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Resisting Democratic Transition Through Terrorism: A Case Study of Post Saddam-Hussein Iraq

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Abstract

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by

Kellie S. Rourke

MPA, Troy University, 2004

BS, Austin Peay State University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Democracy building operations in foreign nations in Iraq and Afghanistan have been met with resistance and at great cost in terms of dollars and lives. Reducing these costs requires understanding why individuals choose to resist the transition to democracy, yet current research in the field does not address the issues of a previously nonviolent population turning to terrorism to resist transition to democracy. The purpose of this single case study was to use rational choice theory and Crenshaw's 3 levels of causation to understand what factors influenced members of the Sunni sect to resist democratic transition following the 2003 invasion of U.S. forces. Data for this study consisted of secondary data, including transcripts of interviews with 15 Sunni Iraqis who once supported or showed neutrality for a democratic government but then resisted transition through terrorism. Data were deductively coded according to Crenshaw's 3 levels of causation and then subjected to thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the primary factor that led individuals to support terrorism against the transitioning government was political, in that Sunni participants felt that after the democratic transition, the government excluded them from participation in the development of the new government to include constitutional development and elections. Findings also showed that religion, specifically being Sunni, impacted the decision to resort to resistance through terrorism. The study concluded with recommendations to the U.S. government and military forces that highlight planning and execution considerations to address during similar democracy building operations for success in the future.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to the men and women of the U.S. military who dedicated much of their lives to bringing democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan; and to their families, who experienced more than all others the sacrifice required to free a country in the interest of our nation's security.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my committee, especially Dr. Joyce Haines, for her mentorship and guidance, which were so critical to my success in completing this study; to Dr. Kevin Fandl, for his advice and support; to Dr. Morris Bidjerano and Dr. Tanya Settles, for taking the time to share your expertise; to my peers and leaders, who encouraged my studies, challenged me, and engaged in helping me to think through the struggles the Iraqi people face to this day; and to my family who encouraged me through this process, always believing I could complete this study, even when I began to question it myself.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explain why individuals use domestic terrorism to resist democratic transition by examining events in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces when more than 20,000 Sunni Iraqis worked with terrorist organizations to resist the democratic transitional government of Iraq (Oppel, 2004). The primary focus of this research was on identifying and analyzing of influential factors in the decision by some members of the Sunni sect to support terrorism and political violence against the newly formed democratic transitional government. These identified factors allow for the early address of those conditions and issues that lead individuals to support terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition and, therefore, decrease violence and the period of democratic transition during future democracy building operations.

Background

On March 20, 2003, U.S. forces led a coalition of four nations in an invasion of Iraq. The stated purpose of the invasion was to disarm the regime of Saddam Hussein of its alleged weapons of mass destruction. However, as early as October 2002, then President George W. Bush made clear that the policy of the U.S. in Iraq was regime change (Woodard, 2004). The reason for the desired regime change in Iraq was clarified by President George W. Bush in April 2004 when he stated, “A secure and free Iraq is a historic opportunity to change the world” (Dunne, 2004, p. 7). President George W. Bush was referring to his administration’s belief that if Iraq could be freed from a suppressive

regime, it could inspire other nations in the Middle East to transform and transition to democracy (Cirincione, 2003). In executing this policy, the Bush administration was anticipating an Iraqi population that desired freedom from the regime of Saddam Hussein, a population that would embrace the opportunity to have a voice in its government activities and influence the direction of Iraq. Instead, the policy of regime change in Iraq was met with violent resistance that lasted more than 10 years, as elements of Iraq's population turned to terrorism and terrorist tactics to resist the government's transition to and implementation of democracy (Diamond, 2004).

Terrorism and the resistance to government transition are credited with more than 650,000 deaths in Iraq (Tapp et al., 2008). This resistance to change is seen in countries throughout the Middle East and demonstrates a need for research to help understand why a population would choose to resist democratic transition from authoritarian rule with terrorism rather than through the political process and nonviolent means. Research on the use of terrorism to resist democratic transition is currently limited to the study of transnational terrorism. Current research neglects the issue of domestic terrorism and the fact that populations with no history of terrorism support the use of terrorism against what many U.S. policymakers see as a liberating event for populations (Braithwaite & Li, 2007; Campos & Gassebner, 2009; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Kurrild-Klitgaard, Justesen, & Klemmensen, 2011; Lutz & Lutz, 2008; Mesquita & Dickson, 2007; Piazza, 2011).

The idea that terrorism is a valid means of resisting political change is not new. Crenshaw (2007) identified the idea of terrorism as a means of political resolution

explaining that the entire notion of terrorism is political, goal-oriented, and the result of a particular type of logic. According to Crenshaw's theory, some revolutionaries view terrorism as an instrument to a specific political end, with three levels of causation. These three leading causes include the (a) political, security, and national stability in which terrorist groups operate; (b) strategies of the terrorist groups; and (c) social and economic problems of individual participants that lead them to believe that violence is their only reasonable resolution (Crenshaw, 2007). Piazza (2008) supported this notion with findings that people might form terrorist organizations because they seek some political change and resort to violence when they believe that nonviolent methods are not productive.

Accordingly, failing states, marked by a government's inability to manage public needs and demands, are more susceptible to terrorist attacks than functioning states (Piazza, 2008). This theory supports the notion that terrorism is the result of a demand for political change to address public needs. Building on these findings, Nitz (2010) found that states undergoing transitions to democracy exhibit many of the same areas of instability as failed states. Nitz concluded that intermediate levels of democracy (i.e., regimes undergoing a transition to democracy) have a higher probability of experiencing a terrorist attack than any other form of government, though Nitz's research did not address the issue of why these democracies are more susceptible to terrorist attacks. Contrary to Piazza (2008) and Nitz (2010), Carothers (2009) found that the manner of transition, rather than the degree of transition, is a primary factor in the success of transition to democratic rule. Carothers concluded that the U.S. practice of promoting

political competition tends to neglect institutional development. Without developing government institutions to promote and exercise democratic principles, a persistent disconnect between the government and the population will occur. This disconnect breeds frustration and violence because of public perception that the government is not responsive to the public's issues.

Taking a different approach to explaining political violence, Fattah and Fierke (2009) presented a framework that emerged from what they identified as a result of a population's sense of humiliation and betrayal from conflict and war in the Middle East. According to the framework of Fattah and Fierke, political violence serves as a means of restoring the dignity that a given population perceives they lost through conflict and war. This belief offers a new perspective on the source of conflict and takes the scope of causation beyond the demand for government service and response.

Chenoweth (2010) also sought explanations for terrorism beyond the demands on government and its ability to meet the needs of the public. According to Chenoweth, the primary motivation for terrorist attacks in democracies involves dynamics within groups. In democracies and transitioning governments, according to Chenoweth, groups of various ideologies must compete for limited influence on the population and government, making terrorism a viable means to gain influence in these restrictive political atmospheres by drawing attention and subsequent support for their causes and issues. Lutz and Lutz (2008) found that these conditions are more likely in a transitioning state, especially those that underwent an abrupt transition to democracy rather than a gradual one. Lutz and Lutz found that abrupt transitions to democracy, such as the one imposed

by U.S. forces in Iraq, create conditions where the government has less ability to secure the population and must compete for influence at the same time as emerging threat and terrorist organizations.

The gap in understanding is why a population would think terrorism and violence are the best means to compete for influence within their own nation. The primary theory addressing the issue of access and influence is political access theory. The political access school of thought holds that by providing multiple venues for citizens to voice their political and social thoughts and agendas, democracies increase the use of legal, non-violent activities and decrease terrorism and other political violence (Piazza, 2007). Advocates of this school of thought conclude that this theory applies well to domestic terrorism, but a lack of research in the field has left the theory untested. Multiple researchers (including Charters, 1994; Crelinsten & Schmid 1992; Eubank & Weinberg, 1994, 1998, 2001; Li, 2005) challenged this theory through the study of transnational terrorism where researchers found that transnational terrorist groups have been attracted to democracies for the conduct of terrorist activities despite political access. Why domestic terrorism develops and occurs in these conditions is not understood (Piazza, 2007).

Despite extensive research in the fields of terrorism and democratic transition, researchers have failed to explain why a group would choose to use terrorism over lawful, non-violent alternatives to address their grievances within their own state and whether the vulnerability of government transition increases the likelihood that terrorism will be employed as a means of resistance. In this study, I addressed this issue and

explored what circumstances and factors led members of the Iraqi Sunni population to conclude that terrorism was their best option, given the promise of political access that democracy brought to Iraq.

Problem Statement

In the National Security Strategy (The White House, 2010), the United States declared the nation's intention to continue democracy promotion efforts globally. This remains the intention of the United States despite the fact that recent democracy building operations, to include those in Iraq and Afghanistan, have been met with significant resistance and have come at great cost to the United States regarding dollars and lives. Reducing these costs requires research to explain why individuals choose to resist the transition to democracy. Current research in the field does not address the issues of a previously nonviolent population turning to terrorism to resist transition to democracy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to help explain why individuals would elect to resist the transition to democracy through terrorism or support for terrorism. I examined this response to transition through events in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces when more than 20,000 Sunni Iraqis worked with terrorist organizations to actively resist the transitional government of Iraq (Oppel, 2004). The primary focus of this research was on identifying and analyzing influential factors in the decision by some members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to support terrorism and political violence against the newly formed democratic transitional government. Identifying and analyzing these factors allow for the early address of those conditions and issues that lead individuals to

support terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition and, therefore, decrease violence and the period of democratic transition.

Significance of the Study

Scholars have conducted extensive quantitative research on the topic of international terrorists and the correlation between types of government and terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, few researchers have examined reasons why people resist democracy as a form of government and why they support domestic terrorism as a means of political resolution.

