questions within the factors were truly related or whether they were interpreted differently by respondents.

Table A.2 summarizes the questions that were related to terrorism in the 24 polls discussed in this appendix.[3]

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[3]   Again the bibliographic information for these polls is given at the end of this appendix, rather than in the monograph's main bibliography.

Table A.2
Public Opinion Poll Questions Related to Support for Terrorism

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Iraq invasion, attacks against U.S. forces, attacks against Iraqi police: justified/unjustified [Q10]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Preferred form of government [Q12]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Agree with free speech/religion/assembly [Q14.4]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Personal experiences post-invasion [Q19.1-3]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Want U.S./British forces to leave [Q20]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Perceived conduct of U.S. soldiers [Q21–24]	1			

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Personal contact with U.S. soldiers [Q25]			1	
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	U.S. soldiers as occupiers or liberators [Q26a-b]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Opinion of attacks on Iraqi police [Q26c]		1		
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Favorability, various groups [Q29]	1			
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Costs/benefits of cooperating w/ coalition [Q36.1-2]			1	
CNN/USA Today Gallup Poll: Nationwide Poll of Iraq, 2004	2004	X			1	Various political attitudes [Q37]	1			
Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, 2002	2001–2002			X	1	Justified/unjusitified: U.S. action in Afghanistan; 9/11 attacks [Q18]	1			

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, 2002	2001–2002			X	1	Word association: jihad [Q29.3]		1		
Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, 2002	2001–2002			X	1	Who is behind 9/11 attacks [Q31-32]	1			
Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, 2002	2001–2002			X	1	Why is U.S. taking military action in Afghanistan [Q33]	1			
World Values Survey	1996–1997			X	1	Using violence to pursue political goals is justified [V164]	1			
Zogby 10-Nation Impressions of America Poll	Mar–Apr 2002			X	1	Favorability of U.S. efforts to fight terrorism [Q12]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Terrorism a problem in our country [Q15f(1); Q14e(6)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Suicide bombing justified/unjustified [Q55(1); Q13(3); Q29(5); Q72(6); Q58(8)]		1		
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Favor/oppose U.S. fight against terrorism [Q72(1); Q16(2); Q9(3); Q9(4); Q3(5); Q30(6); Q26(8)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Approve/disapprove military action in Iraq [Q22(2); Q18(3); Q32(4)]	1			

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Opinion of Iraqi resistance to U.S. and allies [Q23(2)]		1		
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Did U.S. try hard to avoid civilian casualties [Q24(2)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Coalition takes Iraqi needs into account [Q27(2); Q20(3)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Confidence in Usama bin Laden [Q32i(2); Q8e(3); Q40d(5); Q56d(6); Q21e(8)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Suicide bombing against U.S./Westerners in Iraq [Q15(3)]		1		
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Concern with extremism in country/world [Q20–21(5); Q19–20(8)]		1	1	
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Side with modernists or fundamentalists [Q23b/Q28(5); Q71b(6)]	1	1		
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	How many in our country/the world support al Qaeda? [Q30(5)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Favorability, Hezbollah [Q16n(6)]	1	1		
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	U.S. should remove troops from Iraq [Q57(6)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	U.S., NATO should get out of Afghanistan [Q58(6); Q37(7); Q40(8)]	1			

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Favor home country doing more against terror [Q27(8)]	1	1		
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Approve of U.S. withdrawal from Iraq [Q49b(8)]	1			
Pew Global Attitudes Survey	2002–2009			X	1	Approve of more troops in Afghanistan [Q49c(8)]	1			
Gallup World Poll	2002–2009 (varies)	X	X	X	2	Justified for individuals to target and kill civilians		1		
Gallup World Poll	2002–9 (varies)	X	X	X	2	For oppressed groups, peaceful means will work		1		
Gallup World Poll	2002–2009 (varies)	X	X	X	2	Violence index (national)		1		
Gallup World Poll	2002–2009 (varies)	X	X	X	2	9/11, other civilian attacks justified; terrorist attacks will improve U.S. policies (availability unclear)		1		
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003–2005	X			2	Accept attacks on coalition forces, foreigners, police [Q25(2)]		1		
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003–2005	X			2	Support/oppose presence of coalition forces [(2); Q32(5)]	1			

