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Education and Islamic Radicalization in the Arabian Peninsula

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**EDUCATION AND ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION IN THE ARABIAN
PENINSULA**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in **International Relations** from
The College of William and Mary

by

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INTRODUCTION

“...*Crusader interference in changing curriculums is definitely one of the most dangerous interferences in our affairs...*”
-Osama bin Laden, speaking about education reform¹

Since the September 11, 2001 attack, scholars have worked vigorously to identify the causes of radical Islamic terrorism. Political repression, economic stagnation, “the clash of civilizations,” and foreign occupation by non-Muslim troops have been their favorite culprits for explaining this brand of terrorism. However, none of these causal arguments are independently capable of explaining the terrorism produced and experienced by the Arabian Peninsula, currently the largest source of foreign fighters and the staging ground of brutal terrorist attacks against Western tourists and U.S. embassies.² Saudi Arabia, a wealthy country with relatively constant political repression, continued to experience its most violent spate of domestic terrorism after the United States significantly reduced its military presence in the country. The most impoverished country in the Middle East, Yemen, has relatively low levels of political repression and houses no permanent non-Muslim military presence to speak of, but is currently the staging ground for continuous terror attacks on Western tourists and embassies, including the U.S. embassy. What causal factor connects these two cases in explaining their prominence in producing terrorism? Bin Laden gives us a clue in the opening quote: education.

¹ As translated by independent terrorism analyst Dan Darling in “Special Analysis: The 12/04 Bin Laden Tapes,” *Winds of Change*, December 30, 2004, <http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/006101.html>.

² Clint Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: What Foreign Fighters Reveal about the Future of Terrorism* (PJ Sage, Inc., March 24, 2008), <http://www.pjsage.com/products.htm>.

This thesis seeks to examine the role of education in Islamic radicalization and how the educational factor works to complement and combine causal explanations offered by preexisting scholarly literature. Specifically, this paper will study the content, structure and accessibility of education systems in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait and their role in radical Islamic terrorism.

My research will fill two critical gaps in terrorism literature. First, while previous scholarly research has examined the relationship between levels of education and participation in terrorism, no significant empirical study has yet been conducted on terrorism and the content, structure and accessibility of education systems. The second gap that my research intends to fill results from the fact that while Saudi Arabia and Yemen have both been the subject of empirical research on terrorism, no study has yet attempted to offer a causal explanation for terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula as a region. This represents a gap in terrorism literature, considering Saudi Arabia and Yemen's prominent positions as producers and targets of radical Islamic terrorism. Saudi Arabia has been the largest single source of foreign fighters in Afghanistan and Iraq and only recently succeeded in suppressing a domestic terrorist group called al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Yemen has also been one of the top three producers of foreign fighters, has long served as a recruiting ground and safe haven for al-Qaeda, and is currently experiencing unrelenting anti-Western domestic terrorism.

This research is also important because of its particular relevance for policymakers today. Its policy relevance becomes apparent when considering the United States' involvement and leadership in the "Global War on Terror" and the Arabian Peninsula's position as a prominent source of terrorism against the United States in the Middle East.

By examining the reasons that terrorism has taken root in the Arabian Peninsula, this thesis provides direct policy implications for the United States. Research on the causes of terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula is vital to the U.S.-led War on Terror; not only will it be useful in tailoring U.S. counterterrorism measures in the Arabian Peninsula itself, it will also provide a deeper understanding of the causes of terrorism that could be applicable to other regions as well. In fact, *madrassas*, or Islamic religious schools, have been repeatedly charged as important sources of terrorists in countries in south and central Asia, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. For example, analysts have accused Pakistan's abundant *madrassas* for contributing to the bout of terrorism the country has experienced and produced in recent years, including the recent attacks that devastated Mumbai this past November.³

My causal model combines the educational factor with a number of independent variables identified by preexisting literature to offer a new explanation for radical Islamic terrorism. In the model, I propose that the nature of state education systems (whether their content, accessibility or structure) causes certain students to receive a radical religious education that denies them any marketable skills and indoctrinates them into high levels of sensitivity towards foreign presence, which is seen as threatening to their cultivated religious identity. When these individuals are unable to secure employment and also perceive a threatening foreign presence, they are likely to engage in religious terrorism in an attempt to expel the foreign presence by force.

An example of this causal model can be found in Yemen, where students in many areas either lack access to public education or have access to a public education that is

³ Vicky Nanjappa and Krishnakumar P, "The Amazing Anti-India Syllabus of Pak Madrassas," *Rediff: India Abroad*, February 24, 2009, <http://www.rediff.com/news/2009/feb/24amazing-anti-india-syllabus-of-pak-madrassas.htm>.

severely inadequate in nature. This fact causes many students to receive their education in radical religious schools that have sprung up in the absence of the government's authority, where they are sensitized to the presence of foreign, non-Muslim powers, particularly "Crusader" and "Zionist" presences. When the Yemeni government is then perceived as colluding with the "Crusader" United States and by extension its "Zionist" Israeli ally, Yemenis who received these radical religious educations and are unable to find employment as a result of their dearth of marketable skills are then more likely to engage in radical Islamic terrorism. Al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY), the current domestic terror group, continually targets the U.S. and Westerners in their attacks, having attempted to attack the U.S. embassy on several occasions in the past year, and has repeatedly demanded that the Yemeni government cease its counterterrorism cooperation with the "Crusader" United States.

In order to provide a causal explanation for terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula, I will employ between-case and within-case analysis of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait. Case studies are appropriate for this study because of their ability to examine the political, social and economic conditions involved in explaining the incidence of terrorism in each case. I decided to study cases in the Arabian Peninsula because of the region's prominent place in producing terrorism. The cases of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait were then specifically chosen because of their suitability for testing my theory: they are all located in the Arabian Peninsula and have varying levels of the dependent variable religious terrorism and the independent variables of education, foreign occupation, political repression, and deprivation.

Data for the study was collected from a variety of sources, including: primary and secondary materials about the terrorist groups, local newspapers, and country websites. I also extracted information from scholarly reports on education systems in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait and previous studies of terrorism in the individual country cases.

My research ultimately concluded that state education systems in Saudi Arabia and Yemen were a major contributing factor to the high levels of terrorism produced and experienced by those countries. Public education in Saudi Arabia contained radical religious content and was also structured in a way that led a certain contingent of students to receive higher concentrations of this radical material while also being denied marketable skills. These individuals were then more likely to engage in radical Islamic terrorism. Evidence for this theory lay in the conspicuous absence of domestic terrorists with technical or science degrees and the abundance of students and the unemployed among Saudi foreign fighters.

Yemen's public education system has limited accessibility in rural and tribal areas and is largely weak and inadequate in others, and is causing some students to receive an alternative form of education provided by independent religious institutions. In the absence of government authority, religious institutions have flourished and provide an alternative form of education that is often radical in nature. The relationship between these radical schools and terrorism is evident in the fact that known radical Islamic schools like the Iman University and the Dar al-Hadith school network have been found to produce both domestic terrorists and foreign fighters.

In contrast, the state education system in Kuwait played a role in keeping Kuwaiti terrorism at relatively low levels. The education system in Kuwait is widely-accessible

and well-developed and contains primarily moderate religious teachings. As a result of their educational background and the Kuwaiti state's ability to hire a large percentage of graduates, students locate employment easily. A majority of students who major in religious studies, and even those who have difficulty finding jobs in the secular job market, primarily focus on bringing about socially conservative values rather than pursuing violent political objectives.

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter discusses the existing body of literature, presents the theory and testable hypotheses, and outlines the research design, methodology and data collection techniques. The second chapter contains the case study on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, followed by the chapters for the Yemen and Kuwait case studies. The thesis's final chapter presents the study's findings, describes the policy implications and offers suggestions for further research.

THEORY CHAPTER

This study seeks to explain the role that education plays in the Islamic radicalization process by examining the cases of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait. Numerous newspaper articles and individual reports have implicated the role of education in the radicalization process, but there is a dearth of literature examining this relationship empirically. Saudi Arabia's education system has been a particular object of scrutiny since the September 11, 2001 attacks because of its inflammatory religious teachings.

Rather than exchanging preexisting theories for a new one, this thesis argues that education, in combination with previously identified causal factors, explains a greater number of cases than do other theories independently. Education plays an important role in radicalization because it determines students' level of employability and their level of religious indoctrination. When students receive a primarily religious education of a radical nature, they often fail to develop job-appropriate skills, face difficulties securing employment and are more likely to engage in religious terrorism.

For the purposes of this study, education will be defined along the criteria of content, structure and accessibility. Content refers to the school curricula and specifically the religious material contained by textbooks. The structure of an education system determines whether students are organized into different education tracks and can be bifurcated. Finally, accessibility refers to students' ability to enroll in public education and is often determined by socioeconomic or geographic factors.

As scholars have struggled to describe the definitive features of the often ambiguous term "terrorism," a single definition of the term has eluded much of the

literature. For the purposes of this study, I use the definition of terrorism provided by the RAND Worldwide Terrorism Incident Knowledge Database and the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism; “terrorism is violence calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm to coerce others into actions they would not otherwise undertake, or refrain from actions they desired to take. Acts of terrorism are generally directed against civilian targets [...] and terrorist actions are generally carried out in a way that will achieve maximum publicity.”⁴ This definition identifies the most important aspects of terrorism, in addition to being operationally useful. I will further narrow my focus on terrorism to the distinct branch of radical Islamic terrorism. Religious terrorism can take two forms: domestic terrorism conducted by a country’s citizens within its borders and foreign terrorism carried out by foreign fighters originating from that country.

In this chapter, I will begin by reviewing the existing literature in order to lay the groundwork for explaining my contribution to the study of radical Islamic terrorism. In the concluding section, I present a new causal theory for religious terrorism—emphasizing education systems’ role in radicalization—and describe my research design.

Literature Review

This section of the paper will present and evaluate the existing systemic theories of terrorism. This paper focuses on the systemic causes of terrorism, rather than individual or organizational causes, for two reasons. First, systemic explanations are more generalizable, meaning that they can be used to explain a wider range of phenomena. Second, systemic explanations are more predictive than other levels of analysis and therefore, more useful.

⁴ “The RAND Worldwide Terrorism Incident Knowledge Database Project,” *RAND: Infrastructure, Safety and Environment*, May 23, 2008, <http://www.rand.org/ise/projects/terrorismdatabase/>.

The existing systemic theories of radical Islamic terrorism fall into four main bodies of literature, the first of which argues that deprivation creates a motive for terrorism. A second body of literature contends that political repression and lack of civil liberties provide motivation for terrorism. The third group of scholars asserts that foreign occupation serves as a motive for terrorism. Finally, the fourth group argues that culture provides an ideational motive for terrorism, which encompasses the religion and “clash of civilizations” arguments.

Deprivation as a Cause of Terrorism

The deprivation body of literature, first presented by Ted Gurr in 1970, argues that poor social conditions, low levels of education, and lack of political freedom caused by deprivation are the main motives for terrorism in less developed regions.⁵ Some scholars within this camp focus on absolute poverty as a cause of terrorism, while others emphasize relative deprivation.

The absolute poverty group argues that poverty is directly associated with terrorism, because poverty creates conditions favorable to the rise of terrorism in which “disaffected populations turn to transnational terrorist activities as a solution to their problems.”⁶ Poor economic conditions are also vulnerable to exploitation by pre-existing terrorist groups, and weaken a state’s ability to effectively respond to violence and terrorism.⁷ The main causal argument is that a poor state is usually characterized by poor or weak governance, underdevelopment, and high unemployment rates- all of which

⁵ Ana Bela Santos Bravo and Carlos Manuel Mendes Dias, “An Empirical Analysis of Terrorism: Deprivation, Islamism and Geopolitical Factors,” *Defence & Peace Economics* 17, no. 4 (2006): 329-341.

⁶ Quan Li and Drew Schaub, “Economic Globalization and Transnational Terrorism: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 2 (April 2004): 230-258.

⁷ Susan E. Rice, “The Threat of Global Poverty,” *The National Interest* (2006): 76-82.

provide sources of grievance for a population and leave them vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist groups providing welfare and social services.⁸

A second group bases their argument for deprivation as the explanation of terrorism on the relative deprivation theory of political violence. This theory argues that political and economic inequalities are more causally related to terrorism and political violence than absolute poverty, and is based on the assumption that people become more inclined to political violence when they believe that they are collectively being denied access to economic or political opportunities that benefit other groups.⁹

However, many empirical studies challenge the deprivation camp, arguing that there is no direct correlation between poverty and terrorism.¹⁰ The deprivation theory alone is an insufficient explanation for terrorism; it cannot explain a number of cases of radical Islamic terrorism. For example, the deprivation explanation does not apply to members of Hezbollah's militant wing and Palestinian suicide bombers, who were "at least as likely to come from economically advantaged families and have a relatively high level of education as to come from the ranks of the economically disadvantaged and

⁸ See Rice, "Threat of Global Poverty," 76-82; and Alexis G. Grynkewich, "Welfare as Warfare: How Violent Non-State Groups Use Social Services to Attack the State," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 4 (2008): 350.

⁹ See Edward N. Muller and Mitchell A. Seligson, "Inequality and Insurgency," *The American Political Science Review* 81, no. 2 (June 1987): 425-451; Alberto Alesina and Roberto Perotti, "Income Distribution, Political Instability, and Investment," *European Economic Review* 40, no. 6 (June 1996): 1203-1228; E. Wayne Nafziger and Juha Auvinen, "Economic Development, Inequality, War, and State Violence," *World Development* 30, no. 2 (February 2002): 153-163; and Ted Robert Gurr, "Economic Factors," in *The Roots of Terrorism (Democracy and Terrorism)*, ed. Louise Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 85-101.

¹⁰ See Daniel Pipes, "God and Mammon: Does Poverty Cause Militant Islam?," *The National Interest* (2001): 14-21; Michael Mousseau, "Market Civilization and its Clash with Terror," *International Security* 27, no. 3 (2002): 5-29; Alan B. Krueger, "Cash Rewards and Poverty Alone Do Not Explain Terrorism," *New York Times*, May 29, 2003; Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malečková, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 119-144; Alberto Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series* No. 10859 (October 2004); and James A. Piazza, "Rooted in Poverty?: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages," *Terrorism & Political Violence* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 159-177.

uneducated.”¹¹ The deprivation theory also fails to explain why militant Islamism and terrorism have flourished in wealthy locations like Saudi Arabia and the European Union.¹²

Most scholars agree that deprivation and state poverty have more of an indirect effect on the occurrence of terrorism, but that the deprivation factor is still important in explaining terrorism in many cases.¹³ Poverty-induced situations like failed states often become safe havens and breeding grounds for terrorism.¹⁴ Somalia is a prominent example of a failed state turned safe haven and terrorist breeding ground. Another example of the importance of deprivation is how Al-Qaeda has utilized the favorable poverty-induced conditions in Sudan and Afghanistan to establish training camps in those countries.

Political Repression as a Cause of Terrorism

The political repression body of literature argues that there is a linear correlation between the lack of political freedom and a population’s proclivity to engage in international terrorism.¹⁵ Democratization is therefore offered as the most appropriate method of combating terrorism.¹⁶ The theory states that the lack of civil and political freedom creates popular dissatisfaction, which can only be expressed through violent

¹¹ Krueger and Malečková, “Education, Poverty and Terrorism,” 119-144.

¹² Pipes, “God and Mammon,” 14-21.

¹³ See Krueger and Malečková, “Education, Poverty and Terrorism,” 119-144; and Gurr, “Economic Factors,” 85-101.

¹⁴ See CCB Kittner, “The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 307-329; James A. Piazza, “Draining the Swamp: Democracy Promotion, State Failure, and Terrorism in 19 Middle Eastern Countries,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 6 (2007): 521; and Robert I. Rotberg, “The New Nature of Nation-State Failure,” *Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 85-96.

¹⁵ See Krueger, “Cash Rewards and Poverty”; Jennifer L. Windsor, “Promoting Democratization Can Combat Terrorism,” *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 43-58;

¹⁶ See Natan Sharansky, *The Case for Democracy: the Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004); and R. Wintrobe, “Extremism, Suicide Terror, and Authoritarianism,” *Public Choice* 128, no. 1-2 (July 2006): 169-195.

means since there are no alternate channels available to achieve political ends.¹⁷ Within this explanation, repressive military measures taken by a government in response to attempts at political expression are seen as direct causes of terrorist activity.¹⁸

However, empirical analysis finds that the political repression theory fails to provide significant evidence to support a linear correlation between the occurrence of terrorism and the lack of civil and political rights in a country.¹⁹ Empirical research further suggests that there is no significant relationship between the occurrences of terrorism and authoritarianism, and there is no substantial evidence to indicate that democracies are less likely to experience terrorism. The political repression theory, for example, fails to explain why India, the most populous democracy, sustained 75% of the terrorist attacks that occurred in the “free” countries from 2000-2003, while the most populous authoritarian regime, China, experienced no incidents of terrorism in that time period.²⁰

A nonlinear, U-shaped relationship between political repression and terrorism explains more cases than does a strictly linear one; as the level of political repression increases initially, the level of terrorism declines, but as political repression continues to increase, the terrorist cause is given a certain amount of legitimacy and begins to increase

¹⁷ See Martha Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism,” *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (July 1981): 379-399; and Gurr, “Economic Factors,” 85-101.

¹⁸ See Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism,” 379-399; Gurr, “Economic Factors,” 85-101; and Bader Araj, “Harsh State Repression as a Cause of Suicide Bombing: The Case of the Palestinian–Israeli Conflict,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 4 (2008): 284.

¹⁹ See Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism,”; Abdelaziz Testas, “Determinants of Terrorism in the Muslim World: An Empirical Cross-Sectional Analysis,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 253-273; F. Gregory Gause, “Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (2005): 62-76; and Quan Li, “Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (2005): 278-297.

²⁰ Gause, “Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?,” 62-76.

again.²¹ This modified political repression theory might explain why Spain and Russia experienced temporary increases in terrorism during their transitions from authoritarian regimes to more democratic ones.²²

Foreign Occupation as a Cause of Terrorism

Robert Pape is the main proponent of the foreign occupation theory of terrorism, which argues that suicide terrorism is usually a nationalist response to foreign occupation. He asserts that suicide terrorist campaigns are most likely when a national community is occupied by a foreign power, particularly when the foreign power is a democracy of a different religion.²³ The causal logic is that foreign occupation of the “homeland” is strong motivation for nationalism and self-determination. The greater the differences between the occupying and occupied nations, especially religious differences that intensify nationalist resistance by portraying the conflict as zero-sum and allowing extreme demonization of enemies, the occupier will be perceived as an “alien” threat to national identity needing to be expelled.²⁴

Pape’s theory, however, fails to address continued terrorism in countries where foreign occupation has greatly decreased or where there is no discernible physical foreign

²¹ See Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism.”; and Testas, “Determinants of Terrorism in the Muslim World,” 253-273.

Abadie (2004) argues that empirical research shows that “countries in some intermediate range of political freedom are shown to be more prone to terrorism than countries with high levels of political freedom or countries with highly authoritarian regimes”. The implication of this nonlinear argument is that countries in the process of democratization from originally authoritarian countries, and new democracies, may experience temporary increases in terrorism (Eyerman 1998, Abadie 2004). Research by Li (2005) further qualifies this relationship, noting that different attributes of governing regimes and political freedom have different effects on the level of terrorism; while “democratic participation” decreases terrorism, “government constraints” such as typical democratic institutional limitations to executive power increases terrorism.

²² Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism.”

²³ Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

²⁴ Ibid.

occupation.²⁵ For example, the U.S. had removed most of its military forces from Saudi soil when al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was most active in Saudi Arabia. Pape's theory also fails to explain the lack of significant terrorism in Kuwait and the UAE, despite the large number of U.S. naval forces, who are even of a different religion than the local population, stationed there.

Foreign occupation is not independently sufficient to explain terrorism, but is still an important motivation for terrorism. For example, the U.S. occupation of Iraq is a large source of anti-American sentiments throughout the Middle East, not just within Iraq, and draws foreign fighters from throughout the region to fight in Iraq.²⁶ Furthermore, Al-Qaeda, as well as other al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist groups, often cites U.S. occupation in the Middle East and local governments' collusion with the US as the reason for their attacks; perhaps the *perception* of foreign occupation is enough to motivate terrorism.

Culture as a Cause of Terrorism

The fourth main camp argues that certain cultures, in particular those subscribing to the religion of Islam, cause terrorism. This theory is based on the idea of a "clash of civilizations," which proposes that the latest stage of global conflict will occur between different cultures and civilizations because of their immutable differences, such as religion and language.²⁷

²⁵ See Mia Bloom, "Dying to Kill: Motivations for Suicide Terrorism," in *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 25-53; and Assaf Moghadam, "The Roots of Suicide Terrorism: A Multi-Causal Approach," in *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 81-100.

²⁶ See Mohamed M. Mostafa and Mohaned T. Al-Hamdi, "Political Islam, Clash of Civilizations, U.S. Dominance and Arab Support of Attacks on America: A Test of a Hierarchical Model," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 8 (2007): 723; Moghadam, "Roots of Suicide Terrorism," 81-100; and Michael Freeman, "Democracy, Al Qaeda, and the Causes of Terrorism: A Strategic Analysis of US Policy," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 1 (2008): 40-59.

²⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

However, subsequent research has effectively nullified the purely cultural theory of terrorism. An empirical study of post-Cold War conflicts revealed that “civilization membership was not significantly associated with the probability of interstate war,” thereby undermining Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” theory.²⁸ Furthermore, the theory fails to account for terrorist attacks carried out by secular groups, which account for over a third of suicide attacks,²⁹ and groups possessing the same religious or cultural values as the attacked state.³⁰ For example, there have been many more attacks by Christian extremists than Muslim ones on American soil.³¹ This theory of terrorism, which views the differences between cultures as absolute, also fails to account for the variation in levels of terrorism and its popular support over time and does not explain why terrorism and its popular support can be found in all different cultures, not just Muslim ones.³²

While empirical analysis makes it clear that culture and religion alone do not explain terrorism, the rise of terrorism by religious groups indicates that religion does play an important role in terrorism.³³ Radical ideologies of subsets of believers within a religion, rather than a religion itself, lead to terrorism. The threat to Islamic identity embodied by globalization, for example, has been identified as a motivation for

²⁸ Errol A. Henderson and Richard Tucker, “Clear and Present Strangers: The Clash of Civilizations and International Conflict,” *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (June 2001): 317-338.

²⁹ Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*.

³⁰ See Mousseau, “Market Civilization and its Clash with Terror,” 5-29; Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*; Leonard Weinberg, “Suicide Terrorism for Secular Causes,” in *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 108-120; and Mark Juergensmeyer, “Religion as a Cause of Terrorism,” in *The Roots of Terrorism (Democracy and Terrorism)*, ed. Louise Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 133-143.