This qualitative study was unique because I investigated the use of domestic terrorism and the actual transition of governments to democracies, addressing the current gaps in research. The identification of specific factors of domestic terrorism will allow agents of democracy to counter these factors early in their democracy promotion operations and contribute to military policy and doctrine that support democracy promotion operations. I anticipate that this research will contribute to social change by providing a basis for the military personnel promoting the democratic transition to quickly identify factors that lead to resistance and terrorism and address these factors early in operations, thus, reducing the perceived need for terrorism among members of the population. This will be an impetus for positive social change in that grievance with the democratic process can be addressed early and give operational leaders the knowledge to reduce these grievances and violence.

Nature of the Study

Using a case study approach, this qualitative research focused on members of the Iraqi Sunni sect who supported the use of terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces. The case study was explanatory and used secondary analysis of data, applying the content analysis research approach. An explanatory case study seeks to explain a phenomenon or events to predict future events in similar conditions (Harder, 2010). This research used previously conducted interviews as a source of secondary data and focused on 15 individuals who began to support terrorism in Iraq following the establishment of a democratic transitional government. I collected these interviews conducted by Kukis (2011) in Iraq between 2003 and 2009. Consistent with qualitative research, participants and sites were purposefully selected by the author to best help to explain the effects that the U.S.' invasion of Iraq had on Iraqis. Interview participants came from various regions in Iraq and were interviewed at their homes or public locations. Participants included former public officials, terrorists, and victims who ultimately supported terrorism instead of a transition to a democratic government in Iraq.

I collected additional secondary data to understand the conditions that led participants to their decision to support terrorism. The primary method of data collection used in this study was document analysis. This included the use of historical analysis to reconstruct the events in Iraq leading to the resistance of democratic transition. This entailed objectively collecting, evaluating, verifying, and synthesizing data to establish

facts. These facts were then compared to views and experiences of the 15 individuals constituting the case study to determine what specific factors influenced their decisions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the political access subset of rational choice theory, as proposed by Sandler and Lapan (1988) and Enders and Sandler (2012). Rational choice theorists assert that terrorism is the result of rational and informed decisions. By suggesting that terrorism is primarily a means to obtain a desired political result, Enders and Sandler refuted many specialists who believe that terrorism is the result of pathological or illogical behavior.

Within rational choice theory, Eyerman (1998) proposed that terrorist organizations, being rational groups seeking political resolution, would act within legal, non-violent means if they believed that non-violence would change their society. Krieger and Meierrieks (2011) further developed Eyerman's theory, concluding that offering a non-violent and cost-efficient means of conflict resolution through political access does, in fact, reduce political violence. Known collectively as the political access school of the rational choice theory, Eubank and Weinberg (1994, 1998, 2001), Eyerman (1998), and Li and Schmid (2005) provided a basis for examining terrorism as a political act with an intended end. The political access school of the rational choice theory allows for this research to consider why radicals might select terrorism, a form of political violence, as a method of resolution over other viable non-violent political alternatives and means of obtaining political access.

I examined rational choice theory within the context of Crenshaw's (1981) three

levels of causation for terrorism: (a) the situation in society, (b) the strategy of the terrorist group, and (c) the problems of the individual participants. These levels of causation were examined in the context of (a) the political conditions or political beliefs of those who participated in or supported terrorism; (b) their social conditions such as tribal affiliation, economic conditions, or circumstances; (c) the military situation or violence in Iraq and their community; (d) their religion or religious beliefs; (e) the strategy of recruitment or pressure applied by terrorists and terrorist organizations; and (f) any personal experience an individual has.

Research Questions

The primary research question in this study was: What factors influenced members of the Sunni sect to resist democratic transition through either the use of or support for terrorism following the invasion of U.S. forces and the establishment of a transitional democratic government in Iraq?

Secondary Research Questions

1. What conditions (i.e., political, social, military, and economic) in Iraq in 2003 contributed to the decision by members of the Sunni sect to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did any particular factor have a greater influence on this decision than other factors?
2. How did terrorist groups use these conditions to encourage Sunni Iraqis to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did terrorists use any other factors as a means to gain support for their activities against a transitioning government?

3. What are the identifiable attitudes, common experiences, or patterns of behavior shared by those individuals who supported terrorism against a transitioning democratic government of Iraq?

Definitions of Terms

Abrupt democracy transition: The sudden shift in government or regime type to one of democratic practices. This usually involves military action or support in the form of weapons, training, or military removal of government leaders.

Authoritarian regime: A government that concentrates political power in an authority not responsible to the people. This usually entails a one-party system and military control of the state.

Democracy: Fair, free, and competitive elections between multiple distinct political parties; a separation of powers into different branches of government, the rule of law in everyday life as part of an open society; and the equal protection of human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, and political freedoms for all persons.

Democracy promotion: Efforts to increase the number of regimes that practice the principles of democracy in daily state operations. Efforts can be either political and focus on core political processes such as elections, political parties, and politically-oriented civil groups or developmental and focus on institutions and building a capacity to maintain democratic ideals.

Domestic terrorism: Acts of terror by terrorists within a state against the government, institutions, or groups belonging to the same state.

Economic factor: The effects economic and financial conditions had on participants in their decision to support terrorism. Economic influence may be caused by a lack of income and poor economic conditions or the promise of an income and increased economic conditions following support for terrorism.

Gradual democracy transition: Promoting the values of democracy through the creation of civil groups, training and education of developing nations, influencing transparent governments, and providing for the formal education of officials to promote slow, incremental changes toward democracy implementation.

Military factor: The influence military activities had on an individual's decision to support terrorism. Military activities may include influence due to prior military service, the presence of foreign military and extremist forces in the country, and violence and threat activity.

Personal experience: An event or series of events experienced by an individual that influenced that person's decision to support terrorist activities. Personal experience may include negative contact with government, military, or foreign forces. Personal experience may also include the death or injury of an associate.

Political factor: A political system empowered to regulate the structures for a group through governance. It includes how the roles of governance, regulation, and political structure, as well as government interaction in the participant's lives, influenced their decisions to support terrorism.

Religious factor: The role religion or membership in a religious sect played in a participant's decision to support terrorism. This factor measures whether an individual's

support of terrorism was driven by a religious desire to form an Islamic caliphate or to ensure Islamic or Sunni domination within Iraq.

Social factor: The effects current social conditions had on a participant's decision to support terrorism. Tribe, family, and local leader influences define social conditions. Social conditions also included the use of social media and public gatherings as a means of influencing decisions by participants. In this research, this factor includes the status of the Iraqi Sunni sect, which was the ruling minority before the transition to a democratic government.

Terrorism: The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

Terrorist Strategies: Persuasive instruments that active terrorists used to gain supporters. This may include media, direct contact, or mass communication methods as well as message catalysts. Previous terrorist strategies have been couched in patriotic or religious terms, have focused on a need of the recruit, promised social advancement, or have been couched in the excitement of revolution.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Two assumptions underlie this research. The first assumption is that the participants experienced a change in their thoughts and behaviors. Specifically, participants did not previously support terrorism, but events or factors led them to a change in attitude and perspective that influenced them to support terrorism. A second

assumption is that the factors considered here (political, military, economic, social, religious, terrorist strategy, and personal experience) encompass all factors that played a major role in the decision to support terrorism over a transition to a democratic government.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this research is the fact that it is a single case study and examines individuals in a specific context, thus, is only about the people observed, Sunni Iraqis. This creates a risk of minimal transferability to other situations despite how similar they may appear. However, identification of factors that led to the decision of members of the Sunni Iraqi sect to resist democratic transition can help focus other researchers' attention on those factors, screen out others, and provide a basis for further research in the field.

A second limitation is the lack of access to the subject population. Security issues in Iraq prevent access to the Iraqi population and limit the researcher's ability to collect original data.

Also, the decision to restrict this research to members of the Sunni sect can be perceived as a limitation. The decision to eliminate other sects from this study, specifically members of the Shia sect, is owed to the research objective of examining terrorism as a means of resisting a transition to democratic government. In general, members of the Shia sect participated in terrorist acts to influence and shape the new democratic government of Iraq, not as a means of resisting the transition to democracy.

As a result, the Sunni sect is the best sample population to measure resistance to a democratic transition.

The final limitation identified was that of a language barrier. A translator was utilized in the conduct of all interviews. Both the original interviewer and I had limited Iraqi language skills. To ensure effective interviews, all participants were asked to use their native language with a translator subsequently translating interview data into written text. In addition, this research relied on interviews collected by another researcher. As a result, there was no opportunity to ask followup questions or extract the level of detail desired from interview participants.

Summary

Resistance to democratic transition has been researched extensively, and the findings from previous studies are well documented. Although researchers have approached violent resistance to democratic transition from various perspectives, with most focusing on international terrorism and failure of state institutions such as security forces, consensus exists that democratic transition creates a period of vulnerability when terrorists and political failures have led to a failure to transition to democratic governance. Despite the research in the field of terrorism as a means of resisting democracy, a gap remains in research regarding the role of domestic terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition, especially in societies such as Iraq where there was no previous domestic terrorist activity.

Previous researchers of terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition found that instability and state-sponsored violence promoted transnational terrorism.

They also found that political instability escalated into transnational terrorism because instability created conditions that allowed terrorists to thrive. Specifically, research shows that how democracy is promoted affects the success democracy will experience in a society. This case study examines an abrupt transition to democracy. Research indicates that an abrupt transition creates vulnerabilities, as seen in Iraq, with the forced removal of a government authority resulting in transnational terrorist groups emerging to resist implementation of democracy and the eventual joining of these groups by Iraqi citizens.

Current research adequately addresses the issues of terrorism, democracy promotion, and the failure of states in democratic transition. However, a gap remains in the extant literature regarding why increased political access, brought on by a transition to democracy, does not allow for the adequate address of public grievances. As a result, this research identified factors in an individual's decision to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government.

To identify these factors, I used a qualitative single explanatory case study to identify factors in the decision of a local population to support terrorism to resist the transition to a democratic political system. I used secondary data analysis, applying the content analysis research approach, in collecting and analyzing data, facilitating analysis of the decisional factors of the participants.