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	How long should coalition stay in Iraq? [(2); Q33(5)]	1			
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Priority: Stopping attacks on coalition forces [(3); Q39(5)]		1		
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Priority: Stopping attacks on police, army [(3); Q39(5)]		1		
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Have or might use violent political action if necessary (4)			1	
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Invasion of Iraq was right/wrong [Q6(5)]	1			
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Worst thing if occupation does not leave Iraq [Q10(5)]	1			
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Priority: Getting U.S. and other forces out of Iraq [Q14a(5)]	1			
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003– 2005	X			2	Confidence in U.S./UK occupation forces [Q19(5)]	1			

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003–2005	X			2	Coalition has performed good job/bad job [Q31(5)]	1			
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003–2005	X			2	Avoid coalition forces/checkpoints to avoid trouble [Q36(5)]			1	
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003–2005	X			2	Coalition or terrorists responsible for security deterioration [Q38(5)]	1	1		
Oxford Research National Survey of Iraq	2003–2005	X			2	Priority: Stopping attacks on civilians [Q39(5)]		1		
University of Michigan Iraq Survey	Nov–Dec 2004	X			2	Trusts U.S. forces	1			
University of Michigan Iraq Survey	Nov–Dec 2004	X			2	Supports American presence	1			
University of Michigan Iraq Survey	Nov–Dec 2004	X			2	Preferred political system	1			
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	Motivation of sending U.S. troops to Iraq [Q1(1)]	1			
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	Will security situation improve with MNF withdrawal [Q2(1)]	1			

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	Experience with crime [Q3(1)]	1		1	
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	Surge will improve security situation in Baghdad [Q1(2)]	1			
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	Economic questions (3)	1			
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	Less violence in Basra after British withdrawal [Q2(4)]	1			
IIACSS/ORB: Public Attitudes in Iraq	2007	X			2	British troops are biggest security threat to Basra [Q4(4)]	1			
Asia Foundation: Survey of the Afghan People	2004–2009		X		2	Throughout: questions on economy, political behavior, attitudes.	1			
Asia Foundation: Survey of the Afghan People	2004–2009		X		2	Favorability, jihadi leaders [Q45(1)]	1	1		
Asia Foundation: Survey of the Afghan People	2004–2009		X		2	Favorability, Taliban [Q47(1)]	1	1		
Asia Foundation: Survey of the Afghan People	2004–2009		X		2	Favorability, U.S. forces in country [Q50(1)]	1	1		
Asia Foundation: Survey of the Afghan People	2004–2009		X		2	Approve of government reconciliation efforts [Q64a(5)]		1		

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Asia Foundation: Survey of the Afghan People	2004–2009		X		2	Sympathy with anti-government violence [Q64b(5)]		1		
CSS-Jordan: Aftermath of Killing of al-Zarkawi	2005–2006				2	Are armed operations against U.S.-led forces in Iraq terrorist or not?		1		
CSS-Jordan: Aftermath of Killing of al-Zarkawi	2006				2	Are U.S.-led armed operations in Iraq terrorist or not?		1		
CSS-Jordan: Aftermath of Killing of al-Zarkawi	2006				2	Are al-Qaeda's operations in Iraq resulting in deaths of Iraqi civilians terrorist or not?		1		
CSS-Jordan: Aftermath of Killing of al-Zarkawi	2006				2	Are al-Qaeda's operations in Iraq resulting in deaths of Iraqi police and army terrorist or not?		1		
CSS-Jordan: Aftermath of Killing of al-Zarkawi	2006				2	Are al-Qaeda's operations in Iraq resulting in deaths of Iraqi Shiites terrorist or not?		1		
CSS-Jordan: Aftermath of Killing of al-Zarkawi	2006				2	Was the killing of Abu Musa'ab Al Zarkawi by U.S. forces in Iraq terrorist or not?		1		

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	U.S. invasion humiliated/liberated Iraq [Q6(1)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Confidence in U.S. forces, other groups [Q14b(1); Q19(2); Q16(3); Q14(4); Q14(5); Q16(6)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Would use violence or force if necessary [Q23e(1)]		1	1	
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Accept attacks on coalition, police, others [Q25(1); Q30(3); Q23(4); Q26(5)]		1		
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Support/oppose presence of coalition forces [Q26(1); Q32(2); Q25(3); Q19(4); Q20(5)]	1	1		
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Encounters with coalition forces [Q27(1)]	1		1	
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Would X improve security? [Q28(1)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	How long should coalition stay? (slight vary) [Q29(1); Q33(2); Q27(3); Q21(4); Q22(5); Q24(6)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Worst thing to happen: terrorism vs. occupation not leaving [Q10(2)]	1	1		
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Priority: getting U.S. and other forces out [Q14j(2)]	1			