³¹ Juergensmeyer, “Religion as a Cause of Terrorism,” 133-143.

³² Mousseau, “Market Civilization and its Clash with Terror,” 5-29.

³³ Moghadam, “Roots of Suicide Terrorism,” 81-100.

terrorism.³⁴ The focus of this study is on religious terrorism, and so religion is assumed to play an important role in the radicalization process.

Empirical analysis has shown that none of these theories are enough in themselves to explain terrorism, yet they cannot be wholly discarded. Deprivation, foreign occupation, and religion are still important factors of terrorist motivation. Once the mutually exclusive aspect of these causal explanations is put aside, it is possible to see how they might complement and interact with one another, and when combined with my theory, will explain a much wider range of cases of religious terrorism.

The cases of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait clearly demonstrate how none of these theories are independently sufficient to explain terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula. The deprivation theory cannot explain religious terrorism in the region because both wealthy Saudi Arabia and impoverished Yemen have produced high levels of religious terrorism. Likewise, the political repression argument does not account for high levels of terrorism in both politically repressive Saudi Arabia and in the Republic of Yemen, where the central government is too weak to carry out any significant political repression. Furthermore, the relatively constant level of Saudi political repression does not explain the variance in Saudi terrorism over time. Pape's theory of foreign occupation does not fit the case of Kuwait, which has housed the highest level of foreign military presence of the three cases, but has experienced no significant domestic terrorism. Finally, the cultural argument for terrorism does not take into account the varying levels of terrorism produced by these countries, which are all located in the same region and share the same

³⁴ See Audrey Kerth Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism," *International Security* 27, no. 3 (2002): 30-58; and Freeman, "Democracy, Al Qaeda, and the Causes of Terrorism," 40-59.

culture and religion. Kuwait is conservative Muslim country, but has produced relatively low levels of terrorism.

So what factor connects all of these cases in explaining religious terrorism, or the lack thereof? I argue that education, in combination with the other relevant causal factors indentified previously, is most useful in explaining religious terrorism produced from and experienced by the Arabian Peninsula.

Education: A New Explanation for Terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula

A 2004 study on the causes of terrorism in the Muslim world concluded that “[i]n some countries that are governed by Islamist governments, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Sudan, the focus should probably be not only on increasing years of schooling, but also to consider the content of education as well.”³⁵ Existing terrorism literature identifies numerous causal factors in religious terrorism, and even examines the relationship between education levels and terrorism, but does not discuss the role of educational content, structure or accessibility in Islamic radicalization. Although there have been escalating terrorist attacks in Yemen since 2006 and local media have long pointed out the contributing role of private religious schooling, no study has yet examined the causal relationship between education in Yemen and the rise of terrorism in the country. This thesis attempts to address this gap in the literature by examining education systems in the Arabian Peninsula and investigating their role in producing religious terrorism.

Although the main focus of my study will be on education, I will also examine a combination of elements from existing theories in order to determine the causes of

³⁵ Testas, “Determinants of Terrorism in the Muslim World,” 253-273.

terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula. Specifically, I will study the roles that deprivation, religion and perceived foreign occupation play in causing terrorism in the region.

In this paper, I argue that state education systems determine students' levels of employability and religious indoctrination, which then determine their likelihood of participating in religious terrorism. State education systems in Saudi Arabia and Yemen are causing a certain group of students to receive a much higher concentration of radical religious teachings, whether through a bifurcated structure, as in Saudi Arabia, or through limited accessibility to public education in Yemen. The radical religious educational content sensitizes students towards non-Muslim foreign presence and calls on them to expel corrupting foreign influences from Muslim soil. The students who receive a primarily radical religious education also fail to receive job-relevant skills, which causes them to encounter significant difficulties securing employment. Unemployed and having been indoctrinated throughout their entire school career to believe that they must defend Muslims from foreign oppression and influence, these students are more likely to engage in religious terrorism.

Research Design

This thesis seeks to contribute to the discussion of systemic causes of religious terrorism by using cross-case and within case analysis to study the cases of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. My hypothesis in this study is that state education systems are a major contributing factor to religious terrorism. This means that a majority of individuals involved in religious terrorism should have strong backgrounds in religious education—whether through a state education system containing radical religious content, or through independent religious schooling. Therefore, if a high percentage of Islamic militants

have educational backgrounds in science or technical studies with moderate religious content, the proposed theory would no longer hold true.

I chose the Arabian Peninsula for testing the proposed theory because it has consistently been one of the largest sources of religious terrorism and is currently experiencing such terrorism domestically. In 2008, a study on foreign fighters found that the Arabian Peninsula produced almost 58% of all fighters while making up just fewer than 15% of the Muslim population from the top twenty countries producing foreign fighters.³⁶

I specifically selected the cases of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for two reasons. First, I chose these cases because existing systemic theories are not independently sufficient to explain their patterns of religious terrorism, as I have already discussed in the previous section. Secondly, as illustrated in the Table 1, these cases demonstrate a wide variation of independent variables—both those identified by terrorism literature and my own—as well as the dependent variable religious terrorism.

The levels of foreign occupation in these cases cover a wide range of values, with Yemen housing no permanent foreign military troops, Saudi Arabia allowing a moderate level of foreign military troops (U.S.) until 2003, and very high levels of foreign occupation in Kuwait. These countries also experience differing levels of deprivation, with wealthy Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and impoverished Yemen. They have differing levels of political repression: with Saudi Arabia being the most repressive and Kuwait and Yemen experiencing much lower levels of repression. These cases also experience varying levels of the dependent variable religious terrorism. Yemen and Saudi Arabia

³⁶ Clint Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: What Foreign Fighters Reveal about the Future of Terrorism* (PJ Sage, Inc., March 24, 2008), <http://www.pjsage.com/products.htm>.

Table 1

Country	Foreign Occupation	Political Repression	Deprivation	Education System	Domestic Terrorism	Number of Foreign Fighters
Saudi Arabia	High until 2003, currently low	Constant	No, wealthy state	Radical religious content & Bifurcated structure	High 2003-2007	Thousands
Yemen	None	Relatively low	Yes	Inaccessibility and poor quality & Abundance of radical Islamic schools	High 2006-present	Thousands
Kuwait	Very High	Relatively low, some democracy	No, wealthy state	Accessibility and high quality & Moderate religious content	Not significant	Dozens

have both experienced significant domestic terrorism and are large sources of foreign fighters, while Kuwait has experienced no significant domestic terrorism and produces relatively low levels of foreign fighters.

Data for this study was collected from a variety of sources, including primary materials created by terrorist groups themselves, history recorded from secondary sources, ethnographic descriptions, and local newspaper reports on country conditions and terrorist activity. I also used country websites and scholarly reports on education systems in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait to create descriptions to discover their education systems' content, accessibility and structure. Finally, I examined previous studies of terrorism in the individual country cases to extract information on terrorist profiles and provide insight into terrorist motivations.

CASE STUDY:

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

"It looks innocent, they [Saudis] are just trying to teach religion, but in a subtle way it is a recruiting mechanism... If a pupil shows enthusiasm, he is recruited into their circles and then suddenly, bang! -- he takes a gun and goes to Afghanistan to fight for Islam."

-Humanities professor at King Saud University³⁷

On May 12, 2003, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, long an official sponsor of *jihād* abroad and friend to extremist pan-Islamic Saudis waging *jihād* in Afghanistan, became the victim of devastating domestic terrorism. This attack on Western housing compounds in Riyadh was undertaken by the very same Saudi jihadists the government once supported and facilitated, and began a period of domestic terrorism by an organization called al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) at a scale that Saudi Arabia had never before seen. While there were isolated incidents of domestic terrorism in the 1990s, they were small-scale, and focused exclusively on Western targets; Saudi extremists were primarily focused on *jihād* abroad and foreign terrorism against non-Muslim powers perceived to be oppressing their Muslim populations. Fifteen of the nineteen hijackers in the September 11, 2001 attacks were from Saudi Arabia. After 2003, Saudi extremists continued their involvement in *jihād* abroad, with a recent study estimating that 40 percent of foreign fighters in Iraq are Saudi, but also became involved in domestic terrorism. Domestic terrorism in the Kingdom after 2003 was aimed primarily at Western targets, but it was accompanied by high Saudi casualties and occasionally targeted the Saudi regime. AQAP explicitly linked its attacks against the Saudi ruling

³⁷ Neil Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged: Education; Anti-Western and Extremist Views Pervade Saudi Schools," *New York Times*, October 19, 2001, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9402E5DE133EF93AA25753C1A9679C8B63>.

regime to the government's complicity with the West's oppression of Muslims and occupation of Muslim lands.

Saudi Arabia's prominent place as a source and victim of terrorism has made it a subject of much academic study, which has produced a number of theories aimed at explaining terrorism in the Kingdom. However, each of these theories is independently insufficient to explain the pattern of terrorism in Saudi Arabia. Those causal models that subscribe to the purely ideological explanation for religious terrorism in Saudi Arabia, based on the "fundamentally extremist nature" of Saudi Wahhabism, do not account for the variation in domestic terrorism over time. Why did Saudi Arabia, which had been relatively safe from Islamist violence, apart from the Mecca mosque siege in 1979 and isolated bombings in Riyadh in 1995 and Khobar in 1996, suddenly begin to experience the most violent spate of terrorism the Kingdom has ever seen in 2003? Why wasn't there more religious terrorism in Saudi Arabia during the 1990s, when Saudi nationals were highly active as foreign fighters in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya? Theories that center on political repression as a cause of terrorism cannot explain the variance of domestic terrorism over time because political repression in Saudi Arabia has remained fairly constant. Since the late 1980s, the Saudi regime had not been repressing religious extremism, but was in fact encouraging it by adopting a pan-Islamic rhetoric and sponsoring Saudi involvement in the Afghan *jihād*. This relaxed stance towards extremism has actually been cited as one of the reasons that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was able to develop and actively recruit members in 2002, before its first attack in 2003.³⁸ What explains the timing of occasional terrorist attacks in the 1990s and

³⁸ Thomas Hegghammer, "Islamist Violence and Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia," *International Affairs* (July 2008), <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/ia/archive/view/-/id/2300/>.

escalation in domestic terrorism in 2003? Robert Pape's theory that links terrorism with foreign occupation also fails to explain why domestic terrorism continued after the United States withdrew 7,000 troops in 2003.³⁹ If foreign occupation is not a necessary condition for terrorism in Saudi Arabia, what is?

The evidence supports an additional causal factor in the explanation of terrorism in Saudi Arabia: education. Although numerous newspaper articles⁴⁰ have noted the role of Saudi Arabia's education system in promoting terrorism and subsequent studies have been conducted to examine the religious content of Saudi curricula, no empirical study has yet been conducted to verify or dismiss this relationship. The Saudi education system, though freely provided to all, is heavily religious, primarily controlled by Wahhabi clerics, and contains politically radical teachings of anti-Western thought and intolerance for other religions. Many students who go on to pursue higher education in religious studies experience difficulties finding employment upon graduating because they do not have any marketable skills. While the Saudi government had been able to easily supply most graduates with jobs in the 1980s, the government became increasingly unable to absorb graduates over the next decade and in 2001, 50,000 Saudi graduates were unable to secure jobs upon graduation.⁴¹ In addition to having difficulties securing

³⁹ Stephen J. Hedges, "Military to Leave Saudi Arabia: U.S. Moving amid Strained Relations," *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 2003, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2003/030430-psab01.htm>.

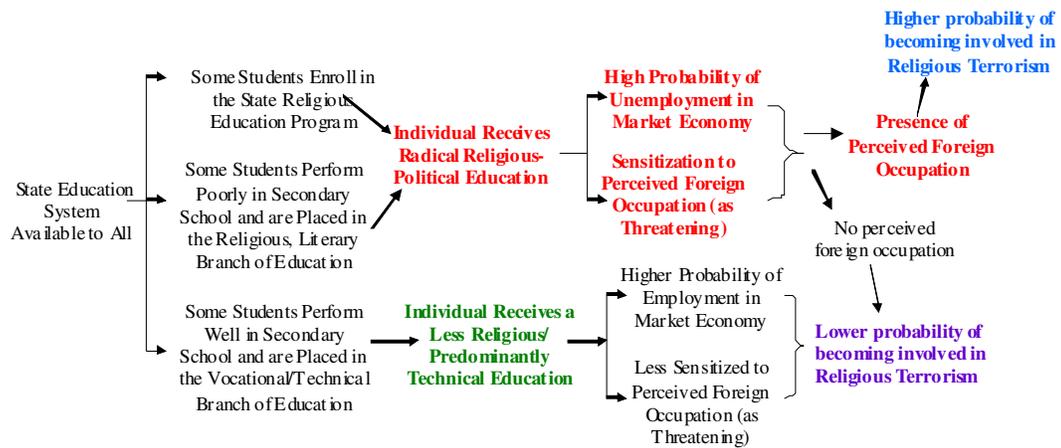
⁴⁰ See Jim Davis and Doug Bereuter, "To Fight Terror, Fix Saudi Schools," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 15, 2002, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1015/p10s02-coop.html>; Charles M. Sennott, "Saudi Schools Fuel Anti-US Anger," *The Boston Globe*, March 4, 2002, http://www.boston.com/news/packages/underattack/news/driving_a_wedge/part2.shtml; Hassan Fattah, "Don't Be Friends with Christians or Jews, Saudi Texts Say," *The New York Times*, May 24, 2006, sec. International, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/24/world/24saudi.html?_r=1; Nina Shea, "Teaching Terror," *National Review*, September 17, 2007, http://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication_details&id=5119; and Olivier Guitta, "Saudi Arabia Facing Homegrown Terrorism," *D.C. Examiner*, February 25, 2009, <http://www.dcxaminer.com/opinion/columns/OpEd-Contributor/Al-Qaeda-revival-attempts-Saudi-Arabia-facing-homegrown-terrorism-40295322.html>.

⁴¹ Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged."

employment, those students with a highly concentrated radical religious education also have a heightened sensitivity to foreign occupation by non-Muslim powers. This heightened sensitivity increases their inclination to perceive foreign occupation although there is no physical evidence of such, and government cooperation with foreign, non-Muslim powers becomes synonymous with foreign occupation in these individuals' mind. This was the case in 2003 when the U.S. withdrew its military forces, but AQAP continued to proclaim its intention to expel the West from Saudi Arabia. The result of all of these processes is that individuals who have received a radical religious education and then perceive foreign presence, especially those who are not otherwise employed, find meaning and purpose in the struggle to violently expel the perceived occupation by a foreign power, and are more likely to engage in religious terrorism. See Figure 1 on the next page for a visual representation of this process. A larger version of Figure 1 can be viewed in Appendix A.

In this case study, I will examine the relationship between religious education and terrorism, and provide evidence to support the argument that the Saudi education system's structure and radical religious content is a major contributing factor in the radicalization of Saudi nationals for foreign and domestic terrorism. In the first section of this case study, I will examine the structure of the education system. The system's

Figure 1



structure is important because it determines which students will receive a higher concentration of radical religious material while other students are given more technical educations that provide them with marketable job skills. I will then describe the religious elements of the school curriculum and the concentration in which certain students receive this material. Finally, I will lay out the consequences of a highly religious Saudi education and the radicalization process, divided into sections on Saudi foreign fighters from the 1980s-2003, domestic terrorism in the 1990s and in 2003, and Saudi foreign fighters in Iraq. Evidence indicates that the majority of individuals involved in religious terrorism had received a highly religious education, were faced with unemployment as a result of their lack in marketable skills, and perceived threatening foreign occupation whether or not physical foreign occupation existed, all of which ultimately led to their participation in religious terrorism.

The Saudi Education System and Its Consequences

Education is an important factor in shaping an individual’s worldview. As I will discuss in this section, the Saudi education system instills in students a sense of external threat from non-Muslim, Western powers, and encourages them to hate and resist foreign

influences at home. Furthermore, the bifurcated structure of the Saudi education system causes certain students to receive higher concentrations of radical religious teachings. Those students that receive a primarily religious education in Saudi Arabia, whether as a result of the bifurcated system or specialization in religious studies, become highly sensitized to foreign occupation and perceived foreign occupation. Having been taught that *jihad* against such corrupting foreign influences is the most meaningful pursuit in life, and not having been given any marketable skills; these individuals have difficulties securing employment and are much more likely to join in religious terrorism.

In this section, I will begin by describing the modern history of the Saudi education system and how its curriculum became increasingly religious and incorporated radical teachings over time. Then I will describe the religious content of Saudi education as presented by textbooks, and teachers' attitudes towards this content.

A Modern History of the Saudi Education System

The modern education system in Saudi Arabia was first established in 1925 and, although it enjoyed a phase where secular and non-Muslim topics were taught, it has become increasingly religious over time. The growing incorporation of religious teachings into the curricula was largely the result of the Saudi regime's efforts to shore up its Islamic credentials in the face of political and religious opposition. Since its inception, the Saudi state has been dependent on its relationship with the Wahhabi clerical establishment and their implicit support of the Saudi governing regime. When faced by political or religious turmoil, the ruling regime often cedes additional social power to the *ulema*, or the body of Muslim legal scholars, to ensure domestic stability,

and the *ulema* have thereby gained considerable power over the education system in Saudi Arabia.

In the 1950s, Saudis educated abroad were returning to the Kingdom to teach, and brought with them secular topics and exposure to non-Muslim history. By the late 1950s, Saudi students were learning about such topics as Roman history and the Protestant Reformation.⁴² However, this period of Western-oriented education was soon over. Since the 1960s, when Muslim Brotherhood members sought refuge in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi curriculum has become increasingly religious in nature.

King Faisal offered political asylum to members of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1960s as they fled Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's crackdown on the Society.⁴³ Many of these Brotherhood members became teachers and significantly altered the existing Saudi curriculum. A former Saudi government official described their effect on Saudi education, saying, "They said, 'This is infidel knowledge,' and gradually their teaching crowded out all useful information."⁴⁴ Evidence of their influence on Saudi education can still be found in textbooks today, which denigrate Arab nationalism and unity movements- the same ideology that had been championed by Nasser.

In 1979, the Saudi government ceded more ground to religious forces in the country in response to the 1979 Mecca uprising, Shi'a demonstrations in the Eastern Province and the Islamic revolution in Iran in order to reemphasize its own Islamic credentials. The government did so through a number of educational activities, among other policies. The Saudi government began to run religious summer classes at schools

⁴² Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged: Education."

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

to increase the amount of religious education, increased funding for religious institutions, and established the Islamic University of Umm al-Qura.⁴⁵

During the mid-1980s, the Saudi government began endorsing a populist pan-Islamism, which propagated the view that the *umma* (transnational community of Muslim believers) was being “systematically oppressed” by foreign powers around the world, and that Muslims have an individual responsibility to help and defend those Muslims in need.⁴⁶ It did so as a defensive measure against domestic political opposition, and also expressed public support for the Afghan *jihad* during this time. This pan-Islamic ideology was integrated into the regime’s rhetoric and its educational curriculum.

The Content of Education in Saudi Arabia: Religious Intolerance and Radicalism

After September 11, 2001, much attention was given to the Saudi education system and its curriculum. Reports surfaced saying that some Saudi citizens accused the education system of giving their students imperfect understandings of Wahhabi Islam, which was then easily manipulated by terrorist recruiters to convince them that their beliefs condone violence against non-Muslims.⁴⁷ Islamic studies are central to the Saudi education system. A 2002 study of education in Saudi Arabia concluded that “Islam is not only integral to Saudi education but also serves as the very essence of its curriculum.”⁴⁸ Estimates of the percentage of Saudi education devoted to religion ranged

⁴⁵ Michaela Prokop, “The War of Ideas: Education in Saudi Arabia,” in *Saudi Arabia in the Balance*, 2006: 61.

⁴⁶ Thomas Hegghammer, “Islamist Violence and Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia,” *International Affairs* (July 2008), <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/ia/archive/view/-/id/2300/>.

⁴⁷ Macfarquhar, “A Nation Challenged.”

⁴⁸ William A. Rugh, “Education in Saudi Arabia: Choices and Constraints,” *Middle East Policy* 9, no. 2 (June 2002): 40-55.

from 30 to 35% at the elementary level, and 25 to 35% at the intermediate level of schooling.⁴⁹

The centrality of Islam to the Saudi education system is not a problem in itself; religious education is not inherently radical. However, certain events in Saudi Arabia's history have caused the state's religious curriculum to contain radical material. These inflammatory teachings inculcate students into the belief that the Western world is waging a war on Muslims, Westernization is a corrupting force on Muslim lands and must be fought and expelled, and that non-Muslims and Muslims who are perceived to be violating Islamic law are valid targets for such aggression.

The content of Saudi textbooks provides a good picture of students' curriculum since all schools, both private and state-sponsored, are required to use the same textbooks. Even technical schools and private, more secular schools are required to include mandatory religious studies in their programs, although they devote a much smaller percentage of time to the study of religion.

Since 2001, a number of reports have examined the content of Saudi textbooks and detailed analysis of the textbooks has revealed three consistent themes: emphasis on historical and current oppression of Muslims by Western Christian and Jewish forces, the need to fight against the encroachment of Westernization and corrupting foreign influences in Muslim lands, and demonization of and hatred for non-Muslims as well as non-Wahhabi Muslims.⁵⁰ Even the more cautious evaluations of Saudi texts found radical content calling for defensive, but still violent, *jihad* against forces oppressing the

⁴⁹ Estimates taken from the studies by Eleanor Doumato and Michaela Prokop in 2003. The two obtained different results from their studies of the percentage of education devoted to religious studies. The variance in the findings could result from Doumato counting history or Arabic literature classes as religious study, since both subjects contain a large amount of religious teachings.

⁵⁰ Prokop, "The War of Ideas: Education in Saudi Arabia," 65.

Muslim world. Eleanor Doumato, the author of a report issued in 2003, argued that Saudi textbooks were designed to instill a sense that the Muslim world was under attack and needed to be defended. Although she asserted that textbooks used in Saudi schools in 2001 and 2002 were minimally aggressive, she also acknowledged that the tawhid sections of the textbooks were “aggressively hostile to non-Wahhabi Muslims.”⁵¹

The first theme presented in Saudi textbooks is that of Western oppression of Muslims. In 2003, Doumato’s research on the content of mandatory textbooks for the 9th through 12th grades used in 2001 and 2002 revealed numerous teachings on how the West is, and had been historically, waging a cultural, ideological, military and political war against Islam and Muslims. The textbooks argued that the Crusades of the Middle Ages, Christian missionaries in the 19th century, the Zionist state of Israel, and cultural globalization were all instances of the West attacking Islam. In an 11th grade textbook, students learned that Christians are still attacking Islam not only through education missions, which are aimed at converting the youth to their civilization, but also through their control of weak Muslim governments. Textbooks also described a Jewish war being waged against Muslims and warned of the Zionist aims of world domination that may reach Saudi Arabia one day.⁵² Another 2003 study also described how Saudi textbooks blamed Jews or Jewish conspiracies for negative historical events, such as the division in the Muslim community between Shi’a and Sunni. Saudi history books were also found to

⁵¹ Eleanor Abdella Doumato, “Manning the Barricades: Islam According to Saudi Arabia's School Texts ,” *The Middle East Journal* 57, no. 2 (Spring 2003).