In Chapter 2, the literature review explores the current understanding of terrorism and democratic transition as well as what is currently understood about the relationship between the two. I identified gaps in the research. In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodology of the research, a qualitative case study, along with data collection

procedures. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of the data collection and present results. Chapter 5 concludes the discussion with an evaluation and interpretation of collected data, including recommendations for the future based on the study's result.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explain why terrorism is used to resist democratic transition. To do so, I examined the events in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces when more than 20,000 Sunni Iraqis worked with terrorist organizations to resist the transitional government of Iraq (Oppel, 2004). The primary focus of this research was identifying and analyzing influential factors in the decision by some members of the Sunni Iraqi sect to support terrorism and political violence against the newly formed democratic transitional government. I begin this chapter with an introduction of terrorism, in general, followed by a discussion of domestic terrorism as a means of political access. Second, I discuss democracy in the context of governmental transition, under both the direction of external influences and internal demands. Third, I explore the relationship between terrorism and democratic transition, considering this relationship within the context of Iraq before and after the U.S. led transition to democratic rule.

Literature Search Strategy

The main strategy used to search and obtain the literature reviewed in this chapter was through several Internet research databases. The databases used to derive current peer-reviewed literature included Academic Search Premier, EBSCO, Military and Government Collection, the Combined Arms Research Library online, and ProQuest Digital Dissertations. Additional Internet database searches conducted used the following search terms: *terrorism theories, domestic terrorism, terrorism for political access,*

resistance to government transition, *democracy promotion*, *resistance to democracy*, *Al Qaeda in Iraq*, *Sunni resistance to democratic rule*, and *Middle East democratization*. Sources collected were primarily peer-reviewed research, with multiple journal articles, published within the last 6 years. I used books primarily published in the last six years to address theory and theoretical foundations throughout this work.

Theoretical Foundation

This case study generally applies rational choice theory, the most common empirical basis for evaluating terrorist decision making in research. Most recently advanced by Enders and Sandler (2012), the rational choice theory of terrorism asserts that terrorism is the result of rational and informed decisions. According to this view, people use terrorism when the expected political gains, minus the expected costs, outweigh the net expected benefits of alternative forms of protest or action (Fischer, Harb, Al-Sarraf, & Nashabe, 2008). By determining that terrorism is primarily a calculated means to obtain desired political or ideological results, this theory refutes many specialists who believe that terrorism is strictly the result of pathological or illogical behavior. The rational choice theory also encompasses the third category of theorists who believe terrorism is the result of structural causes.

Advocates of terrorism as a result of pathology state that individuals with certain personality traits and pathological or psychological issues are more likely to engage in terrorist acts than the rest of the population is (Fischer et al., 2008). For example, Fischer et al. (2008) conducted a study of university students in Baghdad who supported violent resistance in Iraq. The study sought a psychological explanation for the support of

violence and terrorism. Fischer et al. concluded that mental distress and social pathology were not factors in the decision by students to engage in terrorist acts, discrediting literature claiming that poor mental health and politically violent behavior are the sources of terrorism. Instead, the study concluded that support for violent resistance among those university students studied was the result of relative dissatisfaction, greater national identity, and a feeling of injustice.

As demonstrated by this research, advocates of pathology as the cause of terrorism have tended to attribute human actions to an individual's state of mind and did not consider the circumstances that drove that behavior (Tosini, 2007). As the driving force behind the decision to participate in terror attacks, circumstances are the nucleus of the structural theory of terrorism. Advocates of structural theories posit that the causes of terrorism are environmental, as the political, social, cultural, and economic conditions that structure a society (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008). Structural theorists believe that no pathology is required to drive an individual to commit acts of terror, given the correct mix of environmental circumstances.

Experts have viewed the rational choice theory of terrorism as more encompassing than other theories. It includes structural theory and, to some extent, psychological theory, as it posits that terrorism is the result of a rational and logical decision, given the structural causes and mindset experienced by perpetrators. In the context of the study conducted by Fischer et al. (2008), supporters of rational choice theory would argue that the findings demonstrate that participants in the Baghdad survey saw supporting violent resistance as the best alternative to defeating sources of

dissatisfaction based on the current circumstances in Iraq at the time. When terrorism is a purposeful activity, it is the result of an organization's decision that terrorism is a politically useful way of opposing a government.

A significant factor in the theory that terrorist behavior is rational is the assumption that the values and beliefs the terrorist organization is advancing are consistent with the current political, social, economic, and military environment. Piazza (2008) found support for this assumption while researching terrorism in the context of failed states. Piazza noted that a society's history, its government's instability, and its social habits might result in the use of violence against the government becoming morally and politically acceptable to that society and, therefore, increase its rationale for violence. Crenshaw (2007) identified the conditions or situations that inspire and motivate terrorist campaigns as *facilitators* of terrorism. According to Crenshaw's theory, some revolutionaries view terrorism as an instrument, sparked by facilitators within a society, for achieving a specific political end. These facilitators fall into 3 categories of causation: (a) political, (b) security, and (c) stability of the nation. These are collectively known as situational factors in which terrorist groups operate, the strategies of the terrorist groups, and the social and economic problems of individual participants that lead them to believe that violence provides the only reasonable resolution to their grievances (Crenshaw, 2007).

This research examined the decision by some members of the Sunni Iraqi sect to support terrorism by applying rational choice theory within the context of Crenshaw's (2007) 3 levels of causation for terrorism: (a) the situation in society, (b) the strategy of

the terrorist group, and (c) the problems of the individual participants. This research focused on identifying patterns with the context provided here.

Literature Review

Terrorism

The foundation of any study of terrorism is a definition of terrorism to avoid conceptual problems when addressing and hypothesizing about the issue. One primary obstacle in developing international agreements on terrorism is the lack of an agreed upon definition of terrorism. A common saying is "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (Day, 2008, p.128). As this saying expresses, definitions of terrorism tend to restrict the act of terrorism to something evil, conducted by a radical group to advance a particular agenda. Some definitions limit an act of terror to a specifically political act, while others limit it to solely an act of social influence. Disagreements regarding what defines terrorism are so strong that the United Nations does not have an official definition of terrorism to this day. In 2005, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged members of the United Nations to set aside their differences and adopt the following as the official United Nations definition of terrorism:

> Criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols

> relating to terrorism, are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature, any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 1566, that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act. (Anna, 2005, p. 36)

Despite Secretary-General Annan's efforts, some nations found the definition too political and the definition was never adopted (Barnidge, 2006).

Demonstrating how complex the issue of a shared or common definition is, the U.S. government itself has several definitions of terrorism depending on purpose or mission of the federal agency. U.S. Code § 2656f, for example, defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents" (p. 9). The U.S. Federal Regulations' definition differs, defining terrorism as "the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (Government Printing Office, 2013, p. 23). Unlike the U.S. Code definition, Federal Regulations does not define the actor behind terrorism to avoid limiting its definition. Another key distinction is that Federal Regulations includes social objectives such as motivation for acts of terror.

To be more thorough and encompassing of all issues addressed in federal definitions, this dissertation utilized the U.S. Department of Defense definition, developed through academic studies and international relations (Abrahams, 2008; Piazza, 2008; Tyler, Schulhofer, & Hug, 2010). As defined in Joint Publication 3-07.2, *Antiterrorism* (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), the Department of Defense working definition of terrorism is "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological" (pp. 3-4). This definition centers on the understanding that the intention of terrorism is to coerce or intimidate populations to achieve political, religious, or ideological goals. The recognition of religious or ideological goals is critical when analyzing acts of terror perpetrated by Islamic extremists, as they view dedication to Islam as a means of governing one's entire life, not as just a political or religious endeavor (Coulson, 2011). In addition, like the Federal Regulations definition, it does not define the actor, thus, not limiting the definition.

The Department of Defense definition applies well to the predominately Sunni Iraqi resistance. The Iraqi resistance developed as a loose network of groups with disparate motives that U.S. forces and the Iraqi transitional government faced following the removal of Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq in 2003 (Davis, 2005). This loose configuration of groups shared the key goal of rejecting the new order, one of democratic governance, emerging in Iraq (Davis, 2005). Like most terrorist groups, these groups were unable to defeat their rivals militarily. These groups, however, had the ability to

hurt both the government of Iraq and U.S. forces by contesting the government and military monopoly on violence, provoking them to act repressively and increasing the cost of public security (Al-Jabouri & Jensen, 2010). Thus, these groups and their activities fit this working definition of terrorism (Sánchez-Cuenca & de la Calle, 2009).

Facilitators and Causation of Terrorism

Conditions in Iraq during the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces and the following surge of terrorist activity support the rational choice emphasis on circumstances and facilitators. Iraq has experienced a prolonged period of violence. Within a year of the overthrow of the standing government of Iraq in 1979 by Saddam Hussein, Iraq entered an 8 year war with Iran that included chemical weapons use against Iraqi civilians and resulted in more than half a million casualties. Within 2 years of a cease-fire with Iran, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, resulting in a short but destructive war with the U.S. that left Iraq with hyperinflation, widespread poverty, and malnutrition (Elsheshtawy, 2004). In addition, Iraq was a state sponsor of terrorist groups. Support for terrorism focused on groups that could hurt Iraq's, or Saddam Hussein's regional rivals and included the Iranian dissident group Mujahadeen-e-Klahq, Iranians who resisted Iran's transition to democracy in the 1970s and targeted America for its democracy promotion in the region; and the Kurdistan Workers' Party, a Turkish-based Kurdish group fighting the Turkish government for autonomy. Also, Hussein allowed several Palestinian splinter groups that oppose peace with Israel to enter and train inside of Iraq (Polk, 2007). Under the concept of facilitators, 11 years of violence, followed by poverty, national destruction, and state sponsorship of terrorism created an environment in which the

population was familiar, almost comfortable, with violence and government turmoil.