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Rate job of coalition forces [Q31(2); Q24(3); Q18(4); Q19(5); Q21(6)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Who is responsible/to blame for violence/deterioration [Q38b(2); Q38(3); Q27(4); Q12c(5)]	1	1		
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Priority: stopping attacks on Iraqis vs. coalition [Q39(2)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Events/attacks in area [Q33(3); Q25(4); Q28–29(5); Q27–28(6)]	1		1	
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Effects of U.S. troop increase [Q20(4); Q21(5)]	1		1	
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	AQ activities: acceptable/ unacceptable [Q28(4)]		1		
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Consequences of U.S./UK withdrawal [Q35(4); Q33(5); Q25/39(6)]	1			
ABC/BBC Iraq Survey	2004–2009	X			3	Should U.S. have future role in operations against AQ [Q34e(5)]	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Confidence in coalition to improve situation [Q2.3(3)] (Questions vary from survey to survey)	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Support/oppose presence of coalition forces [Q3.1(3); Q3a(5)]	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Multinational forces as liberators/ occupiers/peacekeepers [Q3.2(3); Q3.3(3)]	1			

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Why do you support/oppose presence [Q3b(5); Q3c(5)]	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	If coalition forces withdrew, would you feel more/less safe? [Q3d(5)]	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	How long should coalition forces stay [Q3e(5); Q8(7)]		1		
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	What should coalition forces do if they do not withdraw [Q5a(5)]		1		
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Why are Iraqi police attacked [Q5c(5)]		1		
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	More likely for others to report weapons to coalition vs. Iraqis [Q7e(5)]			1	
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Priority: get coalition out of Iraq vs. unite against terrorism [Q11a(5)]	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	If multinational forces withdrew, what is likely to happen? [Q9(7)]			1	
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Support attacks on coalition/U.S. troops/police/others		1		
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	How safe do you feel in the presence of U.S. forces?			1	
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Who contributes most to your sense of security?			1	

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	Confidence in insurgents/jihadis to improve situation	1			
ICRSS Iraq Surveys	2003–2006	X			3	What is the reason behind Iraqi resistance?		1		
YouGov Poll	2003	X			3	Feel friendly/hostile toward U.S./UK forces	1			
YouGov Poll	2003	X			3	Prefer U.S./UK to stay in or pull out	1			
Brookings Iraq Index	Bi-weekly	X			3	Good for security-related trends	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Priority, getting U.S. troops out [Q5a(1); Q8(2); Q8(3)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Favorability, various (incl. Taliban, U.S., UBL) [Q13–Q15(1); Q29–31(2); Q39(3); Q38(4); Q39(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Attacks on U.S. military forces justified [Q17(1); Q18(2); Q25(3); Q25(4); Q25(5)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	When should U.S. military forces leave (slight vary) [Q18(1); Q20(2); Q28(3); Q27(4); Q28(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Support/oppose presence of U.S., jihadis, others [Q16(2); Q17(3); Q18(4); Q17(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Why are attacks on U.S. justified? [Q19(2); Q26(3)]		1		

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Attacks on non-U.S. forces justified [Q21(2); Q27(3)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Suicide bombings justified [Q21e(2)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Confidence in the U.S., jihadis/Taliban, others [Q23(2); Q31(3); Q29(4); Q30(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Local support for U.S., jihadis/Taliban [Q24(2); Q32(3); Q30(4); Q31(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Why people support Taliban [Q25(2); Q33(3)]			1	
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Events/attacks in area [Q26(2); Q34–35(3); Q31–32(4); Q32(5)]			1	
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Who to blame most for violence in country [Q18(3); Q19(4); Q18(5)]			1	
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Taliban growing stronger/weaker [Q19(3); Q20(4); Q19(5)]				1
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Should negotiate with Taliban [Q20(3); Q21(4); Q21(5)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Feelings toward Western military forces [Q22–24(3)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Belief that Taliban or Afghan government will win [Q23(4); Q23(5)]	1			