⁵² Ibid.

emphasize the close relationship between Americans and Jews, especially with regards to the situation in Palestine.⁵³

The second theme presented in Saudi textbooks is the need to expel Western and other corrupting foreign influences from Muslim lands. Doumato's research in 2003 found that the textbooks' overall message to students was "to proclaim an Islamic battle for *jihad* in the path of God and in defense of the faith."⁵⁴ The call to *jihad* was framed in a defensive context, as a way to drive out negative influences and protect Islam, and required the participation of all who were able. Martyrdom was also highly esteemed and was described in glowing terms in the textbooks. Western culture was consistently depicted as being evil. An 11th grade text said, "When the enemy has seized a place and country in which Muslims dwell, such as Israel, which has been set up by force in the heart of the Islamic world, then *jihad* becomes an obligation upon all Muslims who are capable of bearing arms."⁵⁵

Finally, the third textbook theme is the demonization of non-Muslims and non-Wahhabi Muslims. Examination of textbooks found that they included non-Wahhabi Muslims, such as Shi'as and Sufis, in the same group as non-believers and called them "enemies."⁵⁶ Muslims who work and live among non-believers were considered apostates. Saudi schoolbooks explicitly denigrated Shi'a and Sufi beliefs and used derogatory terms to refer to Shi'as until 1993, when texts were revised.⁵⁷ Yet, despite attempts to revise anti-Shi'a material, students were still being taught that Shi'as and

⁵³ Michaela Prokop, "Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Education," *International Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2003): 77-89.

⁵⁴ Doumato, "Manning the Barricades," 231.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Prokop, "Politics of Education," 77-89.

Sufis are unbelievers, and Shi'as and members of other religious minorities were still forbidden from teaching religion in Saudi schools in 2003.⁵⁸

In addition to religious studies classes, history classes in Saudi schools are also “heavily influenced by Islamic teachings.”⁵⁹ The history textbooks teach that Westernization causes the loss of Islamic ideals and leads to social instability and conflict. A line from one of the history texts is, “Westernization promotes misery and suffering among Muslims.”⁶⁰ Although Saudi history textbooks communicate the importance of popular obedience and *ulema* support for Muslim rulers, they also allow for government opposition when a ruler does not uphold Islamic law.⁶¹ It is interesting to note that a study of history textbooks for grades 4 through 12 found that 68.5% of the material covered Islamic themes, 30% addressed Saudi history, and only 1.5% covered global development.⁶²

Teachers’ Attitudes towards Religious Content

The manner in which teachers present these textbooks to their students could potentially aggravate or palliate the textbooks’ inflammatory messages. Evidence suggests that teachers support the religious curriculum, and do not work to moderate its radical messages. Saudi Arabia has made strong efforts to nationalize its teaching staff and ensure their support of Wahhabism by denying teaching positions to non-Wahhabi

⁵⁸ Prokop, “Politics of Education,” 77-89.

⁵⁹ Prokop, “War of Ideas,” 62.

⁶⁰ Madawi Al-Rasheed, “Political Legitimacy and the Production of History: The Case of Saudi Arabia,” in *New Frontiers in Middle East Security*, ed. Lenore G. Martin (Macmillan, 2001).

⁶¹ Prokop, “Politics of Education,” 77-89.

⁶² Prokop, “War of Ideas,” 66.

Muslims such as Shi'as. There have also been reports that teachers introduce intolerant ideas and anti-Western sentiments into the state education on their own initiative.⁶³

Doumato argued in her 2003 study that, regardless of teachers' attitudes, Saudi students were definitely absorbing the textbooks' radical teachings for several reasons: the religious curriculum is mandatory for all schools in the kingdom, both public and private; each school is supervised by Ministry of Education representatives who ensure that the curriculum is being followed; substantial percentages of education are devoted to religious studies; and the education system implicitly requires student to prioritize their religious studies above other subjects.⁶⁴ This last point arises from the fact that students must receive a passing grade in their religion class to be able to move up to the next grade at all, while a failing grade in any other subject only requires the student to repeat the class in that specific subject.

Formal education is only one among many elements that shape an individual's outlook and religious proclivities; Saudi students' perceptions are also influenced by informal teachings in mosques, at home, and in the media.⁶⁵ But especially for students who receive higher concentrations of religious education, long years of religious instruction have a deep effect on students' worldview. Students unconsciously absorb the belief that the struggle against the West and its corrupting influences is the most meaningful endeavor in life. When they graduate and are unable to find employment due to their underdeveloped job skills, they are more likely to engage in religious terrorism.

⁶³ Fattah, "Don't Be Friends."

⁶⁴ Doumato, "Manning the Barricades."

⁶⁵ Prokop, "Politics of Education," 77-89.

The Structure and Accessibility of the Saudi Education System

Education in Saudi Arabia is highly accessible and is free at all levels, including higher education.⁶⁶ The Saudi government subsidizes education so that students at every level pay little or no tuition fees.⁶⁷ Those students who qualify to enroll in higher education in the Kingdom are given stipends in addition to fully-provided tuitions.

The structure of the Saudi education system causes some students to receive a higher concentration of religious instruction that prepares them poorly for the job market, while another portion of the student population receives a less religious, more technical education that endows them with practical skills and prepares them to succeed in the job market. Students can receive the highly concentrated religious education by either enrolling in a specifically religious school, or by being placed in the literary track in high school. The Saudi education structure also makes it difficult for literary track students to study anything but religious studies in higher education. When students are placed in the literary track or when they choose to concentrate in religious studies, they are exposed to radical teachings in higher concentrations than students in the science track. This exposure gives them a higher sensitivity to foreign occupation and a greater propensity to perceive foreign occupation when it is not physically evident.⁶⁸

Saudi education is divided into four subsystems: general education for boys, general education for girls, technical and vocational schooling, and traditional Islamic

⁶⁶ Mahmoud Abdullah Saleh, "Development of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia," *Higher Education* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 1986): 17-23.

⁶⁷ Rugh, "Education in Saudi Arabia," 40-55.

⁶⁸ See study conducted by Doumato, "Manning the Barricades," 231.

instruction for boys. The religious subsystem is designed to prepare boys to become members of the *ulema* and is highly focused on Arabic and Islamic studies.⁶⁹

Education in Saudi Arabia also operates as a bifurcate system that separates students into the literary track or the science track during high school. In secondary school, students are divided into scientific and literary fields of study after completing their first year of general education. Those who score above 60 percent in their first year classes are allowed to choose which field they will study, while students who score under 60 percent are forced into the literary field, which is largely devoted to religious studies.⁷⁰ Doumato further described those students who chose to concentrate their studies in religion as the “less qualified students.”⁷¹ In secondary school, 35% of school hours were devoted to religion for those students in the literary track, studying Islamic law or Arabic language, while those students in the technical and natural science tracks were studying religion for only 14% of their time.⁷²

Education above the primary level is not compulsory,⁷³ and those Saudis in poorer areas may not be able to afford putting their children in any school except primary school instead of working. These students may then be disqualified from entering vocational or technical schools that require a certain number of years of schooling. Students from economically disadvantaged families may also be working in menial labor while attending school, making it more difficult for them to achieve higher grades. Those disadvantaged students who do enter secondary school do not have the grades to qualify

⁶⁹ Robert Sedgwick, *Education in Saudi Arabia* (World Education News and Reviews, 2001), <http://www.wes.org/ewenr/01nov/Practical.htm>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Doumato, “Manning the Barricades,” 231.

⁷² Prokop, “Politics of Education,” 77-89.

⁷³ Education in Saudi Arabia is compulsory from the ages of 6 to 11, for a total of 6 years (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 1999-2008)

for anything except for literary, religious studies, and do not possess the qualifications to enter into technical training.

Similar to the primary and secondary levels of education, the structure of higher education in Saudi Arabia limits access to higher education in technical studies, while religious studies have easier admittance policies. Access to higher education institutions is determined by scores on the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (*Tawjihi*), in addition to entrance exams administered by certain institutions.⁷⁴ Islamic law and religion are the most popular fields of study in higher education in Saudi Arabia.⁷⁵ In higher education, the concentration of religious instruction varies. Departments such as art, history and administration devote 40 to 45 percent of their curricula to religious studies.⁷⁶ Technical universities, like the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, only set aside approximately 10 to 15 % of their curricula to Islamic and Arab studies.⁷⁷

In 2001, postsecondary technical and vocational education was also available at technical colleges, higher technical and other institutions for financial and commercial sciences. However, access to these schools was limited to students who received their General Secondary Education Certificate in the field of sciences or diplomas from secondary vocational or commercial schools.⁷⁸ In other words, students who did not have high enough grades to be chosen for the science track in secondary school are then unable to enroll in technical or vocational higher education institutions. Students who were placed in the literary track during secondary school are unlikely to be admitted to any

⁷⁴ Sedgwick, *Education in Saudi Arabia*.

⁷⁵ Rugh, "Education in Saudi Arabia," 40-55.

⁷⁶ Prokop, "Politics of Education," 77-89.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Sedgwick, *Education in Saudi Arabia*.

field of higher education besides religious studies, which gives individuals very few marketable skills upon entering the job market after graduation.

The Consequences of Saudi Arabia's Education System

Religious education in Saudi Arabia provides ill-preparation for higher education or market employment, because it relies on circular reasoning (ex. “the right hand is not to be used for unclean things because the right hand is only for things that are clean such as eating and drinking”) and rote memorization of trivial details rather than encouraging critical thinking and understanding of broad concepts.⁷⁹ Historically, Saudi students who graduated with concentrations in religious studies were able to find employment regardless, particularly during the 1980s, when the Saudi government was able to easily supply graduates with jobs. As the oil boom waned, however, the Saudi state was no longer able to guarantee employment for students, and those students with religious studies backgrounds were least qualified for employment in the private sector. As religious students encountered increasing difficulties obtaining jobs and the Saudi regime was no longer able to guarantee all graduates positions in the government, their feelings of anger at the government and resentment of the foreign workers who were getting the jobs in the private sector grew. These feelings and their backgrounds in religious studies provided motivation to join religious opposition movements (including religious terrorist organizations).

In the 1980s, there were two jobs for every Saudi citizen.⁸⁰ The Saudi government absorbed most Saudi graduates without respect to their qualifications and

⁷⁹ Doumato, “Manning the Barricades,” 231.

⁸⁰ Warren Richey, “For Each Saudi Arab There Are Two Jobs,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 17, 1981, <http://www.csmonitor.com/1981/0717/071753.html>

actual skills, and whether they had studied at foreign, religious, or technical schools.⁸¹

This precedent led to the expectation that upon graduation, there would be a secure job waiting for all Saudi students. However, by the late 1980s, the Saudi government's ability to absorb graduates of every field was beginning to decline.⁸² Private-sector businessmen were also increasingly hiring non-Saudi skilled labor over Saudi graduates for their higher skill development, despite the government's Saudization policy that allotted a certain percentage of all jobs to Saudi nationals. The statistics are telling: in 2000, 78 percent of government employees were Saudis, while only 39 percent of private-sector employees were Saudi.⁸³

In 2001, an estimated 50,000 Saudi students could not find jobs after graduation.⁸⁴

The Saudi government was no longer capable of hiring its graduates in 2003, and the majority of the new graduates entering the job field were left to seek jobs in the private sector. Considering that new jobs being created at the time only covered one quarter of the total number of new entrants to the job market, academic performance and technical skills became much more highly valued. Increasingly, jobs were going to Saudis who had been educated abroad or in the more technical or "secular" Saudi universities, where they obtained English proficiency.⁸⁵ As a result, those Saudis who had received the more traditional, religious education were less and less successful in the job market, which led to feelings of resentment and marginalization. Youth unemployment was nearing 30 percent in 2007.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Prokop, "Politics of Education," 77-89.

⁸² Prokop, "War of Ideas."

⁸³ Rugh, "Education in Saudi Arabia," 40-55.

⁸⁴ Macfarquhar, "A Nation Challenged."

⁸⁵ Prokop, "Politics of Education," 77-89.

⁸⁶ Dana Moss and Zvika Krieger, "A Tipping Point In Saudi Arabia," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 15, 2007, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0815/p09s02-coop.html?s=hns>.

Saudi Radicalization

Saudi Arabia has been both a large source of religious foreign fighters and a target of domestic terrorism in recent decades. Saudi Arabia has been a major source of foreign fighters since the 1980s, and Saudi participation in *jihad* movement abroad continued into the 1990s, when there was sporadic domestic terrorism and high Saudi participation in *jihad* abroad. Religious terrorism within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not significant until 2003, when domestic terrorism suddenly intensified although U.S. forces withdrew significantly from Saudi territory that same year. Since 2003, Saudi involvement in terrorist movements abroad has remained high, and the Kingdom is the largest source of foreign fighters in Iraq.

If radical religious education is a major contributing factor in Saudi radicalization, then a majority of individuals involved in religious terrorism should come from the religious track, with only a small percentage coming from the technical track. It is important to note here that religious conservatism is not equivalent to religious radicalism; an overwhelming majority of the Saudi population feels upset by the oppression of Muslims abroad, particularly in Palestine, but only a small percentage of the population becomes involved in religious violence such as domestic terrorism.

The previous sections described how education and the government's growing inability to provide employment to certain students left one group of individuals particularly susceptible to recruitment for religious terrorism. In this section, I will describe the pattern of terrorism in each of these periods and then provide a causal explanation for each period of terrorism.

Saudi Participation in Jihad Abroad, 1980s-2003

Large numbers of Saudis have been involved in *jihad* movements abroad since the Afghan war against the Soviets in the mid-1980s. The 1990s saw the opening of a new chapter in Saudi Arabia's history: sporadic domestic terrorism and high Saudi participation in *jihad* movements in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Bosnia, and involvement in terrorist attacks against American targets around the world. Domestic terrorism targeted foreigners, and particularly Western institutes, exclusively. During this time, the Saudi regime was also highly supportive of its citizens' involvement in *jihad* abroad.

Saudi nationals were the largest source of soldiers for the Islamist anti-Soviet *jihad*, numbering in the several thousands. Some estimates put Saudi involvement in the Afghan war against the Soviets at 5,000 while others put it at 15,000 recruits.⁸⁷ There was also a high level of Saudi participation in *jihad* movements abroad in the 1990s. Thousands of Saudis traveled to Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya with the Saudi government's tacit approval. Shortly after the September 11 attacks in 2001, in which 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, an estimated 600 to 1,000 Saudis were still in Afghanistan.⁸⁸ Saudi intelligence estimates that a total of 25,000 Saudis received militant training and experience abroad from 1979 to 2001.⁸⁹ Many of those Saudis who went abroad were young students, bent on achieving martyrdom.⁹⁰

A number of the Saudis who traveled abroad to wage *jihad* were then recruited for terrorist attacks against Americans in Saudi Arabia (1995), Kenya (1998), Tanzania

⁸⁷ See Asaf Maliach, *The Global Jihad - The Yemeni Connection* (International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, March 20, 2006), <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/207/currentpage/10/Default.aspx>; and Douglas Jehl, "A Nation Challenged: Saudi Arabia; Holy War Lured Saudis as Rulers Looked Away," *New York Times*, December 27, 2001, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A01E0DD1031F934A15751C1A9679C8B63>.

⁸⁸ Jehl, "A Nation Challenged."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

(1998) and Yemen (2000). Al-Qaeda recruited some Saudi foreign fighters to their organization in the 1990s, and began gaining large numbers of Saudi recruits in 1999. There were a number of foiled al-Qaeda attacks in 1997 and 1998, most notably the plan to fire a missile at the U.S. consulate in Jeddah, which was apprehended by Saudi police in 1998.⁹¹ At that time, bin Laden decided to postpone operations in Saudi Arabia indefinitely until the organization was more tactically capable of waging attacks.

Saudi domestic terrorism in the 1990s came from a number of sources and consisted of a number of isolated attacks against Western targets. In November 1995, a National Guard training site, responsible for training Saudi National Guard members who were on contract for the U.S. military, was bombed in Riyadh. The attack killed seven foreigners, including five Americans, and was ascribed to a “local, self-started cell” of al-Qaeda.⁹² Less than a year later, in June 1996, Saudi Shi’as with connections to Iran bombed the Khobar Towers housing facility at an air base in Dahrhan and 19 U.S. Air Force personnel were killed, along with 372 injured others. Following the September 11 attack of 2001, there were also a number of small-scale bombings and shootings of Westerners, including British and American citizens, living in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia’s position as the largest producer of fighters for the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets in the 1980s and high levels of Saudi participation in international terrorism in the 1990s can be partially attributed to the Saudi government’s pan-Islamic rhetoric that, as has been shown in previous sections, had become an integral part of the state’s educational curriculum.

⁹¹ Hegghammer, “Islamist Violence and Regime Stability.”

⁹² Ibid.

The pan-Islamic elements of the education system and the Kingdom's growing unemployment left a large number of students with religious education backgrounds unemployed, but imbued with a belief in the meaningfulness of joining *jihad* to protect Muslims against corrupt and oppressive non-Muslim forces. As a result, many of these students traveled abroad to join *jihad* movements in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The Saudi government also publicly supported the Afghan *jihad* and even assisted those Saudis interested in fighting in Afghanistan during this time.⁹³ The amassment of U.S. military forces on Saudi soil during the Gulf War in the early 1990s gave some of these individuals the motivation to strike against U.S. targets domestically.

Saudi involvement in religious terrorism during this time period was also a result of growing domestic opposition to U.S. military forces stationed in the Kingdom. Since the early 1960s, the United States had maintained combat forces at a safe distance from Saudi Arabia, but during the 1980s, Saudi Arabia and the United States began building their military ties, and a U.S.-Saudi agreement allowed U.S. military aircraft to operate from Riyadh.⁹⁴ In 1990 under King Fahd's rule, the U.S. stationed large numbers of troops directly on Saudi soil to support military efforts against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. From 1990-1991, the U.S. had amassed combat forces in Saudi Arabia amounting to approximately 20,000 troops.⁹⁵

Reportedly, Osama bin Laden approached the Saudi defense minister in 1990 with plans to bar American troops from entering the Kingdom, and claimed he could amass an

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Hedges, "Military to Leave Saudi Arabia."

⁹⁵ Jon Alterman, *Don't Stand So Close to Me: The War on Terror and U.S.-Saudi Relations* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 1, 2005), http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/dont_stand_so_close_to_me.pdf.

army of 100,000 men to do so.⁹⁶ The buildup of U.S. military forces on Saudi territory also faced strong domestic opposition by a group of Sahwa clerics, or the “awakening sheikhs,” who argued that the Saudi regime was no longer protecting the Muslim holy lands by allowing U.S. soldiers to operate on Saudi soil.⁹⁷ In response to this challenge of legitimacy, the regime increased its material and moral support for *jihad* in Bosnia.⁹⁸

However, continuing military cooperation between the Saudi regime and the United States led Osama bin Laden to publish his “Declaration of War” against America and the Saudi family in 1996, decrying “the occupation of the Land of the Two Holy Places [...] by the armies of the American Crusaders and their allies.” In response to his declarations, bin Laden gained a supply of money and recruits from Saudi Arabia. In 2001, there were still 5,000 U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia.⁹⁹

Faced with such violent, religious opposition, Saudi Arabia initially attempted to prevent the United States from staging attacks against any Arab country from Saudi soil after the September 11 attack.¹⁰⁰ However, after Bush got a new UN Security Council resolution on Iraq in 2002, Prince Saud allowed U.S. forces to remain on Saudi soil. During this time, prominent Saudi princes made an effort to downplay the remaining foreign military presence in the country, instead describing it as “consensual, non-aggressive, and internationally sanctioned.”¹⁰¹ Despite these palliative attempts and the former amicable relationship between the Saudi government and jihadists, religious extremists had irrevocably turned against the Saudi regime by this time. This explains

⁹⁶ Jehl, “A Nation Challenged.”

⁹⁷ Hegghammer, “Islamist Violence and Regime Stability.”

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Jehl, “A Nation Challenged.”

¹⁰⁰ Josh Pollack, “Anti-Americanism in Contemporary Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 7, no. 4 (December 2003), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue4/pollack.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

why religious extremists, indoctrinated through the Saudi education system, became willing to carry out devastating attacks on Saudi soil in 2003.

Saudi Domestic Terrorism: 2003-2007

Terrorism in the Saudi Kingdom escalated to unprecedented levels in 2003, the same year that the United States withdrew its military forces. Direct, physical foreign occupation was no longer a necessary condition for domestic terrorism, as the spate of violent attacks continued into 2004 and beyond. Saudis continued to participate in *jihad* movements abroad in high numbers during this time period, particularly in neighboring Iraq following the U.S. invasion in 2003.

On February 14, 2003, Osama bin Laden released a sermon to the Muslim world, accusing the House of Saud of “betraying the Ottoman Empire to the British in WWI and opening the door to Crusader and Zionist domination of the *umma*.”¹⁰² He also condemned the Saudi family for betraying the Palestinian cause to “Jews and Americans.”¹⁰³ On 12 May 2003, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was shaken by multiple suicide car bombings on several housing compounds in Riyadh used by U.S. and other Western contractors in the city. Thirty-four people were killed, including 7 Americans, and 200 more were wounded. The group behind the attack, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), had only begun its campaign of religious terrorism in Saudi Arabia.

The first devastating attack was followed by a series of shootouts and attacks in 2003 and 2004, including car bombings against Western facilities and the kidnapping and murder of a number of individual Westerners. On December 6, 2004, AQAP infiltrated the U.S. consulate in Jeddah and killed 9 people in an attempt to take a young female

¹⁰² Bruce Riedel and Bilal Y. Saab, “Al Qaeda’s Third Front: Saudi Arabia,” *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 33-46.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

U.S. diplomat hostage. The December 2004 attack marked AQAP's last successful large-scale operation. There were a number of foiled attacks on oil targets between 2005 and 2007, and Saudi security forces foiled more than two dozen attacks and killed or captured more than 260 AQAP operatives in 2006. In December 2007, the Saudi government also claimed that it foiled a plot to disrupt the hajj in Mecca.