As an example of research supporting the concept of facilitators and causation, Campos and Gassebner's (2009) research showed that instability and state-sponsored violence promote terrorism. Campos and Gessebner studied 130 countries and found that political instability escalates into transnational terrorism because instability creates conditions that allow terrorists to thrive. Like almost all current research in the field of terrorism (Braithwaite & Li, 2007; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Kurrild-Klitgaard et al., 2011; Lutz & Lutz, 2008; Mesquita & Dickson, 2007; Piazza, 2011), Campos and Gassebner (2009) have helped explain why a state's instability attracts terrorists from other countries, but have failed to address how instability affects domestic terrorism. This lack of address of domestic terrorism brings to light the significant gap in understanding about domestic terrorism and the influence of causation on domestic and political violence.

The focus of much of the current research on terrorism is misleading in that it gives the impression that terrorism is a transnational problem with acts of terror confined to acts committed by terrorists within or from one state against one or more groups in another state (Young & Findley, 2011). The view that terrorism is primarily a transnational issue is not correct, as terrorist attacks are 3 to 8 times more likely to occur as domestic acts (LaFree & Dugan, 2007). The lack of academic study regarding domestic terrorism is surprising given its history. Acts of domestic terror are recorded as early as the first-century AD when a group of Jews tried to overthrow Roman rule over Palestine using murder and assassination. The 11th through the 13th centuries were

plagued with Shia Muslims seeking to assassinate Sunni Muslim leaders. Historical examples continue throughout existence such as in tsarist Russia where opponents tried to destroy the tsar's government through acts of terror, historical Ireland and centuries of terror attacks by the Irish Republic Army, and ongoing Marxist guerillas in Columbia. Despite a world history plagued with acts of domestic terror, researchers primarily rely on transnational terror data for analysis. The difficulty with relying on transnational terrorism as a basis for research on terrorism, in general, is that almost all quantitative research on terrorism, 16 of the 22 studies examined here, use transnational data with theoretical logics that can be complicated. To make their case, researchers imply causal chains that involve acts to influence one government to pressure another government to invoke change. Most of these 16 studies (Abadie, 2004; Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008; Basuchoudhary & Shughart, 2010; Braithwaite & Li, 2007; Kreiger & Meierrieks, 2008; Kurrild-Klitgaard et al., 2011; Lutz & Lutz, 2008; Mesquita & Dickson, 2007; Piazza, 2007) used comparative analysis for their study by distinguishing among terrorist groups and countries. The use of comparative analysis has helped the study of terrorism by identifying a base as to what is common in transnational terrorism and allowing for the identification of anomalies. These studies fail to address why a population would use terror and violence against their own nation state given the potential consequences to their standard of living and fail to provide the same insight regarding commonality to domestic terrorism. Such a study would help explain the shift in the perception of some Iraqis by spring of 2004 in which they began to resist the idea of democracy, despite the initial embrace of the idea of political access and democracy, and eventually began to

support terrorism in Iraq (Felter & Fishman, 2007). This change in attitude was so pronounced that by 2006 Al-Qaeda in Iraq changed its name to the Islamic State of Iraq to symbolize its evolution to a primarily Iraqi organization (Felter & Fishman, 2007). Even more concerning to this research is the lack of study about domestic terrorism against democratic states, either emerging or formed, though studies of why transnational terrorists attack democracies are plentiful.

The reason for lack of research in the area of domestic terrorism may once again come down to various definitions and understandings. Enders and Sandler (2012) defined domestic terrorism as having consequences for just the host country, its institutions, citizens, property, and policies with the perpetrator, victim, and audience all being from the host country. The assertion that domestic terrorism only has consequences for the host country makes this definition contentious. As discussed previously, a definition should not restrict the audience of terrorist attacks. Jamoul (2012) pointed out the Arab Spring, a series of violent demonstrations and acts designed to terrorize government leaders throughout the Arab world, began of domestic terror in Tunisia as the population demanded changes in the government. The Arab spring demonstrates how domestic acts of terror can have consequences of regional proportion. The U.S. defined terrorism in purely international terms until the implementation of the Patriot Act. The Patriot Act expanded U.S.' views on terror following terrorist attacks on the U.S. in 2001. That definition stated terrorism consists of:

> activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the U.S. or of any state, that (B) appear to be intended (i) to

> intimidate or coerce a civilian population, (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping, and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S. (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007).

This definition began to direct the U.S. attention inward following attacks by non-U.S. citizens. Note, the definition does not address whether citizens of the U.S. or foreign entities are the source of the threat, thus, not helping when discussing why a population would attack its own state. LaFree and Dugan (2007) offered a more useful definition of domestic terror as acts of terror by terrorists within a state against the government, institutions, or groups belonging to the same state. The distinction between international and domestic terrorism is critical in the discussion of facilitators and causation to explain motivations and desires of terrorists and, therefore, explain actions.

Domestic Terrorism

Per LaFree and Dugan's (2007) definition, the nation state, with its institutions, becomes a primary factor in understanding domestic terrorism. Rotberg (2013) summarized the role of nation states in today's society as elements that provide a decentralized method of delivering political goods to people living within recognized borders. Rotberg explained that modern states, those that focus on meeting the concerns and demands of their citizens, replaced old monarch states. How states perform in delivering political goods to their populations distinguishes strong states from weak ones. Crenshaw (2010) stated that one of the first conditions that cause domestic terrorism and

political violence in modern states is when an identifiable subgroup within the population has grievances with the state's delivery of political goods. Crenshaw found that a social movement develops to address these grievances and terrorism erupts when the subgroup sees violence as the only way to redress these grievances. Borrowing ideas from Samuel Huntington, Bernholz (2006) offered that such social movements build on the use of ideologies in society. Bernholz determined that terrorists build ideologies that allow them a common identity and facilitate stressing the supremacy of their respective identity (e.g., Sunni versus Shia Islamic sects). Taking such an approach strengthens an organization's cohesion, allowing for fewer moral constraints, as they justify their acts as required by their ideology, thus, making terrorism less costly.

Despite extensive research in the field of terrorism, this expertise fails to explain why a group would choose to use terrorism over other lawful, non-violent alternatives to address their grievances. The current research addressed this as it explores what circumstances and factors lead members of the Iraqi population to conclude that violent resistance through terrorism was their best option, given the promise of political access that democracy brought to Iraq.

Democracy and Democracy Promotion

The most basic definition of democracy holds that democracy is a constitutional form of government that guarantees basic personal and political rights, fair and free elections, and institutions that are accountable to the citizens of that government. Although basic, this definition encompasses the democratic principles the U.S. supports in democracy promotion and building operations. In the *National Security Strategy,* The

White House (2010) outlined four principles that the U.S. advocates in order to promote democracy worldwide:

- Strengthening of key institutions of democratic accountability (p. 37);
- Promotion of power through consent, not coercion, with a legitimate political process placed above party or narrow interests (p. 38);
- Respect and enforcement of human rights (p. 38); and
- Promotion of the belief that pervasive corruption is a violation of basic human rights and a severe impediment to development and global security (p. 39).

Despite The White House (2010) listing these as "principles of democracy" in the *National Security Strategy*, these principles more specifically apply to the term *liberal democracy*. Liberalism is a political philosophy based on the principle of individual freedom, and liberalism goes back to the writings of the English philosopher and social theorist John Stuart Mill (1882). Liberalism calls for many of the rights and guarantees promoted by the national security strategy. These include guarantees of the rights of the individual, including freedom from self-appointed authority, freedom of religion, and the rights to political participation and representation (Lynn-Jones, 1998). This analysis helps to understand that what the U.S. is truly attempting to promote around the world is liberal democracy as a form of representative government responsive to the rights of citizens.

Democracy Defined

United States democracy promotion efforts promote procedural democracy that includes civil rights and civil liberties. For the purpose of this research and in the absence of a specific published definition of democracy by the U.S. government, the following

definition serves as the working definition of what the U.S. advocates through its democracy promotion efforts. The U.S. promotes liberal democracy defined by fair, free, and competitive elections between multiple distinct political parties, a separation of powers into different branches of government, the rule of law in everyday life as part of an open society, and the equal protection of human rights, civil rights, civil and political liberties for all persons. Promoting such a specific system of government with so many factors is a challenge the U.S. strives to achieve within its own borders every day. Many theorists (Carothers, 2009; Dahl, 2013; Ferris, 2010; Kopstein, 2006; Linz & Stepan, 2011; Mill, 1882) have believed that liberty follows the institution of democracy in a state. More significant to this study, this definition is consistent with the average Iraqi understanding of democracy as determined by a 2005 Zogby poll (Mahammed, 2005). In this poll, most Iraqis believed democracy was a system of government that allows people to choose their ruler and government and to judge them by elections held at predetermined times. Mohammed also determined Iraqis believed that democracy calls for the freedom of people enforced by courts and equal to all (Mohammed, 2005). A shared understanding of democracy is critical to any democracy promotion effort to ensure promoters understand the basis of their effort and to ensure understanding and expectations of citizens. Although many types of democracy exist and it comes in many forms, the basic characteristics of liberal democracy, regardless of its final form, are the foundation that both the U.S. and Iraqi citizens idealize for Iraq.

The characteristics of liberal democracy are common in academic research as the basis for democratic discussion as well. Diamond (2006) described these principles

within a definition of democracy as a system of government that includes elections for choosing and replacing the branches of government, active participation by the population, protection of human rights, and the rule of law. Diamond's definition is consistent with most in the field to include Carothers (2011), Dahl (2000), Meerni (1996), and Ottaway (2003). By definition, establishing the democratic principles recognized by academia and the national security strategy within a government framework and cementing them in a constitution results in the international recognition of a country as a democracy. However, Carothers observed that developing these principles and guaranteeing them through a constitution are not enough to meet the standard of democracy. Carothers stated that a government must function according to these principles, increasing the primary purpose of U.S. democracy promotion efforts (Carothers, 2011). The challenge for democracy promotion becomes how to instill the principles of democracy in the daily workings of a government.