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Have Taliban become more moderate? [Q24(4); Q24(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Should U.S./NATO troops be increased/decreased (slight vary) [Q26(4); Q26(5)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	U.S./NATO airstrikes acceptable [Q33(4); Q33(5)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Who to blame for civilian harm in airstrikes [Q34(4); Q34(5)]	1	1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Approval, various possible changes in U.S. policy (slight vary) [Q41(4); Q27(5)]		1		
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Rate U.S./NATO forces: security, casualties, reconstruction [Q20(5)]	1			
ABC/BBC Afghan Survey	2005–2009		X		3	Who to blame for civilian harm in ground operations [Q35(5)]	1			
Brookings Afg. Index	Weekly		X		3	Good for security-related trends	1	1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Believe X increases support for terrorism [Q10a–e(1)]	1			
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Imp. of defeating AQ/jihadis (slight vary) [Q16c(1); Q12e(2); Q8e(3)]	1			

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Favorability, various groups [Q17(1); Q13(2); Q10(3)]	1			
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Support Pakistan pursuing Tal./AQ [Q18a(1); Q14a(2); Q11a(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Support U.S.+Pakistan pursuing Tal./AQ [Q18b(1); Q14b(2); Q11b(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Support U.S. alone pursuing Tal./AQ [Q18c(1); Q14c(2); Q11c(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Favorability, various people [Q19(1); Q15(2); Q12(3)]	1			
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Lal Masjid will increase/decrease extremism [Q25(1)]				1
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Suicide bombing justified/unjustified [Q26(1); Q23(2); Q30(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Suicide bombing justified, by target [Q24–5(2); Q31–2(3)]		1		

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Real purpose of U.S. war on terror [Q27(1); Q36(3)]	1			
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Support U.S. war on terror [Q28(2); Q35(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Support presence of various military groups in Pakistan [Q13(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Who is responsible for violence in Pakistan [Q14(3)]			1	
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Who should Pakistani government negotiate with [Q15(3)]			1	
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Why support AQ/bin Ladin [Q16(3)]			1	
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Perceived threat, various groups [Q28(3)]		1		
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Perceived goals of AQ [Q29(3)]	1			

Table A.2—Continued

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
Terror Free Tomorrow Pakistan Survey	2005–2007			X	3	Suicide bombing permitted by Islam? [Q34(3)]		1		
Brookings Pak. Index	Biweekly			X	3	Good for security-related trends	1	1		
Iraq Living Conditions Survey	Apr–May 2004	X			4	Background factors: demographics, health	1			
IRI Survey of Iraq	Frequent	X			4	Why is Iraq headed in bad direction? (occupation, security situation)	1			
IRI Survey of Iraq	Frequent	X			4	Priority of withdrawing coalition forces	1			
IRI Survey of Iraq	Frequent	X			4	Bomb attack/violence is acceptable political expression		1		
IRI Survey of Afghanistan	2009		X		4	Government should talk/reconcile with Taliban (1) (3);		1		
IRI Survey of Afghanistan	2009		X		4	Attitude toward foreign troops (1)	1			
IRI Survey of Afghanistan	2009		X		4	Rate performance of Taliban (2) (3)	1			
IRI Survey of Afghanistan	2009		X		4	Attitude toward U.S., Taliban (2)	1			
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	The Taliban AQ operating in Pakistan is a serious problem		1		

Poll Name	Date	Iraq	Afg.	Pak.	Level of Data	Relevant Questions	Motivation for support	Legitimacy of tactics	Acceptability of Costs/Risks	Mobilization Mechanisms
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	I support the army fighting extremists		1		
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	I support the U.S. making military incursions		1		
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	Approve Pakistan cooperation with U.S. war against terror		1		
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	U.S. should partner with Pakistan to conduct drone attacks		1		
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	Support of peace deal with extremists		1	1	
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	Problem with extremists using Pakistan as base of operations		1		
IRI Survey of Pakistan	Frequent			X	4	Favorability (UBL, Mullah Omar, Baitullah Mehsud)	1			
Living Conditions in Anbar Province	May–Jun 2008	X			5	Background factors: demographics, employment, effects of war	1			

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