The heavy U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia, which began in 1990 during the Persian Gulf War, ended in 2003. In March 2003, the Saudi government quietly assisted the United States with its attack on Iraq. U.S. Special Forces were permitted to mount ground operations from bases in northern Saudi Arabia, and were given logistical support at the Prince Sultan airbase at al-Kharj, but were banned from launching (highly visible) air attacks from Saudi soil.¹⁰⁴ The Saudi government took great pains to conceal its cooperation in the U.S. invasion of Iraq from the public.¹⁰⁵ The U.S. ended its military presence in Saudi Arabia in August 2003, when it handed over its facility at al-Kharj and withdrew its troops from Saudi soil. However, two American military training missions did remain in Saudi Arabia after all of America's combat forces had departed.¹⁰⁶

Despite the U.S. withdrawal of its military forces in August 2003, AQAP's discourse remained heavily focused on fighting America.¹⁰⁷ Throughout its campaign of domestic terrorism, AQAP consistently explained its violence as a defensive reaction to U.S. aggression against Muslims internationally.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Alterman, *Don't Stand So Close to Me*.

¹⁰⁵ Pollack, "Anti-Americanism in Contemporary Saudi Arabia."

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Hegghammer, "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization," 39-60.

¹⁰⁸ Stephane Lacroix and Thomas Hegghammer, *Saudi Arabia Background: Who are the Islamists?*, Middle East Report (Amman: International Crisis Group, September 21, 2004), http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/iraq_iran_gulf/31_saudi_arabia_background.pdf.

Research conducted on AQAP has provided detailed information on members' backgrounds and profiles. A study conducted by Thomas Hegghamer in 2006 examined the biographies of 240 Saudi militants and a sample of 70 of the most prominent and active members of AQAP.¹⁰⁹ According to Hegghamer's research, greater than 50% of these militants came from Riyadh, although only 21% of the total Saudi population resides in Riyadh. This data indicates the prevalence of urban recruitment and recruitment of "newly urbanized youth" from underprivileged neighborhoods. Recruitment to AQAP was primarily "top down," as recruiters sought out Afghanistan returnees and utilized religious summer camps for Saudi youth. Slightly more than 50% of the AQAP members had previous experience in combat or training camps for *jihad* movements abroad, mainly in Afghanistan.¹¹⁰

The majority of AQAP members were in their late twenties at the beginning of the terrorist campaign in 2003, with an average age of 27 and ranging from 19 to 42 years old. The group's relatively higher average age than other militant Islamist groups reflects the fact that a large number of AQAP members were veterans from Afghanistan. AQAP membership also came overwhelmingly from the middle and lower-middle classes. Most of the militants' highest level of education was high school or less, and many had entered university only to drop out.¹¹¹

Many of the militants were unemployed or students. While other militant Islamist groups have included many natural-science students, AQAP contained almost no natural-science students. There were hardly any militants that had been trained or employed in the hard or natural science fields such as engineering, medicine and economics. Instead,

¹⁰⁹ Hegghamer, "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization," 39-60.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

several members had university degrees in religious studies and a relatively high percentage of AQAP members (12 of 29) were employed in religious professions before they traveled to Afghanistan or joined AQAP. Many of AQAP's ideologues had studied religion formally at the Imam Muhammad bin Saud University.¹¹² This data provides evidence for the theory that the Saudi education prepares natural-science students better for the job market, and that natural-science students have high employment rates while religious studies students face high unemployment rates.

Motivations for joining AQAP in 2002 or 2003 fell within three categories: political, religious and personal incentives. The primary political reason that members cited for joining AQAP was to expel the perceived U.S. military occupation of Saudi Arabia. Religious motivations included the desire for martyrdom and obedience to the obligation of *jihad*, and to expel "polytheists" from Saudi Arabia. Those who were motivated by personal reasons cited an oath they had taken with friends in Afghanistan to free Saudi Arabia, or deaths of family members or friends at the hands of the Saudi government.¹¹³

Saudi authorities began a rigorous domestic counterterrorism campaign in 2003 that resulted in the near nullification of domestic terrorism by 2007. In late 2007, Saudi authorities announced they had captured more than 200 Saudi and foreign militants involved in six terrorist cells with plans to attack the country's oil and security sectors.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Fahd al-Zyabi, "Terror Suspects to Testify via TV Screens," *Saudi Gazette*, March 5, 2009, <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentID=2009030531158>.

Saudi Foreign Fighters in Iraq

Since the U.S. invasion in 2003, Saudis have been traveling to Iraq as foreign fighters in the Iraqi insurgency in large numbers. In 2007, the total number of Saudis that had traveled to Iraq to wage *jihad* against the U.S.-led military forces was estimated at a maximum of 1,500 individuals. Recent research has produced valuable information about these Saudi foreign fighters, who are overwhelmingly students or unemployed.

A study conducted in 2008 of the declassified Sinjar records¹¹⁵ and detainee records from Guantanamo Bay, as well as the profiles of the 9/11 hijackers, provided empirical evidence about the profiles of Saudi foreign fighters.¹¹⁶ This data showed that Saudi Arabia is the largest producer of foreign fighters, and produces 40% of all foreign fighters covered in this study, four to eight times more than the average rate of foreign fighters from other Muslim countries. Furthermore, Riyadh produces the highest total amount of foreign fighters. The study also revealed that foreign fighter recruitment is largely an urban phenomenon, and that regardless of origin, *mujahideen* are most likely unemployed or students or common laborers. Finally, this study revealed that most Saudi foreign fighters in Iraq were not recruited through the internet, but by veteran foreign fighters; 97% of the foreign fighters studied were recruited through social, family or religious connections.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Current data on foreign fighters is limited, the Sinjar records, for example only cover a set amount of time (summer 2006 – fall 2007) and do not account for foreign fighters infiltrating Iraq's southern regions, namely eastern Saudis. There have been thousands of foreign fighters in Iraq since 2003, so this data only covers a small portion of the actual population of foreign fighters.

¹¹⁶ The Sinjar records are files on militants that were captured in Sinjar, Iraq from the summer of 2006 to the fall of 2007. Sinjar is a city in the north of Iraq, very close to the Syrian border, and as such, many of the foreign fighters there entered Iraq through Syria. The weakness of the Sinjar records is that they probably under-represent foreign fighters from eastern Saudi Arabia and Kuwait who could enter Iraq through more southern entry points.

¹¹⁷ Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: What Foreign Fighters Reveal about the Future of Terrorism* (PJ Sage, Inc., March 24, 2008), <http://www.pjsage.com/products.htm>.

Recently, after Saudi Arabian security released a list of 83 Saudis wanted for their attempt to revive AQAP and carry out terrorist attacks in the Kingdom, the Saudi government and analysts have begun to publicly recognize the role that the education system plays in Islamic radicalization. In February 2009, the Deputy Minister of Education and Teaching for boys, Mohammed Said Maliss, recognized the threat posed by radical educational content and called for the removal of specific radical books from school libraries and educational institutions. This effort included removing a book explicitly calling for jihad and another about Sayyed Qutb, an ideological source for al-Qaeda and other extremist Islamists. Saudi authorities also ordered restructuring of the Saudi Ministry of Education at that time, replacing “hardcore Wahhabi” Education Minister Abdullah bin Saleh al-Obaid with a more moderate Prince Faisal bin Abdullah.¹¹⁸

Saudi analysts and journalists have also recently recognized the danger of radical Saudi educational content. The Saudi al-Watan newspaper published an article entitled “Who is Behind the Deviants?” in February, in which the author pinpoints the radical content of Saudi curriculum as being one of the dominant factors behind these “deviants.”¹¹⁹ Dr. Turki al-Hamad, a distinguished Saudi political analyst and journalist, wrote in an April 2009 article, “What other explanation is there for the hundreds of Al Qaeda recruits, a figure which represents only the tip of the iceberg, not to mention the silent followers and sympathizers. There is a defect – there can be no doubt about that – and this is in the damage that has been caused by the educational institutes [in Saudi

¹¹⁸ Guitta, “Facing Homegrown Terrorism.”

¹¹⁹ “Deviants” is the term used by the Saudi authorities to refer to terrorists; Guitta, “Facing Homegrown Terrorism.”

Arabia]...”¹²⁰ He went on to write, “This is where the problem lies, schools and educational curriculums continue to disseminate extremist ideology in spite of the efforts to reduce its impact [...] resulting in the classification of humanity [into believer and unbeliever] and the promotion of hatred and a culture of death.”¹²¹

Conclusion

The structure and content of the Saudi education system is a major contributing factor in the high levels of religious terrorism originating from and occurring within the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia’s education system has become increasingly religious, incorporating radical teachings, since the 1960s. The Saudi regime has historically responded to political and religious dissent, like the 1979 Mecca Mosque uprising, by ceding increasing social power to the *ulema*, which includes control over the education system, and by increasing religious activities such as holding religious summer schools, in order to strengthen the regime’s Islamic credentials.

The role of education systems in Islamic radicalization, which has never been fully examined in empirical research, is causing certain students to receive high concentrations of radical religious teachings that endow them with a heightened sensitivity to foreign occupation and cause them to perceive foreign occupation whether or not it is physically evident. When these individuals faced increasing difficulties finding employment in the 1990s, due to their lack of marketable skills and the government’s inability to continue guaranteeing jobs to Saudi graduates, they were more likely to become involved in religious terrorism.

¹²⁰ Turki al-Hamad, “Terrorism: A Cultural Phenomenon,” *Asharq Alawsat*, April 27, 2009, <http://aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=16538>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Evidence from the case study supports this theory. Examination of the profiles of AQAP members and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan revealed several common factors related to this theory. Many of the militants were unemployed and/or students. AQAP members came overwhelmingly from the middle and lower-middle classes and many had only received high school educations. There was a noticeable absence of AQAP members with technical or science degrees, and those that had received higher education had concentrated in religious studies. The majority of AQAP members and foreign fighters were residing in Riyadh before they were recruited, and veteran foreign fighters were active in recruitment for AQAP and for *jihad* abroad.

CASE STUDY:

THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

“[Yemen is] one of the best Arab and Muslim countries in terms of its adherence to tradition and the faith ... [its] topography is mountainous, and its people are tribal and armed, and allow one to breathe clean air unblemished by humiliation.”

–Osama bin Laden¹²²

Osama bin Laden recognized the opportunity presented by Yemen’s topographical and political landscape early on. Yemen has played an important role as a source and staging ground for bin Laden’s brand of religious terrorism since al-Qaeda’s inception. One of the largest sources of recruits for *jihād* in Afghanistan and now Iraq, a continual safe haven for radical militants, the staging ground for al-Qaeda’s first attack and currently home to a brutal wave of domestic terrorism, Yemen’s role in religious terrorism cannot be ignored. Why is Yemen such a great contributor to foreign and domestic religious terrorism? As the terrorist attacks on Western targets in Yemen continue unabatedly, it is increasingly important to find an answer to this question.

The classical explanations of terrorism are not sufficient to explain religious terrorism in Yemen: neither poverty, nor government repression, nor foreign occupation explains the pattern of terrorism in Yemen. Yemen’s economic situation has been consistently, if not increasingly, dismal since the 1990s and does not account for the variation in domestic terrorism. Government repression in Yemen—including arbitrary jailing, torture, execution, and disappearance – is much lower than it was in the two Yemens during the 1970s and 1980s, yet it is currently experiencing the most violent

¹²² As cited by Michael Scheuer in “Yemen’s Role in al-Qaeda’s Strategy,” *Terrorism Focus* 5, no. 5 (February 5, 2008), <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373951>.

spate of terrorism the country has ever seen.¹²³ Finally, neither the United States nor any other Western power has based any military troops permanently in Yemen since unification in 1990. The extent of Western military presence in Yemen only involves the use of Yemen ports as refueling stations for military ships, a common international practice that in no way indicates foreign occupation. An important causal variable that has been largely overlooked in scholarly research on Yemen is the role of private religious education in radicalization.

Numerous articles on terrorism in Yemen have identified the significant role of private religious institutions in radicalizing Yemeni youth; one article even noted that “the consensus is that the best way to save Yemen's young from falling into the clutches of extremists is by altering the educational curricula, especially in Islamic schools, to promote science, languages, and geography in order to spread more awareness and understanding of the world.”¹²⁴ However, no empirical study has been conducted on the relationship between private religious education and radicalization as of yet.

In this case study, I will examine the relationship between education and radicalization in Yemen and provide evidence to support the argument that the inadequate and limited public education system is causing a large amount of Yemeni youth to be educated in radical religious institutions that subsequently makes these students more likely to become involved in foreign or domestic religious terrorism. In the first section of the case study, I will describe how education in Yemen has developed over time. The

¹²³ Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/williamandmary/docDetail.action?docID=10120607>.

¹²⁴ Andre Carbonieri, ed., “Applying Ideological Tactics in Fighting Terrorism (Yemen: A Bright Future Ahead),” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May 1, 2008), <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=5&sid=f6cec884-9907-453f-bcfa-d00ec95d04ab%40sessionmgr2&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#db=mth&AN=31701225>.

historical context of education in Yemen is important because it shows how radical religious schooling was introduced and developed at particular times that correspond with Yemeni participation in domestic and foreign religious terrorism. In the next section, I will examine the current state of public education in Yemen, describing its weaknesses and limited accessibility in certain regions of the country. This limited accessibility is significant, because religious educational institutes flourish in the absence of public education. The next sections are devoted to describing the regional prevalence of religious schooling, identifying prominent radical religious institutions, and understanding the effects of education in Yemen. In the final sections I lay out the pattern of Yemeni participation in foreign and domestic terrorism. Evidence from the case study suggests that a majority of the foreign fighters and domestic terrorists are coming from regions known for radical religious schooling and that the Iman University and Dar al-Hadith schools in particular have produced a number of Yemenis involved in domestic terrorism and foreign fighting in Iraq.

Education in Yemen

Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East, and according to the United Nations, ranked 153 out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index in 2005.¹²⁵ Furthermore, over 75% of Yemen's population is under the age of 25.¹²⁶ These statistics illustrate the enormous difficulties the Yemeni government faces in establishing and maintaining an adequate public education system. In 2005, the adult literacy rate for males was 73% and 35% for females, while the overall literacy rate for the population

¹²⁵ The Human Development Index measures life expectancy, education, and standard of living.

¹²⁶ Navtej Dhillon, *Addressing Yemen's Twin Deficits: Human and Natural Resources* (The Brookings Institution, September 22, 2008), http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0922_yemen_dhillon.aspx.

age 15 and older was 54%.¹²⁷ In comparison, the least developed low-income countries average a total of almost 62% adult literacy.¹²⁸

The Yemeni public education system is weak, and plagued by corruption, unqualified teaching staff, and overcrowded and understaffed classrooms. An alternative form of education, religious schooling, has long existed in Yemen and preceded the establishment of the modern public system in the 1960s, continuing to develop alongside it since the 1970s. Religious schooling is especially prevalent in rural regions and areas of difficult terrain, where the central government lacks *de facto* authority. Students who receive education at either public or religious institutions do not have any marketable skills, and particularly those who have received radical religious instruction are susceptible to recruitment for religious terrorism.

Modern History of Education in Yemen

The history of educational development in Yemen illustrates how an alternative system of religious schooling has grown alongside the public education system and flourished in areas where public education was inaccessible or inadequate. Historical development of these religious schools also highlights the origins of their ideologies; for example, schools founded and funded by returning jihadists are likely to reflect their Salafi-jihadi ideology, which heavily emphasizes the importance of *jihad* and condones violence against non-Muslims and Muslims who associate with non-Muslims or belong to other Muslim sects.

Traditionally, education in Yemen has been limited to religious schools associated with mosques or schools established on local initiative. This was the case until 1962,

¹²⁷ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division, August 2008), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Yemen.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

when a military government with a secular outlook seized power in North Yemen and began efforts to establish a secular education system. However, increasing urbanization and secularization during this time period did not change the “extremely strong role of religion” in North Yemen, nor did it alter many conservative attitudes.¹²⁹ Throughout this period, religious schools continued to operate vigorously alongside the secular public education system.¹³⁰

During the 1970s and 1980s, secular education expanded significantly and became more accessible. The percentage of school-aged children attending school increased significantly between 1970 and 1980, at 12% in 1971 to almost 50% in 1981.¹³¹ However, the public education system even during this time was plagued by classroom overcrowding, unqualified teachers, and high dropout rates.¹³²

During the 1970s, President al-Hamdi of North Yemen seized the help of Sunni *ulema*, trained by the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo, in order to counterbalance socialist influences.¹³³ Al-Hamdi appointed ‘Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, a man of “deeply Wahhabi tendencies,” to oversee the establishment of these religious institutes throughout North Yemen.¹³⁴ Al-Zindani was constantly traveling back and forth between Saudi Arabia and Yemen during the 1970s, and infused the Yemeni education system with a much more conservative and extreme form of Islam than had been traditionally present in Yemen.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Susan Dorsky and Thomas B. Stevenson, “Childhood and Education in North Yemen,” in *Children in the Muslim Middle East* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

¹³⁰ Peter Clark, “Aspects of Education in the Yemen Arab Republic,” in *Economy, Society and Culture in Contemporary Yemen* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Hooriya Mohammad al-Iriyani, “The Development of Primary Education and Its Problems in the Yemen Arab Republic,” in *Economy, Society and Culture in Contemporary Yemen* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

¹³³ Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Gregory D. Johnsen, “Profile of Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani,” *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 7 (April 6, 2006), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=726.

It was at this time that the Saudi-funded Sunni religious institutes, also called “scientific institutes” (*al-ma’ahid al-‘ilmiyyah*), began being offered as an alternative to poorly funded government-run schools. These institutes were known for spreading intolerance of other Muslim ideologies, and Zaydi Shi’as accused them of attempting to eradicate Zaydi thought.¹³⁶

Al-Zindani was appointed Minister of Education in 1983, and while he did not keep the post for long, his religious schools continued to multiply with large amounts of funding from the education budget, in addition to financing from Saudi Arabia. By 1986-1987 there were an estimated 1,126 religious schools, and by 1988, 118,000 students were enrolled in these institutions, with more than 4,600 of them being trained as teachers to continue spreading the religious education.¹³⁷ Islamist pressures increasingly affected the school system, leading to segregation of the sexes in schools, and causing Sana’a University to impose an Islamic dress code rather than banning it, as had been the former practice. During that time period, Sana’a University actually expelled a writer on development and culture from the school for denying the infallibility of the Prophet.¹³⁸

From 1839 until 1967, South Yemen was under British occupation and formal education was limited to Aden. South Yemen began to develop its education system after the British withdrawal in 1967, adopting a similar structure to North Yemen, but expanded schooling more rapidly than the North in the 1970s in order to spread socialist

¹³⁶ Gabriele Vom Bruck, *Islam, Memory, and Morality in Yemen: Ruling Families in Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹³⁷ Dresch, *History of Modern Yemen*, 173.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

ideology.¹³⁹ In contrast to North Yemen, Islamist groups were banned in South Yemen before unification.

When North and South Yemen underwent unification in 1990, the two education systems merged into a single education system, and the government attempted to standardize texts and curricula and to reform school structure. These changes were particularly difficult in light of Yemen's international isolation during the Gulf War of 1990-1991 in addition to the country's profound poverty. By late 1994, Yemen's economy had been completely devastated by the costs of unification and the loss of the remittance system resulting from Saudi Arabia's expulsion of migrant Yemeni workers in the early 1990s.¹⁴⁰ During this time, the Yemeni education system also began to experience serious overcrowding as 350,000 new students entered into the system following the return of more than 1 million migrant workers from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States in the wake of the 1990-1991 Gulf War.¹⁴¹ With the economy in shambles, many families could not afford to purchase costly textbooks that were then required for public schools. During this time, Salafi educational institutes reflecting the radical teachings of the Saudi education system continued to grow until they had reached 400 schools at secondary level alone by 1996. Salafi schools claimed to have 330,000 pupils at that time, with 12,600 students being trained as teachers "to instruct the next generation."¹⁴² Meanwhile, government teacher training institutes had only a quarter of the number of students as did the Salafi schools.¹⁴³ Islamists also made vigorous efforts

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Rotberg, *Battling Terrorism*.

¹⁴¹ Dorsky and Stevenson, "Childhood and Education in North Yemen."

¹⁴² Dresch, *History of Modern Yemen*, 200.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

to obtain land and funds to build schools in impoverished areas of small-scale farming in the Sana'a, Ibb and Dhamar governorates.¹⁴⁴

The Current Structure and Accessibility of Public Education in Yemen

The public school system in Yemen suffers from limited accessibility, poor attendance levels, high dropout rates, and large disparities between education levels for rural and urban, as well as rich and poor, Yemenis. Even when students have access to education and are able to attend public schools, the quality of schooling is very poor. As will be discussed in more detail later, an alternative system of religious schools is available alongside the public education system, and those students who do not have access to public education or who are disappointed by its poor quality and lack of funding have the choice of enrolling in a religious institution instead.

While Yemen's law provides for universal, compulsory and free education for children aged 6-15 years, the government does not enforce its education policy and a large number of children do not attend school at all. In 2006, only 75% of Yemen's school-age population was enrolled in primary school and only 37% was enrolled in secondary school.¹⁴⁵ Of those children who do attend school, many drop out before completing their basic education – only 48 of every 100 children entering the school

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

system successfully reach the sixth grade.¹⁴⁶ The fact that a large number of those who graduate from school fail to get a job only further discourages student attendance.¹⁴⁷

Low access to education, low school enrollment, poor retention rates and increasing illiteracy all disproportionately affect the poor and rural residents in Yemen.¹⁴⁸

The Yemeni government is plagued by persistent economic challenges and systematic corruption, and as its authority is receding into major urban areas, the accessibility of public education is largely concentrated in those urban areas. Access to basic education is significantly higher in urban areas (at 91%) than in rural areas (at 78%).¹⁴⁹ As the level of schooling increases, school availability decreases, particularly in rural areas.

Secondary schools are available for only 48% of the total student population aged 6 to 14, with 84% of urban youth having access to secondary education and only 36% of youth in rural areas, where the majority of Yemen's population lives, having access to secondary schooling.¹⁵⁰ School non-attendance is primarily a "rural phenomenon," with rural children accounting for 88% of the total number of children not attending school.¹⁵¹

While 22% of urban children do not attend school, in rural areas the total proportion of

¹⁴⁶ L. Guarcello, S. Lyon, and F. C. Rosati, *Promoting School Enrolment, Attendance and Retention among Disadvantaged Children in Yemen : the Potential of Conditional Cash Transfers*, Working Paper, Understanding Children's Work Project (UNICEF, July 2006), http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000333038_20080606052556&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679.

¹⁴⁷ *Yemen: Concern over Increasing Number of School Dropouts* (IRIN, November 27, 2007), <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=75528>.

¹⁴⁸ Dhillon, *Addressing Yemen's Twin Deficits*.