Approaches to Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion and instilling the principles of democracy in daily state operations comes in two distinct approaches: the political approach and the developmental approach. Carothers (2009) explained that the political approach focuses on core political processes such as elections, political parties, and politically-oriented civil groups. Advocates of the political approach believe democracy is a positive value and believe people will follow democracy because it ensures respect for basic political and civil rights (Carothers, 2009). Dahl (2000), the original theorist behind the political approach to democracy promotion, highlighted a bottom-up approach to democracy

where the masses exercise the principles of democracy through fair elections and civic action. The political approach sees democracy building's main task as helping supporters of democracy advance democratic principles in a struggle against non-supporters. Carothers added that support might come in the form of overseeing elections, helping to form and advance political parties, rallying voters, or through indirect support of government institutions. This evolved into an approach that emphasizes the role of international factors in democratization. The approach emphasizes internal forces must drive the demand for change, preferably demands from the populace, for the transition to democracy to work (Finkel, Pérez- Liñán, & Seligson, 2007). The American style of democracy promotion closely mirrors this idea. Kopstein (2006) found that the U.S. sees a stable and functioning democracy as the product of a vibrant civil society. Once the citizenry is empowered to hold elections and draft a constitution, state development, and other factors will occur in time. This is consistent with the concept that once implemented, democracy leads to the growth of liberty, and the U.S.' goal of a liberal democracy will take root. The political approach to democracy building is the subject of much negative discussion by scholars to include Henry and Springborg (2010), Kragelund (2011), Norris (2011), and Sogge (2006) who believe more emphasis must be placed on stabilizing governments rather than on democratizing them. As these authors highlight, the challenge with the political approach to democracy is that government institutions are required to evolve and develop to the point that they are capable of maintaining democratic ideals once the population incites them. If institutions are not capable of maintaining democratic ideals, a nation state may fail in meeting the demands

of citizens regardless of elections or democratic processes. This creates a vacuum for power struggles and political violence.

The developmental approach to democracy promotion attempts to avoid these conditions by focusing on institutions and building a capacity to maintain democratic ideals. It sees democracy as one contributing factor in a larger state process rather than the fundamental aspect of the process (Carothers, 2009). The focus of the developmental approach is the belief that development should be slow and concentrate on socioeconomic gains as the foundation of democratic development. The focus should be on sequencing efforts to gain social and economic development first and later focusing on elections and implementation of democratic procedures (Pelizzo & Stepenhurst, 2013). Kopstein (2006) concluded that the developmental approach to democracy promotion had been the traditional approach of European nations where liberty is less of a concern than in the U.S. Europeans tend to focus on building up a state's structure and capacity to care for its citizenry. A significant finding by Kopstein is that the European approach is designed to stabilize countries that are already democratic rather than changing non-democratic states into democratic ones. This may be because the European approach emphasizes structure over beliefs and principles. Kopstein advocated that a combination of the political and developmental approaches would be most successful in democracy promotion efforts. Kopstein determined that focusing on elections and developing political parties obscured what happened after the elections. Without the developmental approach to democracy building, a state has no capacity to carry out the will of its people, but without the political approach, a state would fail to know the will of its people. This

theory supports Rotberg's (2010) premise that old monarchs are becoming obsolete as they are replaced by nation states focused on meeting the population's needs. Even if the functions that comprise a democracy exist, to include elections and multiple parties, a state's failure to maintain public demands will lead to state failure and failure of democracy promotion efforts. This has led to a broad debate about whether the transition to democracy is best if done abruptly, thus, giving the population some immediate means to influence the government, or if the transition should be slower to allow for institutions to reform to support democratic principles.

Gradual Versus Abrupt Transition to Democracy

A key factor in the discussion of gradual versus abrupt transition to democracy is security. The vulnerabilities of transitioning regimes are a source of debate regarding whether democracy promotion is most effective if it is gradual, with a controlled top-down process of gradual change resulting from internal and external influences. Alternatively, some question whether democracy promotion is more effective if the change is abrupt, brought on by regime failures resulting in loss of legitimacy and forced change (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). Within U.S. policy, the U.S. Department of State is responsible for initiatives that help in gradual transitions to democracy. The principal method for democracy transition is through the Human Rights Democracy Fund. With current funding of more than four hundred million dollars annually, the Human Rights Democracy Fund is the program the government uses to meet the national mandate of monitoring and promoting human rights and democracy worldwide (Burnell, 2008). The Human Rights Democracy Fund accomplishes this by advancing the values of democracy

through the creation of civil groups, training, and education of developing nations, influencing transparent governments, and providing for the formal education of officials (U.S. Department of State, 2005).

Despite the vast expense and effort, gradualism has resulted in very few successful top-down gradual transitions to democracy limited to Mexico, Chile, South Korea, and Taiwan as the only exceptions despite U.S. efforts in more than 65 countries since the 1940s (Carothers, 2009). Finkel et al. (2007) did find that gradualism has consistent effects on a country's reform to democracy over extended periods despite the lack of success in regime change. Their findings show that there is a lag between democracy promotion efforts and results making the gradual approach a very long-term investment.

Despite the lack of success through the gradual process in regard to regime change, the gradual approach is still preferred by western policymakers because it is viewed as less likely to create the conditions of a weak transitioning state that make it vulnerable and, thus, attractive to terrorists and extremist leaders (Lutz & Lutz, 2008). These conditions are more readily apparent in states that experienced an abrupt transition to democracy. The subject of an abrupt transition to democracy is rarely discussed in academics and literature. From the U.S. policy standpoint, an abrupt transition usually involves military action (Meernik, 1996). Military action may be limited to host nation activities similar to the removal of President Morsi from power in Egypt in July 2013. Military action may also involve U.S. support in the form of weapons and training, as in Syria in June 2013. In extreme cases, the U.S. has forced an abrupt transition, as in Iraq

in 2003.

Meernik (1996) conducted the only notable research analyzing both military interventions and democratic successes. Meernik revealed that regardless of the manner in which democratic change is measured, most U.S. military democracy-building endeavors do not lead to increased democracy. However, like Finkel et al. (2007), Meernik did find a correlation between military activity and democratic growth. Meernik found that in countries where U.S. military forces intervened, there was an immediate increase in democratization. These countries also showed success in influencing other nations within their regions to make democratic changes. This supports the conclusion that, although it may result in short-term instability, use of military action is a viable option for democracy promotion when immediate or short-term results are required to advance U.S. interests or security.

Haynes (2013) asserted that the type of regime undergoing change is important in determining whether the transitioning regime will become a democratic form of government and whether an abrupt or gradual transition is the best course. According to Haynes, abrupt transitions in military dictatorships and autocratic monarchies are more effective, as it is a challenge to strip power from the elites making fast action ideal. For a military option to be considered a more viable option than a gradual effort, the findings of Lutz and Lutz (2008), stating that transitioning governments are vulnerable to terrorism, must be further researched to determine why this is the case and what can be done to prevent terrorist activities during military democracy promotion operations. The challenge remains that combining these efforts or any formula involving the

developmental approach to democracy is a long and time-consuming process. This process may work in neutral or non-threat regimes, but a more aggressive and immediate approach was called for in Iraq where removal of a military dictator resulted in the collapse of the government.

Military Approach to Democracy Promotion

When the U.S. finds itself in a position to build a collapsed government, intervention through military action has become a common course of action. Hermann and Kegley's research revealed that the U.S. military was used to promote democracy 65 times between 1945 and 1992 (Hermann & Kegley, 2001). This study demonstrates the use of military action to promote democracy is common but does not clearly address the method used by forces in democracy promotion operations. The results of such operations are what Enterline and Greig (2008) referred to as imposed democratic regimes, where the policy practices of a nation are influenced by changing the authority of the state or forced removal of a government authority. The result of such efforts is an imposed democratic regime where a foreign power plays a major role in establishing institutions of government.

In the case of the U.S., the military occupation of both Germany and Japan are touted as evidence that occupation can deliver successful democratic governance to a previously non-democratic state. In the case of Germany, it took only four years for the U.S. to develop Germany into a partner against communist expansion. Merritt (1995) and other notable historians have argued, however, that democracy bloomed in these countries in spite of the U.S. occupation, not because of it. Merritt sited the will and

desire of the population to transform as the main component of success and reported multiple failed efforts by the U.S. to promote democracy such as denazification policy and efforts. In all, the U.S. led 6 major post-conflict nation-building efforts intended to instill democracy in previously undemocratic states prior to entering Iraq. These include Japan and Germany as mentioned before, as well as Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. To the U.S.' credit, all 6 of these nations are currently classified as democracies despite continued struggles in at least four of them. In each case, though there were some consistencies, U.S. forces varied their approach to nation building and democracy promotion.

Grimm and Leininger (2012) conducted one of the only studies that examined how military forces promote democracy, specifically looking at imposed democracy. In their study, Grim and Leininger offered an approach described as a strategy for democratic promotion and development in post-war and post-conflict regimes implemented by stability and peace builders that is consistent with U.S. military activities. In this strategy, stability and peace builders support domestic actors in removing the root causes of violent conflict and creating a democratic government by reforming or rebuilding the security sector to secure the public and create a monopoly on the use of force. This first step is consistent with the U.S. military doctrine of securing the population before further actions can be successful (Department of the Army, 2006). Grimm and Leininger determined that stability and peace builders next work to develop the rule of law to reduce human rights violations and invest in an economy free from corruption. Establishing the rule of law is expected to breed economic growth to dissuade

criminal behaviors while supporting democratic initiates such as elections that give a voice to all segments of society. The U.S. military followed this general strategy in Iraq to replace a culture of control, war, and violent conflict with a culture of tolerance and respect (Department of the Army, 2006) consistent with the current U.S. security strategy.

Grimm and Leininger (2012) argued that the concepts of security and democracy promotion are in conflict, as it is not possible to secure a population and simultaneously promote democracy. Grimm and Leininger cited the case of Morocco as an example of how efforts to ensure a government monopoly on the use of violence led to an authoritarian state, rather than a democratic one. This perspective is contrary to the Army approach to stability operations. The U.S. Army's field manual *Counterinsurgency* explained that the concept of security and democratic development are not opposing concepts:

> Political factors [meaning government development and democratic initiatives] have primacy in counterinsurgency and stability operations [the doctrinal basis for military democracy promotion efforts]. At the beginning of an operation, military actions may appear predominant as security forces conduct operations to secure the populace and kill or capture insurgents; however, political objectives must guide the military's approach as military units consider how operations contribute to strengthening the host-nation government's legitimacy and achieving U.S. goals. (Department of the Army, 2006, pp. 1-22)

As seen here, what Grimm and Leininger described as a strategy of stability and peace

building is essentially the strategy of military forces as the lead in democracy promotion with security and efforts to promote and legitimize the host-nation government simultaneous (Peceny, 2010).