¹⁴⁹ L. Guarcello and F. C. Rosati, *Does School Quality Matter for Working Children?*, Working Paper Series, Understanding Children's Work Project (UNICEF, April 2007), http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000333038_20080606044117&searchMenuPK=64187283&theSitePK=523679.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

children not attending school is more like 52%.¹⁵² Many people in rural areas are beginning to move to cities to seek better economic opportunities, and this is also affecting school attendance rates. In 2007, many students were dropping out of school and moving to cities in order to find employment to support their families when their fathers were unable to do so.¹⁵³

There is also a difference in attendance between the rich and the poor in Yemen, although the difference is relatively small; 44% of children ages 6-14 from the poorest economic backgrounds were not attending school while 33% of children of the same age group from the richest economic backgrounds were not attending school.¹⁵⁴ A 1999 Poverty Survey found that the enrollment rate for students from poor families was at 62.9% while the enrollment rate for students from rich families was at 70.2%, and these statistics do not take into account the significantly higher rate of school dropout among poor families due to the inability to cover schooling costs, which would further widen the gap between rich and poor enrollment rates.¹⁵⁵ Poor families often force their children to engage in begging or join the labor market, which leads to child labor.¹⁵⁶ Poor Yemenis are further deterred from enrolling their children in school by the cost of attending school (approximately \$10/student/year).¹⁵⁷

Even those students who have access to public schooling will receive a poor education if they attend. The country's poor education system is characterized by weak infrastructure, school facilities and educational materials of poor quality, a shortage of

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ *Concern over Increasing Number of School Dropouts* (IRIN).

¹⁵⁴ Guarcello and Rosati, *Promoting School Enrolment*.

¹⁵⁵ *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (Republic of Yemen Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, May 2002), http://www.mpic-yemen.org/dsp/PRSP2003_2005_2.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (Republic of Yemen Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation).

¹⁵⁷ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

classrooms and teachers, and an unqualified teaching staff. A study conducted by the Yemeni government in 2007 found that the Yemeni public education system is also characterized by “rampant cheating, favoritism and bribery.”¹⁵⁸ The education system also suffers acute nationwide shortages of qualified teachers in the fields of mathematics, science and languages. Half of Yemeni teachers have not completed secondary school. The Comprehensive Education Survey conducted by the Yemeni government in 1999-2000 revealed that only 60% of teaching staff had completed basic education and only 40% had graduated from secondary school.¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, Yemen’s existing education system is based on learning by rote, and a representative of UNICEF in Yemen reported that “there are many de-motivated and largely untrained teachers in Yemen who are pushing children out of school.”¹⁶⁰ A study conducted by the Yemeni government in 2007 found that education curricula rely too heavily on “rote memorization, outdated stereotypes, and outmoded traditions.”¹⁶¹ The effect of Yemen’s poor education system can be seen clearly in anecdotal evidence: A professor of economics at Sana’a University and a visiting professor at Georgetown University reported that professors in Yemen find that a number of their graduate students are unable to even write their own names.¹⁶²

Religious Schooling in Yemen Today

Religious schooling has been operating in Yemen long before the development of the modern education system, and has continued to do so parallel to public education.

¹⁵⁸ Huda al-Kibsi, “Education in Yemen Needs to be Reformed, Says Study,” *Yemen Observer*, August 11, 2007, <http://www.yobserver.com/culture-and-society/10012742.html>.

¹⁵⁹ *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (Republic of Yemen Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation).

¹⁶⁰ *Concern over Increasing Number of School Dropouts* (IRIN).

¹⁶¹ al-Kibsi, “Education in Yemen Needs to be Reformed.”

¹⁶² Mohammed al-Maitami, “Education as a Strategic Deterrent in a Backward Society (Yemen as a Case),” *Al-Bab*, 2003, <http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/econ/maitami3.htm>.

Until 2000, these religious institutions were operating entirely outside of government authority or control and the government has faced continuing difficulties in monitoring and managing religious schools. These schools are particularly concentrated in rural and tribal areas beyond the government's reach, and have played a direct role in recruitment for radical Sunni terrorism.

It is important to note that independent religious schools in Yemen are affiliated with a variety of sects, and are not wholly involved in propagating extremism and religious violence. Mosque schools were long the only source of education in Yemen before the development of the modern education system, and many continue to operate with the simple aim of providing basic education and religious teaching, without any ulterior political motives.¹⁶³ This study is primarily concerned with religious schools that are established to incite hatred and intolerance of others and are used for radical political aims. The majority of these radical schools in Yemen is either Saudi-funded or financed by returning *mujahideen*, and is oriented to the Salafi-*jihadi* ideology, with teachings similar to those in Saudi schools mentioned in the previous case study.

Many rural areas in Yemen are beyond the reach of the central government, which is reflected in low levels of accessibility to public education. In these areas, religious schools are more important and numerous, especially in the north, where geographic isolation often results in limited government reach and societal mistrust of centralized,

¹⁶³ An example is the Dar al-Mustafa school, based on Sunni orthodoxy rather than Salafism, established in the small town of Tarim in the Hadhramout region of Yemen in order to provide education to youth who lack access to any other form of education. Bernhard Zand, "Of Scholars and Zealots: Are Koran Schools Hotbeds of Terrorism?" *Spiegel Online*, sec. 2007 March 20, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,472583,00.html>.

secular government. Unlicensed religious institutes with Salafi ideologies and radical tendencies can be found in the Marib, Hadhramout and Dhamar regions.¹⁶⁴

These religious institutes exist at all levels of education, including primary, secondary and higher education. As was previously mentioned, Salafi Islamists made particular efforts to establish these schools in impoverished rural areas during the 1990s, and train their own cadre of teachers to propagate their ideology and educate future generations. Some notable examples among these Salafi religious institutes include the Iman University in Sana'a and the Dar al-Hadith network of schools. Both of these schools were established by radical individuals: Sheikh 'Abd al-Majid al-Zindani and Sheikh Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i respectively.

Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, previously identified as a man of "deeply Wahhabi tendencies," has had close ties with Saudi Arabia since the 1970s.¹⁶⁵ In the 1980s, al-Zindani recruited thousands of Yemenis and Saudis to fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and served as their spiritual guide. He was also one of Osama bin Laden's "spiritual mentors" in the 1980s, although he has subsequently publicly distanced himself from bin Laden. During Yemen's civil war in 1994, al-Zindani assisted President Saleh in putting down the secessionist attempt of the Socialist south by mobilizing Arab veterans from Afghanistan. His assistance to President Saleh has gained him consistent protection and loyalty from the president against internal and external critics. Al-Zindani was also accused of issuing the fatwas that led to the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 and the murder of three Baptist missionaries in 2002.¹⁶⁶ In September

¹⁶⁴ Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Government Seeks to End Control of Mosques by Extremists," *Yemen Observer*, January 31, 2009, <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10015670.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Johnsen, "Sheikh Abd al-Majid al-Zindani."

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

2002, he declared that all the Muslim lands were “under the control of the infidel Christians.”¹⁶⁷ In 2003, al-Zindani called for *jihad* in Iraq, along with a number of Islamic figures in Yemen.¹⁶⁸ In 2004, the United States and the UN identified al-Zindani as a “specially designated global terrorist.”¹⁶⁹ Al-Zindani’s religious beliefs are reflected in the curriculum at the Iman University.

Al-Zindani also established the conservative Islamic political party, Islah, in 1990, after returning from Afghanistan. The Islah party established its own schools in the 1990s, and was running its own religious school system parallel to the public system in 2002. The Yemeni President tolerated these Islah schools and even funded them at one time.¹⁷⁰ Al-Zindani controlled the thousands of religious educational institutes that were established by the Islah party since 1990, and the schools’ curricula reflect al-Zindani’s Salafi-jihadism.¹⁷¹ Yemenis who attended the Islah schools described how they were taught that only Muslims who follow al-Zindani’s teaching are “real” Muslims.¹⁷² When President Saleh began to perceive the Islah schools as politically threatening in 2002, he devised plans to merge the 1,300 Islah schools, which housed 400,000 students, into the public education system beginning in 2003.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ Evan F. Kohlmann, “In Too Deep: Terrorism in Yemen,” *The National Review*, January 17, 2003, <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-kohlmann011703.asp>.

¹⁶⁸ “Yemenis, Part of Iraqi Resistance,” *Yemen Times*, June 18, 2003, <http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=642&p=front&a=1>.

¹⁶⁹ Gregory D. Johnsen, “Yemen’s Al-Iman University: A Pipeline for Fundamentalists?,” *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 22 (November 12, 2006), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=970.

¹⁷⁰ Susan Sachs, “A Nation Challenged: Militants; Yemen Fears Being Singed by a Home-Grown Firebrand,” *The New York Times*, February 15, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/15/world/a-nation-challenged-militants-yemen-fears-being-singed-by-a-home-grown-firebrand.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

¹⁷¹ Mohammad Hafez, “Radicalization in the Persian Gulf: Assessing the Potential of Islamist Militancy in Saudi Arabia and Yemen,” *Dynamics of Assymetric Conflict* 1, no. 1 (March 2008): 6-24.

¹⁷² Sachs, “A Nation Challenged.”

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

Al-Zindani also founded the most prominent religious university in Yemen, the Iman University, in Sana'a in 1993.¹⁷⁴ The Sheikh chose to build the university in an impoverished suburb on the northern highway of Sana'a, a destination for rural Yemenis who have migrated to the city in search of better economic opportunities, and a location where political Islam has flourished.¹⁷⁵ Although the university was built on land donated by the Yemeni government, it was initially funded by Saudi Arabia and a number of private Islamic groups around the Muslim world.¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, the university follows the Salafi ideology in its curriculum.¹⁷⁷

There have been numerous accusations by domestic and U.S. actors that the university has its own military wing, which al-Zindani has consistently denied.¹⁷⁸ More recently, the university was accused by a number of local newspapers of running a military training camp to prepare students to travel to fight in Gaza, but al-Zindani denied these reports as well.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, John Walker Lindh, an American member of the Taliban, was enrolled at al-Iman University before traveling to Afghanistan to fight.¹⁸⁰

While the Yemeni government has made efforts to either shut down or integrate other private religious institutions, President Saleh has consistently shielded the Iman University from criticism, only temporarily closing the university in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks.¹⁸¹ The Iman University has enjoyed nearly consistent protection by President Saleh because of al-Zindani's assistance in quelling South

¹⁷⁴ Johnsen, "Yemen's Al-Iman University."

¹⁷⁵ Zand, "Of Scholars and Zealots."

¹⁷⁶ Johnsen, "Yemen's Al-Iman University."

¹⁷⁷ Hasan al-Zaidi, "Unprecedented Demonstrations against Al-Iman University Administration," *Yemen Post*, July 28, 2008, <http://www.yemenpost.net/40/LocalNews/20085.htm>.

¹⁷⁸ Johnsen, "Yemen's Al-Iman University."

¹⁷⁹ Zaid al-Alaya'a, "Training of Fighters at al-Emam University Denied," *Yemen Observer*, January 20, 2009, <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10015591.html>.

¹⁸⁰ Kohlmann, "In Too Deep."

¹⁸¹ Johnsen, "Yemen's Al-Iman University."

Yemen's attempted secession in 1994 by lending Saleh armed foreign militants.¹⁸² In July 2008, there were around 6,000 students attending the Iman University.¹⁸³

The Dar al-Hadith schools are a network of radical seminaries established throughout Yemen.¹⁸⁴ The original Dar al-Hadith school was founded in Dammaj, Sa'ada by an extremist cleric named Sheikh Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i, and is one of the largest "Salafi Islamic Movement" institutes in Yemen.¹⁸⁵ Al-Wadi'i studied religion in Saudi Arabia for 20 years, during which time he attended the Islamic University of Medina.¹⁸⁶ Since the original school's founding, many Dar al-Hadith education centers have been established throughout Yemen and abroad.¹⁸⁷ According to a Salafi website, there are Dar al-Hadith schools in seven areas of Yemen and abroad in Egypt, Somalia and Indonesia.¹⁸⁸

The Dar al-Hadith schools are funded and supervised by Salafi donors in Saudi Arabia.¹⁸⁹ In 2002, the Yemeni government accused the Dar al-Hadith schools of promoting terrorism, and deported 70 of the schools' foreign students on claims that their residency papers were illegal.¹⁹⁰ Local media reported that there were more than 80 prominent Salafi religious schools associated with the Dar al-Hadith centers in Yemen in 2002, attended by large numbers of Yemenis, Arabs and foreign students.¹⁹¹ Local media also reported that the United States had information that al-Qaeda militants had studied at

¹⁸² Sachs, "A Nation Challenged: Militants."

¹⁸³ al-Zaidi, "Unprecedented Demonstrations."

¹⁸⁴ Zand, "Of Scholars and Zealots."

¹⁸⁵ Hassan al-Zaidi, "Youth Calling Themselves, Faithful Youth: Their Cell Shifted - Local," *Yemen Times*, March 16, 2003, <http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=626&p=local&a=1>.

¹⁸⁶ Noorhaidi Hasan, "Revitalizing the Yemeni Connection," in *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (Cornell SEAP Publications, 2006), 77-80.

¹⁸⁷ "Information about Daar Hadeeth Yemen," trans. Aboo Imraan al-Mekseekee, *Salafi Web*, May 25, 2006, http://salafiweb.free.fr/Files/information_about_daar_hadeeth_yemen.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ "Salafia Schism," *Yemen Times*, May 26, 2002, <http://www.yementimes.com/02/iss21/front.htm>.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

these Salafi centers in Yemen.¹⁹² In 2003, local sources reported that the number of Salafi institutes had grown to 100 and were educating thousands of students from Yemen and abroad.¹⁹³ In 2004, Joint Task Force Guantanamo counterterrorism analysts designated the Dar al-Hadith school in Dammaj “a known terrorist training center.”¹⁹⁴

While the aforementioned institutes are notable examples of radical education in Yemen, there are many more unlicensed religious schools operating within the country. Yemeni journalist Dr. Mohammed al-Qadhi wrote in an opinion piece in the *Yemen Times* that the curricula of most religious schools and universities in Yemen promote “religious fanaticism” and “legalize the killing of non-Muslims and consider them infidels.”¹⁹⁵ A study conducted by the Ministry of Religious Guidance and Endowment in 2004 provided information on the distribution of religious schools, counting approximately 1,000 institutions, many of which were operating outside of the government’s central control. Although some of these schools were funded by businessmen, political parties and innocent charitable societies, many were financed by charitable societies with ties to terrorism. A number of schools were found to be financed by al-Haramain charitable society in Saudi Arabia, which Saudi authorities closed down after the society was proven to be fundraising for terrorist activities.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ al-Zaidi, “Youth Calling Themselves.”

¹⁹⁴ *Summary of Evidence for Combatant Status Review Tribunal - Al Yafi, Al Khadr Abdallah Muhammed*, Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants (United States Department of Defense, October 14, 2004), http://www.dod.mil/pubs/foi/detainees/csrt_arb/000001-000100.pdf#33.

¹⁹⁵ Mohammed al-Qadhi, “Silver Lining: Addressing Momentum of Terrorism,” *Yemen Times*, October 8, 2008, <http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=1196&p=opinion&a=4>.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Government Response to Religious Schooling

Prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Yemeni government had chosen not to interfere with religious schools, and even funded them to a large extent.¹⁹⁷ After temporarily shutting down al-Iman University in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks and expelling 500 foreign students for counterterrorism purposes, the Yemeni government adopted a policy to oversee religious schools administratively and financially and integrate their budgets into the Ministry of Education's finances in 2002.¹⁹⁸

The government intensified its efforts to close down religious educational institutes in 2004. On June 29, 2004 the Yemeni government announced its decision to close down religious schools "due to the connection between extremism, militancy, and certain curricula that promote deviant and alien ideologies."¹⁹⁹ At that time, the Ministry of Education also vowed to reform religious education curricula to teach a more moderate Islamic discourse.²⁰⁰ The Yemeni government also announced its decision to cease its own funding of religious sectarian schools, which had previously included funding for extremist Salafi schools.

Nevertheless, the Yemeni government announced that there were still up to 330,000 students enrolled in unlicensed religious schools in 2005.²⁰¹ By 2008, the government had closed approximately 4,500 unlicensed religious schools and deported the non-Yemeni students studying there on accusations that these institutions were

¹⁹⁷ "Government Warns of Secret Extremist Schools That Attract More Than 300,000 Yemenis," *The Associated Press*, April 16, 2005, <http://www.curevents.com/vb/archive/index.php/t-13465.html>.

¹⁹⁸ "Yemen to Close 4,000 Religious Schools," *Yemen Times*, February 13, 2005, <http://yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=815&p=local&a=1>.

¹⁹⁹ Mohammed al-Qadhi, "Government Takes Stock of Religious Schools: Feeding Young Minds," *Yemen Times*, October 27, 2004, <http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=784&p=front&a=1>.

²⁰⁰ al-Alaya'a, "Government Seeks to End."

²⁰¹ Abdel Salam Mohammad, "Yemen to Close More Religious Schools," *Islam Online News*, April 27, 2005, <http://www.islamicawakening.com/viewnews.php?newsID=4442&>.

promoting religious extremism and militancy.²⁰² In August of that year, Yemeni press reported that the government had shut down approximately 1,000 religious summer camps that year as well.²⁰³ However, an official report released by the Yemeni Ministry of Endowment and Guidance in December 2008 revealed that there were still approximately 4,000 religious schools operating in Yemen, 20% of which lack any government observation or monitoring.²⁰⁴ As late as January 2009, there were still enough illegal religious schools operating uninhibited that the Yemeni government announced its decision to resume closing down these schools, which government sources have described as “incubators for terrorists and fanatics.”²⁰⁵ The government further announced its adoption of a comprehensive strategy to address the “culture of extremism and violence” by educating youth about “the values of tolerance and moderation in Islamic faith, which rejects intolerance and extremism.”²⁰⁶

The Effects of Education in Yemen

The public education system in Yemen does not prepare students with the necessary skills for securing a job upon graduation. Religious education also fails to provide students with marketable skills. As a result, both forms of education in Yemen leave youth without many employment opportunities upon graduation. Even if the students haven't received a radical religious education, which makes them infinitely more likely to become involved in religious terrorism, as Abdullah al-Faqih, a professor of

²⁰² *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

²⁰³ Kent Davis-Packard, “Antiterror Measures Incite Sectarianism In Yemen,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 29, 2008, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0829/p04s01-wome.html>.

²⁰⁴ “Twenty Percent of Religious Schools in Yemen Unobserved: Report,” *Saba Net*, December 9, 2008), <http://armiesofliberation.com/archives/2008/12/10/religious-schools-in-yemen/>.

²⁰⁵ al-Alaya'a, “Government Seeks to End.”

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

politics at the University of Sana'a in Yemen, puts it, "Thousands of jobless and hopeless Yemeni youths are an easy target for transnational and domestic extremist groups."²⁰⁷

Young men with low levels of education are often only able to find jobs in low wage work, or they end up migrating to find better opportunities. Those who do have stronger educational backgrounds vie for increasingly competitive jobs in the public sector.²⁰⁸ The Yemeni government was the largest employer of university graduates in the 1990s, but became unable to employ additional university graduates by the mid-1990s, requiring only an estimated 10% of graduates from faculties of agriculture, humanities and law and only 50% of business graduates.²⁰⁹ A professor of economics at Sana'a University and a visiting professor at Georgetown University pointed out in an article in 2003 that the unemployment rate among university graduates was 50%, with a national unemployment rate at 35-40%.²¹⁰

Yemeni Radicalization

Yemen has been both a source and staging ground for terrorism in the past few decades. Thousands of Yemeni volunteers traveled to Afghanistan in the 1980s to participate in *jihad* against Soviet forces. These Yemenis, along with the other "Afghan Arabs" were welcomed back to Yemen in the 1990s, bringing with them their radical Salafi-*jihadi* ideology. In 1992, Yemen became the staging ground for al-Qaeda's first attack, targeting U.S. soldiers on their way to Somalia during Operation Restore Hope. Local terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda carried out a number of other attacks in the

²⁰⁷ Nicholas Blanford, "Are Iran and Al Qaeda Vying for Influence in Yemen?," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 13, 2004, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0713/p11s01-wome.html>.

²⁰⁸ Dhillon, *Addressing Yemen's Twin Deficits*.

²⁰⁹ Mutahar A. al-Abbasi, "The Education Sector in Yemen: Challenges and Policy Options," in *Yemen into the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007): 392.

²¹⁰ al-Maitami, "Education as a Strategic Deterrent."

1990s and early 2000s, which the Yemeni government was able to effectively dismantle by 2003. Yemenis continued to travel to fight abroad throughout this time period, and became a large source of foreign fighters in Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003. A new terrorist group was formed in 2006, al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY), and has been carrying out violent attacks against Western targets since then, including attacks on the U.S. embassy, Spanish tourists, and a Western residential complex.

Yemeni Participation in Jihad in Afghanistan: 1980s-1990s

Yemenis have strongly supported *jihad* efforts abroad since the 1980s, when thousands of Yemenis traveled to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviets. Three thousand Yemenis participated in the *jihad* effort in Afghanistan during the 1980s, and Yemen was second only to Saudi Arabia as the largest source of *mujahideen*.²¹¹ These recruits came primarily from North Yemen, while Socialist South Yemen supported the Soviets and made efforts to prevent Yemeni volunteers from traveling to Afghanistan for *jihad*.²¹² Sheikh ‘Abd al-Majid al-Zindani recruited many Yemenis for *jihad* in Afghanistan during the mid-1980s and 1990s. From 1984 to 1990, he brought 5,000 to 7,000 Arabs, including a large number of Yemenis, to al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan for religious and military training under his guidance.²¹³ Some sources argue that Yemen provided two-thirds of Osama bin Laden’s recruits for his training camps in Afghanistan.²¹⁴

Osama bin Laden himself recognized fertile breeding ground in Yemen, and accordingly cultivated ties with several Yemeni tribes, helped al-Zindani found the

²¹¹ Maliach, *The Global Jihad*.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Kohlmann, “In Too Deep.”

²¹⁴ James Brandon, “Koranic Duels Ease Terror,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 4, 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0204/p01s04-wome.html>.

Islamist Islah party, and assisted Yemenis traveling to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Estimates put the number of Yemenis who fought in Afghanistan or were trained in al-Qaeda's camps in Afghanistan at thousands to tens of thousands.²¹⁵

The high number of Yemeni volunteers, specifically from North Yemen, can be explained in part by the establishment of Saudi-backed Salafi-jihadi schools under al-Zindani's supervision in North Yemen in the 1970s. As was mentioned previously, the President of North Yemen gave al-Zindani free rein to establish these radical religious institutes in the 1970s in order to counteract socialist influences. Al-Zindani was appointed Minister of Education in North Yemen in 1983, and he went on to recruit thousands of Yemenis for *jihād* against the Soviets in the 1980s, many of which were recruited from these religious institutes.