Democracy Promotion and the War on Terror

The decision President George W. Bush to invade Iraq in 2003 included the mission for military forces to remove Saddam Hussein from power and install a democratically elected government. Choosing the use of military forces as the approach to democracy building placed the military as the lead agency of democracy-building efforts in Iraq. Also, President George W. Bush gave the War on Terror and the defeat of transnational terrorism as an additional purpose for the invasion of Iraq (Record, 2003). In doing so, President George W. Bush formalized a new policy of linking the defeat of terrorism to the establishment of democracies. Windsor (2003) spoke on behalf of the government and voiced the George W. Bush administration's position that democratic institutions and procedures allow for peaceful reconciliation of grievances and, therefore, help to address the underlying conditions that fuel Islamic extremism and terror in the Middle East. This perspective is not unique to the Bush administration. Martin Indyk and Strobe Talbot (as cited in Brooks, 2009) argued that democracies were better prepared to confront the challenges of terrorism on behalf of the Clinton Administration in 2002 and 2007. Hamid and Brooke (2010) advanced the belief that the link between democracy and terrorism rests in the fact that without democracy, citizens do not have a peaceful way to express political and social grievances, thus, turn to violence. Collectively, this is the political access school of thought.

Political Access and Strategic Schools of Thought

The political access school of thought holds that by providing multiple venues for citizens to voice their political and social thoughts and agendas, democracies increase the use of legal, non-violent activities and decrease terrorism and other political violence (Piazza, 2007). Advocates of this school of thought conclude that this theory applies well to domestic terrorism, but a lack of study in the field has left the theory untested. Multiple researchers (including Charters, 1994; Crelinsten & Schmid 1992; Eubank & Weinerg, 1994, 1998, & 2001; Li, 2005) have disproved this theory through the study of transnational terrorism where researchers found that transnational terrorist groups are attracted to democracies because democratic freedoms and civil liberties allow terrorist organizations freedom to maneuver within a country. This is known as the strategic school of thought (Piazza, 2007).

Lutz and Lutz (2008) helped explain the gap in these theories through research that showed that political systems in transition are the most vulnerable political systems to both domestic and international terrorist attacks. Their research found that when political systems are in transition from a non-democratic regime to a democratic one, security forces and government institutions are in a state of disarray for an extended period. In transitioning governments, control mechanisms that previously deterred acts of violence are weaker and judicial systems have diminished authority compared to their predecessors. This finding reflects how transitioning democracies have the effects described by the strategic school of thought: attracting terrorism due to freedom to maneuver because of government constraints and individual rights. Lutz and Lutz also

addressed how political access is not ensured during periods of transition due to a lack of established means for public grievance and dispute resolution characteristics of a newly formed democracy would result in a lack of political access and increased political violence. Lutz and Lutz did not test their assertions regarding effects of transition on domestic terrorism, as they focused exclusively on transnational terrorism. Their findings did support the theory that regimes in transition to democratic governments exhibit the qualities that attract transnational terrorism according to both the political access and strategic schools of thought. Thus, regimes transitioning to democracy are the most likely to experience terrorist activities, but we have yet to understand how domestic terrorism is influenced.

Democracy Promotion and Terrorism in Iraq

The invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces in 2003 resulted in an abrupt transition to democracy because of the national security strategy on democracy promotion. This abrupt transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic state resulted in what Lutz and Lutz (2008) described as a transitioning government vulnerable to terrorism, and it was targeted immediately by transnational terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda (Piazza, 2007). U.S. forces, with a coalition of allies, spent more than eight years executing what Grimm and Leininger (2012) described as the stability and peace-builder approach to democracy promotion to stabilize the country and form a constituted and elected democratic government. Wimmer (2003) described the situation in Iraq following the 2003 invasion as a state implosion where the central political institutions crumbled and where transnational terrorists eliminated the government and coalition monopolies on violence.

Despite these observations, the initial establishment of democracy in Iraq appeared promising. By April 2003, political groups banned by Saddam Hussein began to reform. This included strong Sunni political parties such as the Iraqi Islamic Party. The Iraqi Islamic Party even made public speeches about how the party stood for human rights, for helping people, and for rebuilding the country (Davis, 2005). Iraqi tribal and military leaders in the primarily Sunni provinces of Anbar, Ninevah, and Salah al-Din held their own temporary elections to maintain security until U.S. forces established operations in their provinces (Booth, 2003; Booth & Chandrasekaran, 2003; Dawisha, 2005; Gordon & Trainor, 2006; Klein, 2007). Most Iraqis seemed excited about the prospect of democracy after having lived for 20 years under the control of Saddam Hussein's totalitarian rule and political repression (Metz, 1988).

Enthusiasm for democracy among many Sunni Iraqis changed with the activation of transnational terrorists, some of whom had already entered northern Iraq to escape U.S. forces in Afghanistan (Al-Jabouri & Jensen, 2010). These transnational terrorist organizations were successful in influencing the Iraqi population to support terrorism. This was demonstrated when Al-Qaeda in Iraq officially changed its name to the Islamic State of Iraq, and it became an umbrella group for all Sunni resistance in Iraq. Records show the Islamic State of Iraq had more than 10,400 members by June of 2005, and 85% of them were Sunni Iraqis (Karam, 2007). Sunni resistance was evident early in the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Data derived from U.S. Central Command and press reporting indicated that between April 14 and August 3, 2003, the first 4 months of the occupation, there were at least 202 serious incidents of armed resistance across Iraq. Most of these

were in Baghdad or the surrounding area, and most were in Sunni-dominated areas of the country (White & Schmidmayr, 2003). Coalition authorities attributed the vast majority of resistance operations to former regime elements. These potentially included tens of thousands of members of the Saddam Fedayeen, Saddam Hussein's elite military force, Special Republican Guard, Republican Guard, security service, and Ba'ath Party officials (White & Schmidmayr, 2003). This fact has led some to belief that Saddam Hussein anticipated his defeat and planned prior to the invasion to "go to ground" and lead an insurgency that would return him to power after the departure of U.S. forces (Eisenstadt & White, 2005). This theory was given some credence because of Saddam Hussein being found alive inside of an underground bunker by U.S. forces. The insurgency continued on long after his execution, and there is no evidence, however, that Saddam planned to lead a postwar resistance movement or that he played a significant role in the emergence of the insurgency (Johnson, 2005).

A lack of comprehensive understanding about the resistance in Iraq stems from the fact that the resistors are diverse elements with various motives. These include former regime members as previously addressed but also includes Iraqi Islamists, foreign jihadists, angry or aggrieved Iraqis, tribal groups, and criminals. The one binding element is the motive. All groups want to resist the occupation by U.S. forces and overthrow the new Iraqi government (Baram, 2005; Eisenstadt & White, 2005; Johnson, 2005). Although no comprehensive research has been conducted examining why these members of the Sunni Iraqi sect resisted democratic transition in Iraq, a study of current literature (Bremer, 2006; Enterline & Greig, 2008; Feldman & Martinez, 2006; Hadenius & Teorell

2007; Haklai, 2009; O'Donnell & Schmitter, 2013; Pratt, 2007; Sorensen, 2007) highlights 3 categories of causes for internal and external factors negatively affecting democratic transition that apply to Iraq. These causes are many decades of authoritarian rule, ethnosectarian divisions, and lack of security. These are also conditions not present in previous U.S. military democracy promotion operations.

Effects of Authoritarian Rule

The perception that authoritarianism in the Middle East has created a political community that resists democratic transition is common (Haklai, 2009). Davis (2005) explained this perception in the context of Iraq as an authoritarian state since its inception in 1920; the population never developed a shared sense of a single political community. Davis indicated that authoritarian rule created a nation that is largely tribal in organization, especially in rural areas, promoting a social structure that is regional, rather than national, and this undermined political stability and a democratic political culture. The basic premise of an authoritarian government is that the exercise of power by leaders is unregulated. Leaders are either self-appointed or elected, but if they are elected, they cannot be displaced by a vote by citizens making a free choice among competitors (Vesta, 1999).

Under Saddam Hussein, Iraq was specifically a one-party state controlled by a military regime. It was a type of authoritarian state where military officers were the predominant political actors and maintained power, including the head of state, by actual or threatened use of force (Nordlinger, 1977). According to Hadenius and Teorell (2007), the transition to democratic rule is highly unlikely in such governments, observing that

from 1972 through 2003, 77% of the transitions from authoritarian governments through military rule resulted in another authoritarian regime. Although very limited, there are historical examples of the successful transition from a military-ruled one-party system to democracy, primarily in South America. The most notable of these is Brazil, which elected its first President in 1985 ending 21 years of military rule. A key factor in the success of Brazil's transition is that the desire to become a democracy came from inside the military regime. Regime leaders made the decision to make a slow, gradual, and careful transition to democracy, often credited with its success (Mainwaring, 1986). There are cases of abrupt transitions being successful as well. Argentina was a military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983 during which time reports indicate more than 20,000 citizens were tortured by the regime (Jones, 2012). Argentina's transition to democracy occurred only after the British defeated Argentine forces following an invasion of the Falkland Islands. A successful transition in Argentina was based on an official hand-offs of the government and its institutions from military forces to the new civilian organizations vis-à-vis a collapse of the government and total rebuild of institutions (Jones, 2012). Like Iraq, these states were once colonies, experienced a decade or more of military rule, and had only a one-party system. Hadenius and Teorell noted that these transitions were unusually successful, as military multiparty systems are the political systems most likely to transition to democracy, suggesting that it is the presence of multiple political parties in the political system that make democracy successful. This finding supports Davis's (2005) statements that a shared sense of political community is an essential ingredient to an authoritarian state succeeding at democratic transition.

Many current academic studies attribute the structure of authoritarian rule and lack of political community to colonization (Haklai, 2009; Pratt, 2007; Simon, 2008; Valbjørn & Bank, 2010). Prior to the 21st century, many scholars favored the theory associated with orientalism. In this context, *orientalism* refers to the belief that Islam, as a culture, favored authoritarianism and is not compatible with democratic principles (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1995; Hourani, 1983; Lewis, 1993; Safran, 1961; Smith, 1973, 1983). A greater understanding of Islam and a closer study of the Middle East dispelled this theory in the 21st century (Almond, 2007; Nanquette, 2013), which led to a greater understanding of the role colonialism played in developing the complex social structures seen in modern Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes (Pratt, 2007).

Iraq is a member of a group of nations characterized as one-party political regimes that lacked development while under colonial rule (Moten, 2012). Haklai (2009) predicted that such countries, meaning those that had a hegemonic single ruling party at the end of colonization, universally transitioned to authoritarian rule and created the current social and cultural conditions of countries with no middle class that was divided by ethnic groups and religious sects. In cases such as Iraq, once colonial powers left the region, and anti-colonial struggles began, populations sought to establish self-identities. As a result, tribal structure and individual group identity began to prevail, calling for a strong central figure to maintain the nation state (Pratt, 2007). In Iraq, this self-identify created a nation where tribal loyalty is superior to any national identity and later single-party affiliation as a Ba'athist, associated with Sunni Islam, evolved as a self-identifying trait (Simon, 2008). Saddam Hussein banned independent groups or any political

organizations to absorb any independent social identification into his authoritarian state and increase his control (Henry & Springborg, 2010). The resulting cultural lack of social and political diversity shape political legitimacy in Arab countries such as Iraq where populations and citizens accept political authority as that which provides for their welfare and security (Valbjørn & Bank, 2010). Valbjørn and Bank (2010) concluded that this thinking becomes institutionalized and becomes the understood role of authority and government in a society.

Although one can argue that a democratic form of government will offer the same welfare and security as an authoritarian regime, the emergence of multiple political groups competing for power and the debate over ideas often leads such populations to conclude that democracy is chaotic and does not provide results in the form of welfare and security (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 2013). This literature highlights that, historically, a significant challenge in transitioning from authoritarian to democratic rule is, thus, getting the citizenry comfortable with an open debate of ideas and political options. This is particularly difficult to achieve in the period of transition when welfare and security will likely decline as new institutions become familiar with their role in a new democratic society (Cheibub, Gandhi, & Vreeland, 2010). There remains a gap in the literature regarding whether open debate, political options, reduced welfare, and security were factors in the decision by some Iraqis to resist the transition to democracy, as literature on the subject would lead one to expect.

Ethno Sectarian Divisions

Ethno sectarian divisions, characterized by the state being partitioned along

ethnic or sectarian lines, dominate Iraq as a nation state. In Iraq, this division is primarily along Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish lines (Marr, 2009). Currently, the demographic composition of Iraq consists of approximately 55% Arab Shia, 20% Arab Sunnis, and 17% Kurds, along with several small groups such as the Turkmen, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and others (O'Leary, 2007; see Figure 1). This ethnosectarian division results in what is known as a *security dilemma*. Williams and Simpson (2008) explained that a security dilemma exists when one community is distrustful of a second community and, at the same time, its own defensive actions are viewed as antagonistic to the security of the other groups involved.

Within Iraq, ethnosectarian divisions and the ensuing security dilemma can be traced back to the establishment of Iraq by the British following World War I (Hourani, 2013). When the British drew Iraq's borders, the people of the newly formed nation were of different ethnic groups, religious beliefs, and languages. They were expected to assume their new identity as Iraqis despite these vast differences (Hourani, 2013). Not understanding these differences or the complex relationship between these ethnic groups, the British placed King Faisal, a Sunni Arab from Syria and ally of Britain, in charge of the new state. King Faisal placed Sunni Arab elites from Iraq in positions of authority within the government and allowed them to monopolize the military (Kaufmann & Haklai, 2008). This is what Murray and Scales (2009) identified as a defining decision in the ongoing ethnosectarian conflict in Iraq.

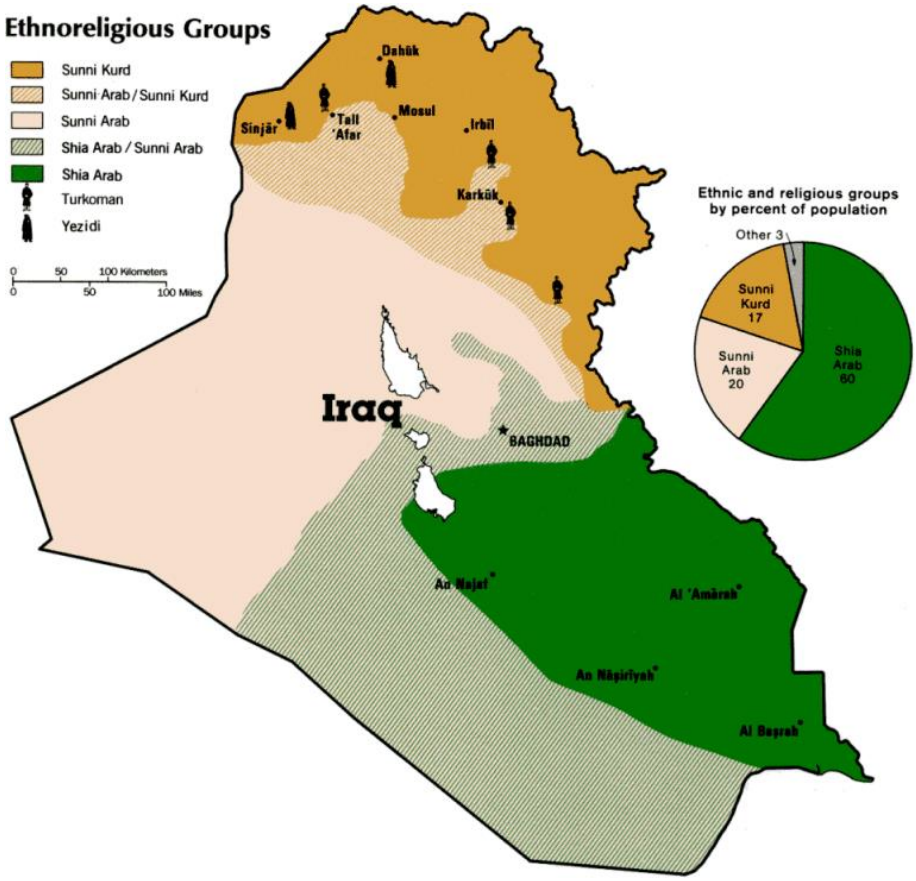

Figure 1. Ethnic and religious groups in Iraq (adapted from Hourani, 2013).

Research by Murray and Scales led them to offer that efforts by King Faisal to unite Iraqis along secular Arab lines alienated the majority of the Iraqi population. This alienation led to demands for autonomy and conflict that resulted in strong military control and continued authoritarian rule by Sunni minorities.

When Iraq gained its independence from Britain in 1932, the Shia majority (approximately 60% of the population) held only approximately 15% of government posts and most of those were low-level positions (Hourani, 2013). Fearon, Kasara, and Laitin (2007) found that countries with heads of state from ethnic minority groups are

prone to violence and civil war. Kaufman and Haklai (2008) found that this is because maintaining minority political hegemony called for extensive reliance on the exclusion of majority groups in any decision making. To enforce this, Iraq developed a very large military force that controlled the population. For example, Bengio (1999) cited the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds in northern Iraq where, reportedly, 50,000 Kurds were killed following Kurdish demands for autonomy.

More than 70 years of authoritarian control by minority rulers in Iraq has created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust even after a decade of democratic transition. Dawisha (2009) saw this as a classic security dilemma where each sect within Iraq fears the power held by other sects. Specifically, as the Shia sect works to rebalance power and achieve the rights and positions it was denied in society under Sunni rule, the Sunni sect fears retribution for past atrocities as well as marginalization within the new government. Each sect views the other's actions as a threat and responds to even defensive acts by the other with hostility. These perceptions help demonstrate why, despite democracy's many theoretical advantages, these advantages do not tend to accrue in societies divided along racial, ethnic, or religious lines. If Iraq's mutually hostile sects gain a voice in government, they may be able to resolve their differences peacefully through the political system rather than resort to violence. The question of why members of these sects see violence as a better alternative than the democratic process remains unanswered in current literature.

Lack of Security

Scholars have observed that regimes in transition to democratic governance are

vulnerable to violence and terrorism (Lutz & Lutz, 2008). For example, Gisselquist (2008) used Nigeria to describe how the violence and lack of security it creates during this vulnerable period often lead to a failed transition to democracy. In the case of Nigeria, violence and a lack of security repeatedly resulted in the military seizing control of the government in what they proclaimed as a need to restore security. This resulted in continued military rule for 24 years, despite democratic aspirations. Englebert and Tull (2008) found that of 19 peace operations in support of democratic transitions in Africa, 10 operations failed to see democracy enacted, all due to violence. Branch and Cheeseman (2008) used the case study of Kenya to conclude that opening up states that lack the effective rule of law and legitimate use of force invites violence and disaster. States that lack the effective rule of law and legitimate use of force tend to lack mutual trust and have limited social and administrative control. Removing the restraints used by military or authoritarian regimes invites a lack of control and increased violence (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008).