Domestic Terrorism in Yemen: 1990s-2003

During this time period, Yemen served not only as a continual safe haven to Arab militants returning from Afghanistan, but also as the staging ground of al-Qaeda's first attack. A number of terrorist attacks against Western targets followed this al-Qaeda operation, and were only halted by extensive counterterrorism measures in 2002.

In the 1990s, Yemen became a magnet for veterans of the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, and Yemeni veterans were sheltered by the religious opposition party, the Islah Party.²¹⁶ Al-Zindani encouraged al-Qaeda affiliated fighters to seek refuge in Yemen upon their return from Afghanistan, in order to continue training in the

²¹⁵ *Terrorism Havens: Yemen*, Backgrounder (Council on Foreign Relations, December 2005), <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9369/#4>.

²¹⁶ Maliach, *The Global Jihad*.

mountainous regions of Yemen. During this time, the Yemeni government welcomed tens of thousands of returning Arab militants from the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan.²¹⁷ These individuals had experience in battle and were indoctrinated into al-Qaeda's Salafi-jihadi ideology in Afghanistan, which they brought with them when they returned to Yemen.

Thousands of these veterans aided President Saleh in his military campaign that defeated Socialist South Yemen in its attempted secession in 1994.²¹⁸ Some veterans subsequently assumed peaceful lives in Yemen, while others went on to form Salafi-jihadi groups affiliated with al-Qaeda. When the government failed to meet some Afghan veterans' demands (that they be permitted to enlist in the Yemeni army and be granted greater freedom to act in South Yemen against the Socialists), fighting broke out between the government and Afghan veterans in July 1994.²¹⁹ The government defeated the militants and either expelled or arrested them from Yemen, but those militants who escaped went on to form the Islamic Aden-Abyan Army. This group established training camps in the Abyan province in the southern Yemen, in order to better expel American and British presence from Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula.²²⁰ Bin Laden also used Yemen to house some of al-Qaeda's business fronts and safe-houses, which were used as financial, logistical and passport-forgery centers. There were also several major al-Qaeda training camps in Yemen until the Yemeni government dismantled them in the late

²¹⁷ Robert F. Worth, "Yemen's Deals with Jihadists Unsettle the U.S.," *The New York Times*, January 28, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/28/world/middleeast/28qaeda.html?pagewanted=print>.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Maliach, *The Global Jihad*.

²²⁰ Ibid.

1990s.²²¹ Some analysts estimate that Yemenis make up the third largest national representation in al-Qaeda, after Egyptians and Algerians.²²²

In December 1992, militants in Yemen affiliated with al-Qaeda carried out al-Qaeda's first anti-US attack.²²³ They bombed a hotel in Aden used as a stopping point for U.S. troops on their way to Somalia during Operation Restore Hope, part of the UN effort to address the Somalia humanitarian crisis.²²⁴ While the attack failed, it was a precursor for the formation of the al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic Army of Aden-Abyan (IAA) in the late 1990s. On December 28, 1998, IAA and other al-Qaeda affiliates kidnapped sixteen Western tourists in the Yemeni governorate of Abyan. With al-Qaeda Central backing, IAA attempted to attack the USS *The Sullivans* in January 2000, but failed.²²⁵

IAA's first successful, high-profile attack against the United States occurred on October 12, 2000 when an IAA suicide bomber drove a skiff laden with 270kg of C-4 explosives into the U.S. Navy destroyer USS *Cole* in the Aden harbor.²²⁶ IAA later released a communiqué claiming responsibility for the attack, which killed seventeen U.S. sailors and injured thirty-nine others. Eighty percent of the *mujahideen* involved in the attack were Saudis of Yemeni origin, including the mastermind behind the attack, Abdul al-Rahim al-Nashiri.²²⁷

There were a number of foiled terrorist attacks in 2001 and 2002. In July 2001, eight Yemeni veterans of the anti-Soviet *jihād* in the 1980s were arrested for plotting to

²²¹ *Terrorism Havens: Yemen*, Backgrounder (Council on Foreign Relations).

²²² Jonathan Schanzer, "Yemen's War on Terror," Foreign Policy Research Institute's *Orbis* (Summer 2004), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/print.php?template=C06&CID=780>, 522-523.

²²³ Scheuer, "Yemen's Role in al-Qaeda's Strategy."

²²⁴ Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 129.

²²⁵ Schanzer, "Yemen's War on Terror," 523-525.

²²⁶ Akiva J. Lorenz, "Al Qaeda's Maritime Threat". International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (April 2007), <http://www.ict.org.il/apage/11847.php>.

²²⁷ Scheuer, "Yemen's Role in al-Qaeda's Strategy."

attack the U.S. embassy in Sana'a.²²⁸ The next high-profile IAA operation was the October 6, 2002 attack on the French *Limburg* oil tanker in the port of al-Dabbah. One civilian was killed and seventeen others were injured. As a result, the Yemeni government began more intense cooperation with the United States in counterterrorism efforts. Throughout late 2002, however, IAA continued their attacks on Western targets, trying to shoot down a U.S. oil company helicopter in November and gunning down three American missionaries at a hospital in December.²²⁹

Over the next several years, there were several attempted attacks on Western interests by different al-Qaeda affiliate groups in Yemen. However, counterterrorism operations continued, and effectively contained militants affiliated with al-Qaeda. State police arrested many of the *mujahideen* and released some of them in amnesty initiatives which required their agreement not to carry out attacks on Yemeni soil.

The commencement of domestic terrorism in Yemen can be attributed to a number of important factors besides the presence of thousands of Afghan veterans: the perceived threat of Western military targets, the worsening domestic economic situation, and the proliferation of radical religious schools and institutes in Yemen.

Although the United States has had a strong military presence in the region historically, the modern state of Yemen has never hosted a permanent U.S. military base. American and other Western powers use Yemen's ports as refueling stations, but this is a typical international practice that does not entail foreign occupation. Yet despite the absence of any significant Western military presence in Yemen, the overwhelming majority of domestic terrorist attacks have been aimed at Western targets.

²²⁸ *Terrorism Havens: Yemen*, Background (Council on Foreign Relations, December 2005), <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9369/#4>.

²²⁹ Schanzer, "Yemen's War on Terror," 526.

As a result of the 1990-1991 Gulf War, relations between Yemen and Western democracies were strained until the mid-1990s, when the West decided to reestablish its ties to Yemen, and encouraged the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to extend financial assistance to Yemen.²³⁰ However, Western military targets were still to be found in Yemen throughout this time, and were directly targeted in domestic terrorist attacks. Al-Qaeda's first attack, aimed at U.S. troops stopping in Aden on their way to Somalia during Operation Restore Hope, occurred in 1992, before these relations had been publicly restored. The first successful attack by the domestic terror group called the Islamic Aden-Abyan Army was against a U.S. Navy destroyer. The United States had begun using Aden as a refueling stop for the U.S. Navy in 1999.²³¹ From 1999 until the bombing of the *USS Cole* in 2000, approximately two dozen U.S. Navy warships had stopped to refuel in Aden. After the *Cole* bombing, the United States suspended its refueling operations in Yemen.²³²

In 2001, the United States renewed its commitment to provide financial aid to Yemen and relations between the two countries were further strengthened following the September 11, 2001 attack.²³³ Since then Yemen has cooperated with the United States in counterterrorism efforts and the U.S. government has provided Yemen with military, diplomatic and financial assistance. However, both Yemen and the United States have made efforts to conceal their cooperation in order to prevent domestic anger. In 2002, rather than stationing any forces in Yemen, the United States moved 800 special

²³⁰ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Suspends All Refueling in Yemen for Security Inquiry," *The New York Times*, October 16, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/16/world/us-suspends-all-refueling-in-yemen-for-security-inquiry.html?sec=&spon=>.

²³³ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

operations troops to Djibouti, where they could be rapidly deployed against al-Qaeda forces in Yemen.²³⁴

When Yemen adopted a pro-Iraq position and opposed Western intervention in the 1990-1991 Gulf War, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait cut diplomatic ties with Yemen, halting financial aid and, in the case of Saudi Arabia, expelling nearly 1 million Yemeni workers.²³⁵ The strain of thousands of returning workers who were now unemployed, in addition to the loss of revenue from the migrant workers' return, only intensified Yemen's already poor economic situation, struggling from unification costs. As a result of its dire economic situation, the Yemeni government could not provide adequate funding to its public education system. In contrast, Saudi-funded Salafi schools flourished during this time, particularly in impoverished rural areas. The Iman University, for example, was established by al-Zindani in 1993, with Saudi funds.

An important part of the Yemeni government's successful counterterrorism strategy in 2002 was to shut down hundreds of these religious schools and introduce an ideological reeducation program through dialogue with Islamic scholars. In early 2002, President Saleh had expelled more than 100 foreign teachers and students without proper visas from private religious institutions, including Dar al-Hadith schools and al-Iman University.²³⁶ The government targeted these schools in particular since a number of their students had been directly involved in domestic terrorist attacks. Ali al-Jarallah and Abed Abdul al-Razak Kamal, the al-Qaeda affiliated militants responsible for the murder

²³⁴ Michael Smith, "US Special Forces in Djibouti as 'Stepping Stone' to Yemen," *The Telegraph*, September 18, 2002, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/djibouti/1407680/US-special-forces-in-Djibouti-as-stepping-stone-to-Yemen.html>.

²³⁵ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

²³⁶ Sachs, "A Nation Challenged."

of an opposition politician and three Baptist missionaries in late 2002, were products of the Iman University.²³⁷

Yemeni Foreign Fighters in Iraq: 2003-Present

Yemenis have continued to travel abroad as foreign fighters since 2003. In 2008, reports indicated that Yemeni *mujahideen* could be found in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Lebanon, with the largest numbers in Iraq.²³⁸ Yemeni citizens have been involved in the insurgency movement in Iraq against U.S.-led forces since the beginning of the U.S. occupation in 2003. They make up the third largest source of foreign fighters, and have acted as suicide bombers on a number of occasions. In 2006, a study conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies discovered that 17% of foreign fighters in Iraq were Yemeni nationals, and al-Thawry newspaper reported that 20 suicide bombings in Iraq were perpetrated by Yemeni nationals.²³⁹

Estimates for the number of Yemeni foreign fighters in Iraq have varied over the years. In 2005, the number of Yemeni militants traveling to fight in Iraq reached 2,000, according to local media.²⁴⁰ The National Security Assessment Project made its own estimate of foreign fighters in Iraq in 2005, putting the total number of foreign fighters in Iraq at three thousand, 17% of which were Yemeni (500 foreign fighters).²⁴¹ By 2007, Yemeni media were only reporting an estimated 1,289 Yemeni militants in Iraq, 550 of

²³⁷ Johnsen, "Yemen's Al-Iman University."

²³⁸ *Country Profile: Yemen* (Library of Congress- Federal Research Division).

²³⁹ Maliach, *The Global Jihad - The Yemeni Connection*.

²⁴⁰ "Al-Tajammu: Main Headlines," *Yemen Times*, April 25, 2007, <http://yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=1044&p=press&a=3>.

²⁴¹ Nawaf Obaid and Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Militants in Iraq: Assessment and Kingdom's Response* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 19, 2005), http://www.csis.org/index.php?option=com_csis_pubs&task=view&id=1442.

which were from Sana'a.²⁴² Other Yemeni media reports in early 2007 revised that statement to say that 1,000 Yemenis had traveled to fight in Iraq between 2003 and 2006.²⁴³ In 2008, Clint Watts issued a report based on data on foreign fighters from the Sinjar records, Guantanamo Bay, and the 9/11 hijackers. This report found that Yemen was still the third largest source of foreign fighters, producing four to eight times as many foreign fighters as the other twenty countries analyzed in the study.²⁴⁴

Information on Yemeni foreign fighters reveals several trends: a disproportionate amount of foreign fighters are young men coming from Sana'a and many of them are religious students, with a number of the foreign fighters coming from the Iman University in particular. Local media reported that most of the recruits for *jihad* in Iraq were young men under the age of 20.²⁴⁵ In 2007, Yemeni media also reported that approximately 50% of Yemeni militants in Iraq were from Sana'a, and the Mosaik district in particular, known for producing religious extremists.²⁴⁶ A study conducted in 2008 confirmed that Sana'a produces slightly more than 50% of the foreign fighter population while making up only 5% of the country's population, adding that Aden produces 15% of the fighter population while making up only 2% of the country's population.²⁴⁷ This data indicates that militant recruitment is largely an urban phenomenon and that foreign fighters consist of newly-urbanized youth. It also corresponds with the fact that both al-Iman University and a branch of the Dar al-Hadith schools are established in Sana'a.

²⁴² "Yemeni Fighters Dying in Iraq," *Yemen Times*, January 28, 2007, <http://www.yementimes.com/article.shtml?i=1019&p=local&a=1>.

²⁴³ Nasser Arrabyee, "Scores of Yemeni Men Died in Iraq Fighting Jihad," *Gulfnews*, January 24, 2007, <http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/01/24/10098958.html>.

²⁴⁴ Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*.

²⁴⁵ Arrabyee, "Scores of Yemeni Men".

²⁴⁶ "Yemeni Fighters Dying in Iraq," *Yemen Times*.

²⁴⁷ Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*.

A study conducted in 2008 found that, in comparison to other countries producing foreign fighters, many more Yemenis were involved in *jihad* through religion. Several of the foreign fighters described themselves as religious students, while others mentioned that they had been recruited through the mosque. This study concluded that a majority of those foreign fighters involved in Iraq were either students or unemployed, or were working as common laborers; 60% of foreign fighters in Iraq were either students or unemployed.²⁴⁸ Several reports in 2007 also indicated that a number of graduates from the Iman University had traveled to Iraq as foreign fighters.²⁴⁹ Local security sources confirmed this fact, noting that many of the militants traveling to fight in Iraq had been previously registered students at the Iman University.²⁵⁰

Current Wave of Terrorism in Yemen: 2006-Present

Nadia al-Sakkaf, editor of the Yemen Times said, “There was a deal [with the jihadists] but it's not working any more. Now there are just fanatics who want to be hired by al-Qaeda, people who have come back from Iraq or Afghanistan and have no skills, who are not integrated into society and have no education. They are brainwashed. Jihad is all they know.”²⁵¹ Domestic terrorism in Yemen has been increasing in intensity since 2006, when the organization al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY) was founded by escapees from a Yemeni prison, where they were being held for charges of terrorism committed in the early 2000s. Although the United States has been providing military assistance to Yemen since 2001, there are still no foreign troops, American or otherwise, based permanently in Yemen. Yet a large percentage of AQY’s attacks have been against Western targets,

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Zand, “Of Scholars and Zealots.”

²⁵⁰ “Al-Tajammu: Main Headlines,” *Yemen Times*.

²⁵¹ Ian Black, “Yemen Terrorism: Soft Approach to Jihadists Starts to Backfire as Poverty Fuels Extremism,” *The Guardian*, July 30, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/30/yemen.alqaida>.

including Western tourists and embassies. What has caused this resurgence of domestic terrorism in Yemen? After describing the pattern of the current wave of terrorism in Yemen, I will offer a causal explanation for this resurgence.

In February 2006, 23 prisoners escaped from the Political Security Organization prison in Yemen. Two of those escaped prisoners went on to create a new al-Qaeda inspired terrorist group, al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY), which carried out its first attack less than a year later.²⁵² AQY is often referred to as the “younger generation” of al-Qaeda militants in Yemen- those who have fought in Iraq and now refuse to dialogue with the Yemeni government as militants had before them. The group’s self-professed goals, which identify their ideology as Salafi-*jihadi*, are to secure the release of al-Qaeda members from imprisonment, lift government restrictions to allow travel to Iraq, end the Yemeni government’s cooperation with the enemies of Islam (the United States and its allies), and return the country to Shariah law.²⁵³ The group AQY has adopted a number of other names as well, including the “Yemen Soldiers Brigade,” “Islamic Jihad,” and “Al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula.” After merging with the Saudi al-Qaeda organization, AQY adopted the name “al-Qaedas of Jihad in the Peninsula of the Arabs” in January 2009.²⁵⁴ In an interview with the group’s leader, al-Wahayshi, aired on al-Jazeera on January 27, al-Wahayshi justifies his goal to strike “all Crusader interests” in

²⁵² Gregory D. Johnsen, “Tracking Yemen’s 23 Escaped Jihadi Operatives – Part 1 & 2,” The Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Monitor*, 5, no. 18 (September 27, 2007).

<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373680>

<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373709>

²⁵³ Gregory D. Johnsen and Brian O’Neill, “Yemen Attack Reveals Struggle Among al-Qaeda’s Ranks,” The Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Focus*, 4, no.22 (July 10, 2007),

<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373533>.

²⁵⁴ Fred Burton and Scott Stewart, *Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Desperation or New Life?* (Stratfor Global Intelligence, January 28, 2009),

http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090128_al_qaeda_arabian_peninsula_desperation_or_new_life.

the peninsula by pointing out that “Crusades” against Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia have been launched from bases in the Arabian Peninsula.²⁵⁵

Operations conducted by AQY have targeted oil installations and Western tourists and embassies in particular. Al-Qaeda in Yemen’s first major attempted attack targeted an oil exporting port in Hadhramout and an oil refinery and gas producing facility in Marib on September 15, 2006. Security guards were able to detonate four explosive-laden cars and kill the two assailants before they reached the target.²⁵⁶ AQY has carried out a number of operations against oil installations in Yemen since then, of which the following are most prominent. In early April 2008, AQY carried out attacks against a French oil pipeline and a Chinese oilfield.²⁵⁷ A few days later, two bombs were planted near the Sana’a headquarters of the Canadian oil firm Nexen Petroleum.²⁵⁸

Al-Qaeda in Yemen first targeted a Western embassy when it launched a mortar attack on the U.S. embassy in Sana’a in March 2008. The mortar missed its target and hit the Seventh of July school for girls nearby. Thirteen schoolgirls and five soldiers were wounded in the attacks.²⁵⁹ In May 2008, AQY attacked the Italian embassy in Sana’a with two mortars.²⁶⁰ The U.S. embassy in Sana’a was again targeted by AQY on September 17, 2008, with two suicide car bombs.²⁶¹

Attacks targeting Western tourists began in July 2007, when AQY used a car bomb to attack a group of Spanish tourists. The tourists had just finished their tour of the

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Johnsen, “Tracking Yemen’s 23.”

²⁵⁷ Mohammed al-Kibsi, “Al-Qaeda Claim Attack on Yemeni Oil Facilities,” *Yemen Observer*, April 5, 2008, <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10014020.html>.

²⁵⁸ Nasser Arrabyee, “Second Blast within a Week, Americans Evacuated from Embassy,” *Yemen Observer* (April 10, 2008), <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10014048.html>.

²⁵⁹ “13 Hurt in Yemen Attack: U.S. Embassy Thought Target,” *CNN* (March 18, 2008), <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/03/18/yemen.blast/>.

²⁶⁰ “Qaeda Claims Attack on Italian Embassy in Yemen,” *Reuters*.

²⁶¹ Mikkelsen, “Yemen Attack Shows Qaeda.”

ancient Balqis temple in Marib. Eight Spanish tourists and two Yemenis were killed as a result of the explosion. The next major operation against Western tourists occurred on January 18, 2008. Four of its gunmen opened fire on two female Belgian tourists and their two Yemeni drivers in the Hadhramout region, killing all four and wounding two other people. Other AQY operations also targeted Western residential complexes. In April 2008, AQY launched a mortar attack on an American residential complex in Sana'a that also housed other Westerners. No one was injured by the blasts, which only broke a few windows.²⁶²

The AQY organization's most recent attack killed four South Korean tourists. On March 15, 2009, a group of South Korean tourists at a tourist site in the Hadhramout were attacked by a suicide bomber.²⁶³ Another attempted terrorist operation targeting a convoy of South Korean officials and bereaved family members in Sana'a failed three days later.²⁶⁴ AQY claimed that it had targeted the South Koreans because of South Korea's role in the U.S.-led War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan (South Korea once had the third-largest amount of foreign soldiers stationed in Iraq, until December 2008).²⁶⁵

The core membership of al-Qaeda in Yemen was initially made up of the prisoners who escaped the Political Security Organization Prison in February 2006, but the majority of members are young men who have subsequently joined AQY. Many of the members of AQY also have had experience fighting abroad in Afghanistan, Somalia

²⁶² Mohamed Sudam, "Al Qaeda Says behind Yemen Attack: Yemeni Official," *Reuters* (April 7, 2008), <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSL0747029920080407>.

²⁶³ "4 South Koreans Die in Bombing at Fort in Yemen," *The Associated Press*, March 16, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/16/world/middleeast/16yemen.html>.

²⁶⁴ "Fresh Attack on Koreans in Yemen," *BBC*, March 18, 2009, sec. Middle East, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7949961.stm.

²⁶⁵ "Qaeda Says Hit Koreans in Yemen over U.S. Ties-Web," *Reuters*, March 27, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/featuredCrisis/idUSLR144076>.

and Iraq. Finally, a majority of AQY membership is Yemeni, although there are a number of foreign militants involved in the organization, including an increasing amount of Saudi extremists. It is important to note that many of the members of AQY were born in Saudi Arabia to migrant Yemeni workers, and may have received education in Saudi Arabia, which they carried back to Yemen.

In the wake of the suicide attack on South Korean tourists in March 2009, the Yemeni government released a list of 12 Yemeni males who allegedly had been “recruited and trained by al-Qaeda to carry out suicide bombings in the country.”²⁶⁶ The men on the list were between the ages of 18 and 29.²⁶⁷ Local media reports in March 2009 also indicated that AQY had been recruiting young men less than 18 years old in particular for its recent terror activities.²⁶⁸ A specialist on insurgency in Yemen, Gregory Johnsen, reported in an interview that al-Qaeda in Yemen does receive an amount of popular domestic support, particularly from disaffected youth and other segments of the population.²⁶⁹ He also mentioned that the group’s e-magazine *Sada al-Malahem* is very popular, and copies of it are often downloaded off the internet, printed, and then passed around the population.

As has been described previously, youth in Yemen are receiving their educations from a variety of sources, including the weak public system and radical religious schools, but most of them are not being taught marketable skills and are unable to secure employment, leaving them vulnerable to recruitment for religious terrorism. Although

²⁶⁶ Abdul-Aziz Oudah and Nasser Arrabyee, “Security Forces Hunt 12 Young Suicide Bombers,” *Yemen Observer*, March 21, 2009, <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10015995.html>.

²⁶⁷ “Yemen Offers Reward to Help Track Down Militants,” *Reuters*, March 19, 2009, <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LJ581693.htm>.

²⁶⁸ “Al-Qaeda Recruits Young in Yemen,” *Saba Net (Yemen news agency)*, March 25, 2009, <http://www.sabanews.net/en/news179280.htm>.

²⁶⁹ Gregory D. Johnsen, telephone interview, March 9, 2009.

the Yemeni government has made efforts to close down unlicensed religious institutions since 2001, an official government study found that there were still approximately 4,000 religious schools operating in Yemen in December 2008, 20% of which still lack any government observation or monitoring.²⁷⁰ In the wake of the March 2009 attacks on South Korean tourists, the Yemeni Minister of the Interior said there were a number of religious schools and institutes that “incite terrorism, violence and the killing of tourists” still in operation in the country, blaming them in part for the terrorism.²⁷¹

Many of the members of AQY have had experience fighting abroad in Afghanistan, Iraq or Somalia. The previous sections of this chapter showed how many of the recruits for *jihād* in Afghanistan and Iraq had been recruited at religious schools or institutes, and at the Iman University in particular. Al-Qaeda in Yemen was then able to recruit a number of these militants upon their return to Yemen, because they had already been radicalized and had valuable experience in undertaking terrorist attacks.

These skills are so desirable that Al-Qaeda in Yemen has also sent a number of its members to be trained abroad in Afghanistan, Iraq or Somalia. AQY has been accused of funneling militants to fight in Iraq on numerous occasions.²⁷² In January 2009, al-Qaeda in Yemen released a statement claiming it had sent over 300 Yemenis affiliated with al-Qaeda to wage *jihād* in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia in 2008.²⁷³ The suicide bomber behind the March 2009 attack on South Korean tourists was an 18-year old who had been trained in Somalia.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ “Twenty Percent of Religious Schools in Yemen Unobserved: Report,” *Saba Net*.

²⁷¹ Oudah and Arrabyee, “Security Forces Hunt 12 Young Suicide Bombers.”

²⁷² Gregory D. Johnson, “Prosecuting Terrorism: Yemen’s War on Islamist Militancy,” *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 9 (May 4, 2006), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=759](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=759).

²⁷³ Zaid al-Alaya’a, “Over 300 Yemenis Volunteered for Jihad in 2008, al-Qaeda Statement,” *Yemen Observer*, January 24, 2009, <http://www.yobserver.com/front-page/10015613.html>.

²⁷⁴ “Al-Qaeda Recruits Young in Yemen,” *Saba Net*.

As Saudi al-Qaeda members have been filtering into Yemen since mid-2008, they are bringing their radical religious education with them to AQY. In March 2009, Yemeni security forces listed 116 suspects being sought, including 50 Saudi citizens, for involvement in terrorism within Yemen's borders. Many of these Saudi citizens had previously been included on a similar Saudi list of individuals wanted for terrorism-related charges.²⁷⁵

Conclusion

While numerous articles have pointed out the importance of religious schooling in producing extremism and support for terrorism, no empirical study has yet been conducted to examine the relationship between radicalization and the structure and accessibility of education in Yemen. This case study suggests that the weak and limited structure of the public education system in Yemen and the prevalence of radical religious institutions in its absence produce students lacking marketable skills who are unable to secure employment. Central government authority, and hence public education, does not reach youth in impoverished rural areas or regions with difficult terrain. Education for these youth is instead offered through private religious schooling, which fails to prepare its students for employment in the job market and, in the case of radical religious institutes, also endows them with a radical ideology, both of which make them vulnerable to recruitment for religious terrorism.

Evidence from the case study supports this theory. In the 1970s, Saudi-funded radical religious schools were established throughout North Yemen and in the 1980s, almost all of the Yemeni volunteers for *jihad* against the Soviets in Afghanistan came

²⁷⁵ Oudah and Arrabyee, "Security Forces Hunt 12 Young Suicide Bombers."

from North Yemen. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, who was responsible for launching these schools across the region, was also a recruiter and religious guide for these Yemeni volunteers in Afghanistan. After the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, many of the Arab veterans returned to Yemen, bringing along with them a Salafi-jihadi ideology. At the same time, religious institutions were flourishing, particularly in impoverished rural areas, as the public education system faced serious difficulties because of numerous economic strains. One of the religious institutions established in the 1990s has produced both domestic terrorists in the early 2000s, and foreign fighters in Iraq more recently. Although the Yemeni government was able to temporarily suspend domestic terrorism in 2003 by shutting down a number of these schools among other things, private religious schooling has continued to grow into 2009. The Yemeni government has attributed the most recent wave of domestic terrorism to the continued existence of these radical religious institutions.

CASE STUDY:

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

“All the Kuwaiti people are against terrorism and its destructive actions. [...] Those who call themselves radicals are nothing more than criminals and deviants.”
- Abdullah Fadli, a Kuwaiti Salafi²⁷⁶

Pape’s theory of foreign occupation argues that foreign military presence by forces of a different religion than its host country causes terrorism. The large numbers of U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s and early 2000s contributed significantly to Saudi domestic terrorism. The Kuwaiti state has allowed U.S. troops to be stationed and operate freely on its territory at astoundingly higher levels than has ever been seen in Saudi Arabia, but has experienced no significant domestic terrorism to speak of.

Following the U.S.-led liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in 1991, the United States and Kuwait signed a defense agreement that allowed U.S. troops to be stationed on Kuwaiti territory.²⁷⁷ In 2002, ten thousand U.S. troops were stationed in Kuwait as part of this agreement.²⁷⁸ Prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the United States had 100,000 troops stationed in Kuwait, ready to be deployed.²⁷⁹ Following the 2003 U.S. invasion, the United States decreased the amount of troops stationed in Kuwait to 37,500 troops and military contractors for supporting operations in Iraq.²⁸⁰ Kuwait

²⁷⁶ Nicholas Blanford, “Among Kuwait's Salafis, a Rejection of Violence,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 16, 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0216/p07s01-wome.html>.

²⁷⁷ “Kuwait to Revise its School Curriculum,” *The Associated Press*, November 28, 2002, <http://www.aljazeeraah.info/News%20archives/2002%20News%20archives/Nov%202002%20News/Nov%2028,%202002%20News.htm>.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ “U.S. Has 100,000 Troops in Kuwait,” *CNN*, February 18, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/18/sprj.irq.deployment/>.

²⁸⁰ Michael Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*, Policy Watch (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 11, 2005), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2253>.

continues to be used as a transit point for large numbers of U.S. troops before being deployed to Iraq. If this is the case, then why has terrorism in Kuwait remained so limited? And furthermore, why did the series of attacks on U.S. troops occur before the increase in U.S. military presence in Kuwait rather than after?

In this chapter, I argue that the case of Kuwait offers a sharp contrast to the cases of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. While education systems in Saudi Arabia and Yemen are major contributors to religious terrorism originating from and occurring within these countries, the Kuwaiti education system serves as a bulwark against religious terrorism. The Kuwaiti education system is well-developed and freely accessible, preventing the spread of private religious educational institutions, unlike the case of Yemen. What religious education exists is well-monitored by the government's Ministry of Education and is generally moderate in nature, promoting conservative social values instead of violent, radical ideologies.

In the first section of this case study, I will discuss the structure and accessibility of the education system in Kuwait and how it prevents students from becoming involved in religious terrorism. I will then describe the content of the public education system and the nature of its religious material and how this aspect of Kuwait education also limits students' involvement in religious terrorism. I will conclude the education section of this case study by discussing the effects of the Kuwaiti education system: employability and religious studies students' involvement in moderate religious movements rather than radical religious terrorism. Finally, I will examine the patterns of Kuwaiti participation in *jihad* movements abroad and the scale of domestic terrorism experienced by the

country. This data will support the hypothesis that Kuwait's education system works as a defensive measure against religious terrorism.

Kuwait's Exemplary Education System

The education systems in Saudi Arabia and Yemen cause certain students to receive higher concentrations of radical religious education and fail to acquire employable skills. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the structure of the education system is responsible for this process, as it is bifurcated between scientific and literary tracks, and poorly performing students are forced into the literary track, which is heavily religious in content and neglects to endow students with marketable skills like those received by their colleagues in the scientific track. In the case of Yemen, the inaccessibility and poor quality of the public education system is causing students in rural and tribal areas to receive their educations at private religious schools, many of which contain radical religious curricula and also fails to provide students with job-relevant skills. These students in Saudi Arabia and Yemen go on to face serious difficulties in acquiring a job and many of them turn to religious terrorism while unemployed.

Kuwait's well-developed and highly accessible education system and, more importantly, its lack of radical religious content prevent Kuwaiti students from becoming highly involved in religious terrorism. As such, Kuwait's education system is a model to be emulated in preventing high levels of Islamic radicalization.

The Structure and Accessibility of Education in Kuwait

Kuwait has a well-developed and highly accessible education system, free and compulsory for children aged 6 through 14. The state even goes as far as to provide school meals, books, uniforms, transportation and medical attention in addition to

covering enrollment costs. In 2008, Kuwait was ranked 33 out of 177 countries on the Human Development Education Index, in comparison to Saudi Arabia, ranked 61, and Yemen, ranked 153 out of 177.²⁸¹ The accessibility and high quality of Kuwaiti education prevents an alternative system of private religious schooling from arising. It also gives students beneficial educations that increase their employability.

The public education system in Kuwait is divided into four categories: general, vocational, religious, and special education for adult literacy and the handicapped. All types of school in Kuwait begin with four years of primary education. Following primary schooling, those students in the general education program go on to four more years of intermediate and then another four years of secondary schooling, during which, students go into one of two tracks: science or non-science.²⁸² Both of these tracks receive the same amount of religious education, and the differences in their curriculum will be discussed in the next section. There is an alternative structure of general education at the secondary level, which was introduced in 1978. This system is called the “unit system” and instead of dividing students into the science and non-science tracks, gives students eight different options of subjects to study.²⁸³

Higher education is provided by Kuwait University primarily, in addition to applied colleges and private post-secondary colleges and universities, such as the American University of Kuwait and the Gulf University for Science and Technology. In order to enroll at Kuwait University or the applied colleges, students need only graduate

²⁸¹ *Kuwait*, 2007/2008 Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme), http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_KWT.html.

²⁸² Ismail Safwat, *System of Education in Kuwait*, Working Paper, PIER World Education Series (Projects for International Education Research, 1993), <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED399866>.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

with a score of 50% total and in each individual subject from secondary school. Applied education is sponsored by the Public Authority of Applied Education and Training, and is divided into the College of Basic Education for training teachers, the College of Business Studies, the College of Health Sciences, and the College of Technical Studies. Kuwait University was established in 1966, and offers a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Sciences in a number of different majors.²⁸⁴

There are also a number of private schools in Kuwait that operate under government supervision through the Ministry of Education. These private schools were originally established in order to accommodate foreign workers and their families, who are not entitled to receive free education in Kuwait.²⁸⁵ There are several categories of private education, including: Arabic private schools, foreign private schools (British, American, Indian, etc.), and cultural institutes specializing in training, vocational and career studies.²⁸⁶

Public education in Kuwait is widely accessible. Eighty-seven percent of school-aged children were attending primary school in 1999, and 83% were attending in 2006. In 2006, 91% of children were completing a full course of primary school. Both youth and adult literacy rates in Kuwait are more than 10% higher than the regional average.²⁸⁷

The Content of Education in Kuwait

School curricula in Kuwait does contain mandatory religious education at every level, however, this religious material is largely focused on conservative social values

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ "Ministry of Education," *Kuwait Info*, 2009, http://www.kuwait-info.com/a_state_system/ministry_education.asp.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ "Education in Kuwait," *UNESCO Institute for Statistics*, 2006, http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=4140.

rather than radical political ideologies. Mainstream Islamists of a moderate nature have been closely involved with education in the past decades, but the vast majority of them have consistently denounced religious violence and terrorism.

Although students in Kuwait may be divided between the science and non-science tracks, the religious content of their education is the same and is similarly concentrated in both tracks. The curriculum at the primary level is the same in all categories of public education, apart from special education. It consists of Arabic language, Islamic studies, mathematics, social studies, physical education, music and arts. At the intermediate level, which last for four years, students in general education study the same subjects as they did at the primary level, in addition to civics, applied studies, and English language. The secondary level of general education also lasts for four years and is divided into two tracks during the third year: the science and the non-science track.²⁸⁸

For the first two years of secondary education, all students study Islamic studies, Arabic, French and English language, mathematics, sciences, social studies, art and computer studies. The amount of time spent on Arabic and Islamic studies is the same for both tracks; the only difference between the two tracks is that those students in the science track study mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry while their non-science schoolmates study history, geography, psychology, and logic and philosophy. Students in the vocational school system also study Islamic studies, Arabic and English Language, social studies, mathematics and sciences, in addition to their specialized technical or vocational classes.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Safwat, *System of Education in Kuwait*.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

Religious education in Kuwait requires 8 years of study after the 4 years of primary school, divided into intermediary and secondary education. Slightly more than 50% of class time at the intermediary level is devoted to Islamic studies and Arabic language. At the secondary level, roughly two-thirds of instruction is devoted to Islamic studies and Arabic language. Students enrolled in religious schools also study English, mathematics, social studies, and sciences.²⁹⁰

Although religious studies are included throughout the state curriculum and students have the opportunity to enroll in religious schools, the religious content of Kuwaiti education is primarily non-radical in nature. Islamists have exercised a considerable amount of influence over the education system, but their major concerns have focused on conservative societal values, such as gender segregation in school, rather than radical political campaigns to engage in violence.

In the late 1970s, there was a movement to Islamize Kuwait as Islamists became part of the Ministry of Education, where they encouraged the growth of Islamic studies and influenced which texts were being taught in public schools.²⁹¹ In 1981, Islamization gained speed when Islamists won elections for parliamentary seats and joined with tribal leaders to promote their political goals.²⁹² There were three dominant groups of Islamists involved in Kuwaiti parliament in the late 1990s: The Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the Islamic Popular Alliance (IPA), and the Islamic National Alliance. The ICM and IPA were Sunni organizations focused on reducing corruption and encouraging Islamic values and did not articulate any intentions towards radical reform. On the

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Mary Ann Tetreault, "Frankenstein's Lament in Kuwait," *Foreign Policy In Focus*, A Global Affairs Commentary (November 29, 2001), <http://www.fpiif.org/pdf/gac/0111kuwait.pdf>.

²⁹² Ibid.

contrary, the ICM was devoted to preserving the traditional social order and creating a more socially conservative state.

The issue of gender segregation in education has been a consistent source of controversy in Kuwait. In 1996, Islamists and conservatives in Kuwait's parliament passed a law requiring males and females to be separated at Kuwait University and other institutions of higher learning.²⁹³ In 2000, this law was extended to private universities as well, and in 2008, a senior liberal MP received a death threat in response to his proposed amendment of these two laws enforcing gender segregation at universities.²⁹⁴

Mainstream Islamists have also directly interfered in school curricula on a number of occasions, although their interference was not related to violence or terrorism. For example, in 2007, the Ministry of Education decided to remove Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the high school curriculum to appease Islamists.²⁹⁵ Article 18 states that everyone has the right to freedom of religion, including the freedom to change his or her religious beliefs. Islamic studies textbooks also teach Islam from a Sunni interpretation and have included passages declaring some Shi'a religious practices as heretical.²⁹⁶ In 2008, Shi'a leaders called on the Ministry of Education to remove these references, and a governmental committee was formed to examine this issue.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ "Supporter of Co-Education in Kuwait Receives Death Threat," *AME Info*, February 7, 2008, <http://www.ameinfo.com/146026.html>.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ *Kuwaiti Columnist: Interference of Religious Groups in Curricula Damages Education*, Special Dispatch (The Middle East Media Research Institute, March 2, 2007), <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP148607>.

²⁹⁶ *International Religious Freedom Report 2008- Kuwait* (Kuwait City: U.S. Department of State), <http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/policy-news/irfr.html>.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

Westernized liberals in Kuwait have criticized Islamic studies textbooks in the state education system for encouraging religious extremism.²⁹⁸ They also pointed out that teachers at state-run religious schools were coming from very conservative religious groups such as the Social Reform Society.²⁹⁹ However, examination by the media reveals a large difference between religious textbook content in Kuwait and religious content in Saudi textbooks: Kuwaiti textbooks do espouse Islam as the “only religion that leads to happiness in this world and the afterlife,” but do not incite violence against other religious groups or the West, as do Saudi textbooks.³⁰⁰ Absolute statements on religious legitimacy do not particularly indicate radicalism, but rather reflect the religious and social conservatism of a large portion of the Kuwaiti population.

In 2002, the Kuwaiti government announced that it would be revising the Islamic content of state education, with assistance from the newly-formed Security Strategy Committee, to “develop and modernize school curricula” in the wake of unprecedented attacks on U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait.³⁰¹ However, the education minister stressed the fact that state textbooks and curricula at the time did not promote terrorism or hatred for others. Instead, the Ministry of Education wanted to review educational materials to ensure that they could not be misinterpreted. In 2003, the Kuwaiti government removed a number of schoolteachers from the education system for propagating extremist ideology.³⁰² Reflecting the government’s goals to emphasize moderation and tolerance in

²⁹⁸ “Kuwait to Revise its School Curriculum,” *The Associated Press*.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ Brian Murphy, “Islamic Reformers Struggle to Revise School Textbooks,” *The Associated Press*, November 28, 2005, <http://www.christiansofiraq.com/reform1105.html>.

³⁰¹ “Kuwait to Revise its School Curriculum,” *The Associated Press*.

³⁰² N. Janardhan, “Kuwait Wakes up to the Face of Militant Islam,” *Terrorism Monitor* 3, no. 9 (May 6, 2005), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=159](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=159).

Islam, revised texts in 2005 stated that all religions “hate brutality.”³⁰³ In 2007, Dr. Nuriyah al-Sbeih³⁰⁴ was elected as the Kuwaiti Education Minister and she refused to wear a veil in parliamentary sessions. While she was criticized by Islamist MPs, Kuwaiti media published numerous articles in support of her right to choose whether or not to veil.³⁰⁵ In March 2009, the Kuwaiti religious authority, the Ministry of Awqaf, was making major efforts to promote moderation and dialogue.³⁰⁶

In addition to the moderate religious teachings of the Kuwait curriculum, the teaching staff holds largely moderate religious beliefs. The majority of Kuwaiti society is open and tolerant of other religions. Furthermore, most Kuwaitis have more benign views of America than do citizens of other countries in the region, and even perceive the more than 25,000 U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait as a necessary line of defense against external threats.³⁰⁷ This positive attitude towards the United States is largely a result of the United States’ role in liberating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in 1991. Another Kuwaiti Salafi said in an interview, “We support stability and it is very important for the American forces to stay for the time being.”³⁰⁸ However, despite the fact that Kuwaitis hold some of the most pro-U.S. attitude in the Gulf region, there is still considerable popular dissatisfaction with the U.S. policy towards the Palestine-Israel conflict.³⁰⁹

³⁰³ Murphy, “Islamic Reformers Struggle to Revise School Textbooks.”

³⁰⁴ Alternately transliterated as Nouriya al-Subeeh, from the original Arabic نورية الصبيح.

³⁰⁵ I. Rapoport, *Kuwaiti Education Minister Would Not Wear the Veil*, Inquiry and Analysis (The Middle East Media Research Institute, May 11, 2007), <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA35207>.

³⁰⁶ Ahmad Hawwari, “Kuwaiti Religious Authority Plays Major Role in Promoting Moderation -- Official,” *Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)*, March 8, 2009, <http://www.kuna.net.kw/NewsAgenciesPublicSite/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=1981274&Language=en>.

³⁰⁷ Blanford, “Among Kuwait's Salafis, a Rejection of Violence.”

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Tetreault, “Frankenstein's Lament in Kuwait.”

There is a minority of ultraconservatives in Kuwait who oppose the presence of non-Muslim groups in Kuwait, including a number of extremist Salafis. There are only a small amount of Salafi-jihadists in Kuwait that make up a “radical fringe” and are not only suppressed by the government, but are also criticized by both urban liberals and mainstream Islamists who are involved in parliament.³¹⁰ There have also been a number of radical Islamists who have promoted violence and *jihad*, but the Kuwaiti government has exiled these individuals or banned them from preaching. For example, Hamid bin Abdallah al-Ali, an influential Salafi-*jihadi* cleric in Kuwait and a former professor of Islamic studies at Kuwait University, was arrested and officially banned from teaching or speaking in any Kuwaiti institutions when he issued fatwas calling for *jihad* against the Kuwaiti state and other Arab government “apostates” for supporting non-Islamic countries’ aggression against Muslims in 1999.³¹¹ The majority of the Salafis in Kuwait denounce terrorism and violence.

The Effects of the Kuwaiti Education System

The Kuwait education system primarily produces employable students and in instances where religious studies students are unable to secure employment, they become involved in Islamist movements devoted to conservative social values rather than radical religious ideologies.

Unlike students in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Kuwaiti students have high employment rates, which increase with the level of education. Unemployment rates in Kuwait have remained low throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. From 1993-2004

³¹⁰ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³¹¹ Chris Heffelfinger, “Kuwaiti Cleric Hamid al-Ali: The Bridge Between Ideology and Action,” *Terrorism Monitor* 5, no. 8 (April 26, 2007), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=4112](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=4112).

unemployment in Kuwait ranged between 1-2%.³¹² Approximately 50% of unemployment was made up of those with only primary education, while those with secondary education made up only 11-13% of the unemployed from 1996 until 2001.³¹³ During this time period, those with tertiary education only made up 3% of the unemployed.³¹⁴ While unemployment did begin to rise for Kuwaitis with secondary and tertiary education in 2002, and reached a pinnacle of 7% unemployment in 2003, unemployment rates have remained relatively low overall, at 2-4%. Low unemployment rates in Kuwait are largely due to the fact that the government is able to employ around 90% of the national labor force.³¹⁵

While there are a number of students majoring in Islamic studies who are unable to obtain employment in secular fields of work because of their lack of technical or vocational skills, they represent a small minority of Kuwait's population, and are primarily concerned with social issues rather than political violence. By 2001, Islamists holding influential positions in the Ministry of Education had been able to shape the education system to produce a number of graduates with ample experience in religious studies, but lacking the skills needed to get a secular job. These young men became the primary constituency for Islamist movements because of the Islamists' stance on gender segregation and the role of women in society: young men were angry that young women were performing better than they were, so supported Islamism for its promise to segregate

³¹² *Kuwait*, World Development Indicators (The World Bank Group, 2007), <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPOQ/report.do?method=showReport>.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ "Unemployment Support for University Graduates in Kuwait," *Arab News*, March 31, 2000, <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/000331/2000033149.html>.

schools and limit women's ability to participate in the workplace because they wanted to improve their chances of success in school and later in the job market.³¹⁶

The Lack of Kuwaiti Terrorism

Kuwaitis have been involved in *jihad* movements abroad, but their numbers have been relatively low compared to other countries in the region. Furthermore, despite the substantial and consistent presence of U.S. military forces stationed in Kuwait, domestic terrorism in Kuwait has remained very limited. Even as the numbers of U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait remained high in the years following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, no terror attacks have been carried out against these forces since then.

Limited Kuwaiti Involvement in Jihad Abroad

While thousands of Saudis and Yemenis volunteered for the *jihad* against Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, only dozens of Kuwaitis did the same. Kuwaiti volunteers for *jihad* abroad in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Iraq have been limited and only make up a small minority of religious foreign fighters abroad. Kuwait has been a greater source of funding for *jihad* abroad, through private religious charities, than it has been a source of fighters.

Many Kuwaitis traveled to Afghanistan in the 1980s for *jihad*, although there were not near the level of Kuwaiti volunteers as there were Saudi and Yemeni.³¹⁷ There

³¹⁶ This is a result of the fact that during the years of early childhood, boys are given few demands or restraints while their sisters are, and girls therefore have higher self-discipline and perform better in school. Mary Ann Tétreault, *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000): 160-163.

³¹⁷ Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (Berg Publishers, 2004): 231.

were about 120 surviving Kuwaiti veterans of the 1980s anti-Soviet *jihād* in Afghanistan in 2005, and they were very closely monitored by Kuwaiti security forces.³¹⁸

After participating in the armed resistance to the Iraqi occupation forces, “scores” of Kuwaitis went on to join the *jihāds* in Chechnya, Bosnia, post-September 11 Afghanistan, and currently, Iraq.³¹⁹

In 2001, when the U.S. launched airstrikes on al-Qaeda infrastructure in Afghanistan, there were approximately 150 Kuwaitis in the al-Qaeda training camps.³²⁰ Of the 100 who survived (50 were killed in the airstrikes), many fled to Pakistan or Iran and some traveled onto Iraq after 2003, or made their way back into Kuwait.³²¹ In 2006, there were still reports coming in that Kuwaitis were found among al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan killed in clashes with American forces.³²² More recently, in March 2008, a retired Kuwaiti pop star announced his decision to renounce the “sin” of the music industry in order to join al-Qaeda and the Taliban in fighting *jihād* against foreign troops.³²³ As recent as January 2009, a Saudi al-Qaeda operative was arrested in Kuwait and admitted to having recruited 20 Kuwaiti young men to travel to Afghanistan to wage *jihād* against NATO forces.³²⁴

³¹⁸ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³¹⁹ “Kuwait to Revise its School Curriculum,” *The Associated Press*.

³²⁰ B Raman, “Jihadi Terrorism, from Iraq to Kuwait,” *Asia times*, February 24, 2005, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GB24Ak02.html.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Logan Barclift, *The Kuwaiti Factor* (The Gulf Institute, September 5, 2006), http://www.gulfinstitutet.org/artman/publish/media_articles/The_Kuwaiti_Factor_63.shtml.

³²³ “Retired Kuwaiti Pop Star Joins al-Qaeda,” *Al-Arabiya*, March 15, 2008, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/03/15/46971.html>.

³²⁴ “Kuwait: 'Suspected Saudi Al-Qaeda Recruiter Arrested',” *Adnkronos International*, January 29, 2009, <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Security/?id=3.0.2962058674>.

While Saudis are estimated to make up more than 40% of foreign fighters in Iraq, Kuwaitis make up less than 1% of the foreign fighters.³²⁵ Kuwait produces less than half as many foreign fighters in Iraq as Saudi Arabia and Yemen produce.³²⁶ However, Salafi-jihadi figures in Kuwait were able to establish a recruiting and transportation infrastructure in 2003 to send would-be *mujahideen* to Iraq through Syria.³²⁷ In July 2004, three Kuwaiti teenagers were arrested in Damascus for trying to enter Iraq illegally, and were sent back home.³²⁸ In early 2005, reports indicated that dozens of Kuwaitis had joined al-Qaeda in Iraq, and up to 11 of them had died in suicide missions.³²⁹ Also in early 2005, 22 Kuwaitis were put on trial for recruiting and transporting volunteers to Iraq.³³⁰ In 2008, a Kuwaiti Sunni extremist named Mubarak al-Bathali admitted in an interview with a local newspaper that he had personally sent Kuwaiti fighters to Iraq through Syria; he was detained by Kuwaiti security forces following the interview.³³¹ Also in 2008, the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait expressed her concern over continued Kuwaiti funding of foreign fighters in Iraq.³³²

In addition to the tens of Kuwaitis who participated in *jihad* movements abroad, there have been a few prominent Kuwaitis involved in al-Qaeda's work abroad. One of the Kuwaitis who were integral to al-Qaeda's early work is Ramzi Yousef, born in Kuwait of Pakistani descent, who became the chief bomb-maker in the 1993 World Trade

³²⁵ Diana Elias, "US Ambassador: Few Kuwaiti Fighters in Iraq," *Associated Press*, June 9, 2008, <http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/20080609/us-ambassador-few-kuwaiti-fighters-in-iraq.htm>.

³²⁶ Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*.

³²⁷ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³²⁸ Janardhan, "Kuwait Wakes up to the Face of Militant Islam."

³²⁹ Raman, "Jihadi Terrorism."

³³⁰ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³³¹ Elias, "US Ambassador: Few Kuwaiti Fighters in Iraq."

³³² *Ibid.*

Center bombing.³³³ Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, another Kuwaiti, served as a senior official spokesman for al-Qaeda, and was arrested by Iranian authorities in 2003 after pressure from Kuwait to extradite him. It is unclear whether he is still in Iranian custody or not. Finally, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the alleged mastermind behind the September 11, 2001 attacks, was born in Kuwait to Pakistani parents from Baluchistan. He studied in Kuwait until the age of 16, then joined the Muslim Brotherhood and traveled to Pakistan and the United States for study. He was captured in a safe house in Pakistan in 2003, and has been in U.S. custody since.³³⁴

Domestic Terrorism in Kuwait

Although Kuwait experienced a violent bout of Iranian-backed domestic terrorism in the early 1980s, domestic terror groups in Kuwait have remained largely unorganized and isolated. The amount of Kuwaitis intent upon engaging in religious terrorism has been described as a “very small minority.”³³⁵ This minority has been unable to carry out any serious terrorist attacks and has been largely prevented from connecting with the wider *jihadi* network and the broader al-Qaeda network or even with one another because of the tight surveillance by Kuwait security.³³⁶ The height of domestic terrorism in Kuwait since the 1980s occurred in late 2002 and early 2003 when there was a series of shootings against U.S. military targets. Since then, Kuwaiti security forces have uncovered many plans to attack government and Western targets and facilities, but none of these plans, despite their increasing level of maturity, have reached fruition.

³³³ Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe*, 71.

³³⁴ “Who's Who in al-Qaeda,” *BBC*, April 27, 2007, sec. Special Reports, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2780525.stm.

³³⁵ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

Iranian-backed domestic terrorism in Kuwait was at its peak in 1983, when Muslim extremists drove car bombs into six targets, including the U.S. and French embassies. After the Kuwaiti government arrested the extremists, Iranian-backed radicals launched another set of attacks to pressure Kuwait to release the prisoners, hijacking a Kuwaiti plane and killing two of its passengers, driving a car into the Emir's motorcade, and planting 2 bombs in Kuwaiti cafes.³³⁷ Throughout this episode, the Emir remained firm in his commitment to refuse negotiations with terrorists.

Since then, domestic terror groups have remained "scattered and isolated"- only able to form basic cells and carry out amateur attacks striking accessible targets with basic weaponry without any apparent comprehensive planning.³³⁸ The only terror activity they were able to carry out resulted in a haphazard series of shootings at U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait that led to only two deaths. This series of attacks on U.S. soldiers stationed in Kuwait occurred during the buildup to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002-2003.³³⁹ In the most fatal of the attacks, two Kuwaiti extremists, who had been trained in Afghanistan, shot U.S. Marines on Failaka island on October 8, killing one Marine and wounding another.³⁴⁰ At this time, another young Kuwaiti attempted to launch an attack on a residential complex for Western businessmen, claiming to have received his instructions through the internet from al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan.³⁴¹ However, the vast majority of their plans were successfully apprehended and prevented by Kuwaiti security forces.

³³⁷ Daniel Pipes, "Kuwait's Terrorism Policy Sets an Example," *Wall Street Journal* (November 18, 1986), <http://www.danielpipes.org/article/173>.

³³⁸ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³³⁹ Janardhan, "Kuwait Wakes up to the Face of Militant Islam."

³⁴⁰ "Kuwait to Revise its School Curriculum," *The Associated Press*.

³⁴¹ Jack Fairweather, "Kuwait's Cyber Cafes Spawn a New Young Breed of Terrorist," *The Telegraph*, December 22, 2002, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/kuwait/1416935/Kuwait-cyber-cafes-spawn-a-new-young-breed-of-terrorist.html>.

In early 2005 a sequence of raids on militant hideouts revealed a more threatening network of Kuwaiti terrorists than ever before: there was a well-developed cell structure, including a bomb-making shop in Kuwait City, and an increased interconnectedness between Kuwaiti terror cells and regional Salafist movements.³⁴² Security forces uncovered plans to target the Kuwait security agency headquarters, oil facilities, and U.S. installations. In the ensuing battles between security forces and militants, 17 Kuwaitis were arrested along with 15 other suspects.³⁴³ The terror cell, dismantled by security forces in early 2005, included Kuwaiti, Saudi, Jordanian, Yemeni nationals, as well as a number of stateless Arabs.³⁴⁴

During the same time period in early 2005, Saudi terrorists from the al-Qaeda Organization of the Arabian Peninsula were reported to be entering Kuwait and assisting with the development of domestic terror cells, and a number of domestic terror groups were found to have links to Saudi groups.³⁴⁵ These groups used a number of different names, including the “Peninsula Lion Brigades” and the “Brigade of the Two Shrines,” and the “Sharia Falcons Squadron.”³⁴⁶ However, these terror cells were never able to even come close to carrying out any violence on Kuwaiti soil.

Although the Interior Ministry of Kuwait declared a high state of alert in March 2009 after intelligence warnings about al-Qaeda threats to attack the Saudi Arabian airlines to and from Kuwait, Kuwait is considered an example in successful

³⁴² Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³⁴³ Janardhan, “Kuwait Wakes up to the Face of Militant Islam.”

³⁴⁴ Stephen Ulph, “Terrorism Accelerates in Kuwait - The Jamestown Foundation,” *Terrorism Focus* 2, no. 3 (February 2, 2005), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=27494&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=238&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=27494&tx_ttnews[backPid]=238&no_cache=1).

³⁴⁵ Knights, *Backing Kuwait's Stand against Terrorism*.

³⁴⁶ Ulph, “Terrorism Accelerates in Kuwait.”

counterterrorism to be emulated throughout the region.³⁴⁷ In addition to the education systems role as a bulwark against Islamic radicalization, the government's successful counterterrorism measures include barring radical Saudi Imams from preaching within Kuwait, blocking Islamist websites promoting violence, and seizing radical books from mosques.³⁴⁸

Conclusion

The Kuwaiti education system is a stark contrast to the education systems in Saudi Arabia and Yemen because it serves as a bulwark against religious terrorism, rather than a facilitator or contributor in the radicalization process. The well-developed and highly-accessible Kuwaiti education system allows a large percentage of youth in Kuwait to receive a good education, relative to the rest of the region. Additionally, Kuwaiti students face high employment opportunities upon graduation, which increase as their level of schooling rises. Furthermore, the moderate nature of religious content in the Kuwaiti curriculum also prevents high levels of Islamic radicalization. Only a small percentage of students who major in religious studies and lack the skills for secular jobs are left unemployed, and of these youth, a majority of them channel their dissatisfaction with their situation into support for Islamists who espouse socially conservative values, particularly in the area of gender segregation.

Tellingly, Kuwait is only a small source of religious terrorism both domestically and abroad, unlike Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Thousands of Yemenis and Saudis have traveled to Afghanistan for *jihad* and hundreds of them have gone to Iraq as foreign

³⁴⁷ "Kuwait on High Alert after Intelligence Warns of Plot against Airlines," *World Tribune*, March 4, 2009, http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2009/me_terror0185_03_04.asp.

³⁴⁸ Olivier Guitta, "Follow the Kuwaiti Example," *Middle East Times*, August 31, 2008, http://www.metimes.com/International/2008/08/31/follow_the_kuwaiti_example/1169/.

fighters, but the number of Kuwaitis involved in either of these endeavors only amounts to the dozens. Finally, only a small minority of Kuwaitis is interested in carrying out domestic terrorism, and what domestic terrorism has occurred has remained largely unorganized and unsuccessful.

CONCLUSION

Although appeals from the media and statements from Osama bin Laden have long underlined the need to examine the role that education plays in the radicalization process, this thesis is one of the first to study the relationship empirically. This thesis argues that education plays an important role in the Islamic radicalization process by determining students' levels of employability and indoctrination into radical religious ideologies. Certain state education systems cause a particular group of students to receive high concentrations of radical religious education and deny them the opportunity to acquire job-relevant skills so that students have difficulty securing employment and are more likely to engage in religious terrorism. The cases of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait support this argument.

My research showed that the public education system in Saudi Arabia has been a major contributor to radical Islamic terrorism within and originating from the country. Public education in Saudi Arabia contains religious material that borders on being Salafi-jihadi in nature, teaching its students hatred for Westerners and non-Muslims and calling upon them to defend their community from these corrupting influences through violent *jihad*. The bifurcated structure of the education system channels poorly performing students into the literary religious track of schooling, where they receive higher concentrations of radical religious teachings. This high concentration of radical religious instruction not only heightens students' sensitivity to perceived foreign occupation, but also produces students lacking marketable skills. Since the 1990s, when the Saudi government became increasingly unable to employ Saudi graduates, these students have faced growing unemployment. Unemployed and having been taught that participation in

violent *jihad* against the apostate and infidel governments in the Middle East and the West is the most meaningful endeavor in life, these individuals are more likely to participate in radical Islamic terrorism.

Profiles of domestic terrorists and Saudi foreign fighters provided evidence for the causal relationship between Saudi Arabia's education system and participation in religious terrorism. The domestic terror group, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), primarily consisted of young men in their late 20s and early 30s from the middle and lower-middle classes. Many of these militants were students or unemployed individuals with degrees in religious studies. There was a notable absence of AQAP members who had been trained or employed in the hard or natural sciences such as engineering, medicine, and economics.³⁴⁹ Recent data on Saudi foreign fighters in Afghanistan and Iraq also shows that a majority of militants are students and/or unemployed.³⁵⁰

Yemen is also a case where the public education system, particularly its limited accessibility and poor quality, contributes to religious terrorism by leading students to receive their education at private religious institutions of a radical nature. The public education system in Yemen is poorly developed and offers limited accessibility particularly in rural, geographically isolated locations where central government authority is weak or nonexistent. Since the 1970s, when North Yemen encouraged the establishment of private Saudi-funded religious schools under the direction of a Salafi-jihadi, 'Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, independent religious schools flourished in these areas,

³⁴⁹ Thomas Hegghammer, "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 4 (December 2006): 39-60.

³⁵⁰ Clint Watts, *Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: What Foreign Fighters Reveal about the Future of Terrorism* (PJ Sage, Inc., March 24, 2008), <http://www.pjsage.com/products.htm>.

and a number of these schools promote religious violence and terrorism. Students at these schools are indoctrinated into an extremist ideology and are left unemployable because of their lack of vocational or technical skills.

The thousands of Yemeni volunteers for the anti-Soviet *jihad* in the 1980s came overwhelmingly from North Yemen, where Saudi-backed Salafi-jihadi schools had been established in large numbers in the 1970s. The Yemeni government's success in temporarily halting radical Islamic terrorism in 2003 was partially dependent on its closure of these radical schools. The Iman University, established by Salafi-jihadi 'Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, and the Dar al-Hadith schools have been singled out as known sources of al-Qaeda militants, foreign fighters in Iraq and domestic terrorists responsible for attacks on Western targets. Furthermore, the Yemeni government and other varied Yemeni sources have specifically noted the major contributing role of the continued existence of these radical religious institutions to the most recent wave of domestic terrorism.

Kuwait provides a stark contrast to the Yemen and Saudi Arabia cases: the country's education system serves as a bulwark against religious terrorism. Kuwait produces only a small number of foreign fighters and has experienced only sporadic, largely unsuccessful domestic terrorism, despite the heavy U.S. military presence in the country. Unlike public education in Yemen, the schooling system in Kuwait is widely accessible and is ranked as one of the best in the Arab world. Although there are required courses in Islamic studies at every level, only students majoring in religious studies receive higher concentrations of religious material. More importantly, the religious teachings contained in school curricula are determined by mainstream Islamists who are

concerned with imparting conservative social values, and generally espouse a moderate and tolerant version of Islam, in direct contrast to the more radical content of Saudi curricula.

The relatively high quality and accessibility of education in Kuwait ensures that students are prepared for the job market. The moderate nature of Kuwaiti curricula's religious content also ensures that the majority of those students who do receive higher concentrations of religious education, such as religious studies majors, are primarily concerned with instilling conservative social values in Kuwaiti society rather than waging violent *jihad* against non-Muslim influences. Furthermore, educational figures that speak openly of the need for violent *jihad* against the West or espouse *takfiri* ideology are arrested and/or banned from teaching or preaching in Kuwaiti institutions. As a result, Kuwaiti participation in domestic and foreign terrorism is limited to the dozens, in direct contrast to the hundreds and thousands of Saudis and Yemenis that have been involved in domestic and foreign terrorism respectively.

Several policy implications flow from my theory and findings. First, educational reform must be a key component of de-radicalizing Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Specifically, education systems' content, structure, and accessibility need review and reform in countries producing high volumes of terrorists and foreign fighters. Radical religious material needs to be revised, students need to study subjects that will prepare them for their domestic job markets, and in areas where public education is inaccessible, it either needs to be made available or an alternate form of non-radical education needs to be provided. U.S. foreign policy should focus on encouraging these reforms by investing in education and human development, pressuring these governments as well as

multinational organizations to bring about these reforms and then ensuring accountability. The effectiveness of investing in educational development is supported by a study conducted in 2008. The study found that foreign aid reduces terrorism produced by recipient countries and heavily emphasized the importance for Western democracies to invest in foreign aid, particularly to support education, in order to combat terrorism.³⁵¹

The religious content of education needs particular attention in reform efforts, as it is the primary radicalizing factor in education. It is important to note that effective education reform may involve a return to orthodoxy rather than a move to secularism or liberalism. A return to orthodox Islam, which teaches tolerance and moderation, coupled with the modernization of education systems to adjust to the technical needs of the job market is much more likely to be received with popular approval. After touring *madrassahs*, or private Islamic schools, in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, British diplomat Alexander Evans warned Western politicians against demonizing *madrassahs*, saying instead, “They should encourage modernization but avoid insisting on secularization.”³⁵² Hamid al-Majid, a professor of education at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud University has even said, “I believe the way to minimize extremism is to put greater emphasis on religious education, but in a good way.”³⁵³

Furthermore, the United States, as well as any other non-Muslim actors and Western countries in particular, need to maintain a low profile in its involvement in

³⁵¹ Jean-Paul Azam and Veronique Thelen, “The Roles of Foreign Aid and Education in the War on Terror,” *Public Choice* 135, no. 3-4 (June 2008): 375-397.

³⁵² Bernhard Zand, “Of Scholars and Zealots: Are Koran Schools Hotbeds of Terrorism?,” *Spiegel Online*, sec. 2007 March 20, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,472583,00.html>.

³⁵³ Neil Macfarquhar, “A Nation Challenged: Education; Anti-Western and Extremist Views Pervade Saudi Schools,” *New York Times*, October 19, 2001, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9402E5DE133EF93AA25753C1A9679C8B63>.

education reform, restricting its interference to covert exchanges with government officials whenever possible. The perception that the United States and the West are trying to pervert Islam to suit their own needs already exists in extremist rhetoric, and any public interference by Western forces in this matter would only validate these claims. Osama bin Laden has released numerous statements warning of this very attempt by the West to reform Islamic education in the Middle East.³⁵⁴

The significance of education in the radicalization process can be seen in the successful militant rehabilitation programs in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi program has processed hundreds of religious militants through reeducation classes with religious clerics to correct their “errant” ideologies and provide them with job training and financial assistance. Although there have been recent reports of recidivism, the senior spokesman for the Saudi interior ministry claims that only one in ten terrorists that go through Saudi’s re-education program return to the al-Qaeda network.³⁵⁵ If Saudi Arabia’s public education system were to be reformed to reflect the principles of its militant reeducation program, extremism could be combated from the start instead of after the fact.

Given the importance of education in the radicalization process in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, further work needs to be done to examine how education affects radicalization in other terror-producing countries. In the 1990s, the Saudi government launched campaigns to establish religious schools in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bosnia,

³⁵⁴ Shaun Watermann, “Bin Laden Tape Blasts Reform, Saudi Royals,” *United Press International*, December 18, 2004, <http://archives.navyseals.com/community/articles/article.cfm?id=5368>.

³⁵⁵ “Saudi Arabia: Education Deters Militants from More Violence, Says Official,” *Adnkronos International*, February 27, 2009, <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Security/?id=3.0.3057977579>.

Nigeria, Indonesia and the Philippines.³⁵⁶ These schools were likely to have incorporated the same radical ideology found in Saudi Arabia's domestic school system and deserve further examination. Additional case studies should include North African countries like Libya and Levantine countries such as Syria that are producing high levels of foreign fighters.

Religious and public education in Pakistan has already been the subject of much terrorism research, particularly as private Islamic schools in Pakistan, especially the Saudi-funded institutes, have gained much attention over recent years for their role in militant recruitment. A 2004 study has already emphasized the role of Pakistan's state education system in Islamic radicalization, noting that Pakistan's public schooling and higher education system have been known to provide up to 40% of extremist militants, while only 15 to 20% of *madrassahs* have been estimated to provide military training.³⁵⁷

Further research should focus on a more detailed comparison of textbooks in Muslim countries producing relatively low amounts of terrorism with those producing high amounts. This research would help determine what changes need to be made in religious educational content to promote moderation and tolerance without resorting to secularization.

Additional research is also merited to further investigate Yemen's current episode of domestic terrorism. Very little research has focused on the al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY) group that was founded in 2006 and is responsible for the current wave of terrorism. Extensive examination of AQY's membership and their socioeconomic and educational backgrounds would provide further insight into the ongoing radicalization process.

³⁵⁶ Zand, "Of Scholars and Zealots."

³⁵⁷ C. Christine Fair, "Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for al-Qaeda and Other Organizations," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27 (2004): 489-504.

Further research should also be conducted on additional aspects of education and their relationship with religious radicalization. One specific area of education meriting further examination is teachers' attitudes towards educational material. My thesis has primarily focused on educational material presented by textbooks, but a teacher's attitude towards textbook material can significantly influence the way students view a subject. For example, if a teacher was to adopt a very moderate stance while the textbook were to present radical material, students would be getting a much different understanding of religious teachings than if a teacher were also to teach from a radical point of view.

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APPENDIX A

Figure 1 - The Process of Saudi Radicalization