Prior to its democratic transition, Iraq was what Diamond (2008) referred to as a predatory state. Diamond explained that states under authoritarian and military rule desire control. Leaders in such countries maintain order through military and police violence and fear of this violence. For such states to transition successfully to democracy, Diamond advocated the creation of agencies designed to regulate the power and control over a society and its security forces. Through such organizations, security forces maintain a secure environment without abuse of power or control. Chomsky (2007) found that the lack of such measures leads to an inability of the state to protect its citizens from

overt and covert violence and potential destruction of the country. Chomsky found that a trigger for violence in such states is the expression of dissent by the population. Prior to the 2003 invasion, the people in Iraq were so tightly controlled that all opposition groups were banned. Any efforts to resist rule under the Ba'ath Party and Hussein were crushed. For democracy to flourish, Chomsky found that the people must be protected by the state when they voice dissent. A lack of security and a failure to protect the population defeat the principles that a democratic process is trying to instill. Extant literature shows the need to secure a population during democratic transition against both political violence by opposition forces and leadership and security forces that have not embraced political freedoms.

Summary

Resistance to democratic transition has been extensively researched, and the findings from previous studies have been well documented. Although researchers have approached violent resistance to democratic transition from various angles, with most focusing on international terrorism and failure of state institutions such as security forces, there has been a consensus that democratic transition creates a period of vulnerability where terrorists and political failures have led to a failure to transition to democratic governance. Despite the research in the field, there remains a gap in studies regarding the role of domestic terrorism in this struggle.

Previous researchers of terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition found that instability and state-sponsored violence promote terrorism. They also found that political instability escalates into transnational terrorism because instability creates

conditions that allow terrorists to thrive.

Despite the lack of a specific study on domestic terrorism and resistance to democracy, domestic terrorism is widely studied. For example, Crenshaw (2010) found that the primary cause of domestic terrorism and political violence in modern states is when an identifiable subgroup within the population has grievances with the state's delivery of political goods. A social movement develops to address these grievances and terrorism ensues. The U.S. has taken the position that the promotion of democracy allows subgroups a forum to voice political grievances in a non-violent manner.

Research shows that how democracy is promoted in a society affects whether democracy activities will succeed and to what degree. Historically, there are two distinct approaches to promoting democracy and instilling the principles of democracy in daily state operations: the political approach and the developmental approach. Carothers (2009) explained that the political approach focuses on core political processes such as elections, political parties, and politically-oriented civic groups. The developmental approach to democracy promotion attempts to avoid these conditions by focusing on institutions and building a capacity to maintain democratic ideals. It sees democracy as one contributing factor in a larger state process rather than the fundamental aspect of the process (Carothers, 2009). Kopstein (2006) advocated that a combination of the political and developmental approaches would be the most successful approach in democracy promotion efforts. Kopstein found that focusing on elections and developing political parties obscured what happened after the elections. Without the developmental approach to democracy building, a state has no capacity to carry out the will of its people, but

without the political approach, a state would fail to know the will of its people.

The primary challenge with a combined approach to democracy promotion is that it is time-consuming and it provides limited results visible to the population. A lack of political results and progress creates dissatisfaction and welcomes violence. This has led to a broad debate about whether the transition to democracy is best if done abruptly, thus, giving the population some immediate means to influence the government, or if the transition should be slower to allow for institutions to reform to support democratic principles. The vulnerabilities of transitioning regimes are a source of debate regarding whether democracy promotion is most effective if it is gradual, with a controlled top-down process of gradual change resulting from internal and external influences. Alternatively, some question whether democracy promotion is more effective if the change is abrupt, brought on by regime failures resulting in loss of legitimacy and forced change (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). In Iraq, the decision was made to place the military at the forefront of democracy promotion efforts, thus, making the transition abrupt. The results of such operations are what Enterline and Greig (2008) referred to as imposed democratic regimes, where the policy practices of a nation are influenced by changing the authority of the state or forced removal of a government authority. Forced removal of a government authority in Iraq resulted in transnational terrorist groups emerging to resist implementation of democracy and the eventual joining of these groups by Iraqi citizens.

Research explaining why members of the Iraqi population choose to join this resistance has been inadequate. However, research has been conducted to examine why democratic transitions fail. Iraq meets 3 of the current failing criteria: (a) many decades

of authoritarian rule, (b) ethnosectarian divisions, and (c) a lack of security. Hadenius and Teorell (2007) found that transition to democratic rule is highly unlikely in authoritarian governments with a one-party system such as Iraq. Hadenius and Teorell noted that the presence of multiple political parties in a political system makes democracy transition more likely to be successful. Davis (2005) associated this with a shared sense of political community and found it is essential to an authoritarian state succeeding at democratic transition. Iraq lacks a shared sense of community as demonstrated by the strong sectarian divides within the country. Sunni control of the government focused on limiting any political influence of other sects and worked to ensure complete obedience to Sunni leadership. The government accomplished this through the presence of a strong military, and it even used military operations against non-Sunni populations (Bengio, 1999). The presence of strong military control has historically created a security gap following regime change. In this case, security concerns include vulnerability to transnational and domestic terrorism but also to internal security forces and government abuses. Chomsky (2007) found the need for internal control measures to regulate military and security force actions a critical component of democracy promotion efforts. A lack of such measures leads to an inability of the state to protect its citizens from overt and covert violence and potential destruction of the country.

Exant research adequately addresses the issues of terrorism, democracy promotion, and the failure of states in democratic transition. However, there remains a gap in the current literature regarding why increased political access, brought on by a transition to democracy, does not allow for the adequate address of public grievances.

Current literature in the area of domestic terrorism regarding why a transition to democracy creates domestic terrorism where there was no previous record of such violence is inadequate. As a result, this research identified what factors cause an individual to support terrorism and violent resistance against a transitioning democratic government.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology, research design, research questions, data collection, and study sample. Chapter 3 also explains the data analysis, the instrument for assessing the data, and the issues of reliability and validity.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The goal of this research was to explain why individuals use terrorism to resist democratic transition. Using a case study approach, this research focused on members of the Sunni Iraqi sect who supported the use of terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces. The case study method is explanatory and uses secondary analysis of data, applying the content analysis research approach. An explanatory case study seeks to explain a phenomenon or events to predict future events in similar conditions (Harder, 2010). This research used one data set consisting of 15 interviews. The remainder of this chapter outlines the research design and rationale in more detail. This includes a description of the research tradition used, the rationale behind using the tradition of inquiry, the theory that grounds the study, data collection procedures (including the sample population and the researcher's role), the data analysis framework, and issues of ethics, biases, and participant protection.

Research Question

The primary research question in this study was: What factors influenced members of the Sunni sect to resist democratic transition, through either the use of or support for terrorism, following the invasion of U.S. forces and the establishment of a transitional democratic government in Iraq?

Secondary Research Questions

1. What conditions (i.e., political, social, military, and economic) in Iraq in 2003 contributed to the decision by members of the Sunni sect to support terrorism

against a transitioning democratic government? Did any particular factor have a greater influence on this decision than other factors did?

2. How did terrorist groups use these conditions to encourage Sunni Iraqis to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did terrorists use any other factors as a means to gain support for their activities against a transitioning government?
3. What are the identifiable attitudes, common experiences, and patterns of behavior shared by those individuals who supported terrorism against a transitioning democratic government of Iraq?

Research Approach and Design

The research tradition used in this study was qualitative, using a single explanatory case study. The qualitative research tradition is based on the understanding that individuals construct meaning as they interact with the world and that these interactions shape their understanding and reality of the world (Hays, 2011). I selected qualitative research as the preferred method for this study because it centers on understanding and explaining why events are perceived as they are. In identifying factors that influence a decision, perception of events and an explanation of what shaped that perception is deemed as critical.

As a result, the current study is one of qualitative research; the intent of this research was to explain why an individual made the choices he or she did in supporting terrorism through identification of factors in his or her decision making. These factors can then be used to explain events or behaviors and predict future outcomes in similar

circumstances (McNabb, 2008). My purpose for this study was to collect, analyze, and interpret data from Sunni Iraqis who supported terrorism against the transitioning government of Iraq to gain insight into the factors that influenced this decision and to develop predictors for support of terrorism in similar future events. To accomplish this, I used a qualitative case study approach to present personal experiences of Iraqis who either participated in terrorist events or supported the use of terrorism against the transitioning government.

Methodological Approach: Explanatory Case Study

This research applied an explanatory case study approach using both inductive and deductive content analysis to explain events and behaviors in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces. Researchers generally use case studies to explore certain phenomena. An explanatory case study allows researchers to go one step further than other forms of a case study because it allows researchers to move beyond only understanding phenomena and instead helps researchers explain the phenomona (Harder, 2010). According to Harder (2010), a properly constructed explanatory case study consists of an accurate description of the facts of the case, discusses alternative explanations, and draws conclusions based on credible explanations that are fact based.

Consistent with Harder's (2010) construct, this research began by providing a detailed description of events in Iraq from March 2003 to the end of U.S. operations in 2011 through multiple published sources using inductive content analysis to identify emerging themes. This research examined alternative points of view and understanding of events through interviews conducted in Iraq from 2003 to 2009 with individuals who

resisted the transition to democracy in Iraq through terrorism to identify factors that influenced their decisions. Once themes were identified in the interviews and details documented, general conclusions regarding factors that influence the decision to resist government transition through terrorism. A deductive approach was then applied as these factors were examined in the context of the causation theory.

To accomplish this, this study followed the tradition of a qualitative single explanatory case study. By applying this approach, the single case study of Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces allowed the issue of resisting government transition through terrorism to be explored while examining multiple sources, individuals within Iraq, as a means of taking into account various points of view and illustrating the issues and factors that led to the decision to resist democratic transition through terrorism (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Applying the technique of a single qualitative explanatory case study allows for close examination of multiple individual perspectives on the issue of transition in Iraq and terrorism through the use of multiple sources and allows for consideration of various influences within Iraq and the associated attributes on each individual's decisions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Once each particular perspective is examined and analyzed, interviews were compared to one another to find consistent factors that influenced participants. This is known as *between-case analysis* (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The last step taken was *cross-case analysis* (Baxter & Jack, 2008) where a comprehensive look across all subunits (individuals interviewed) was made to reach conclusions about the decision by some members of the Sunni Iraqi sect to resist government transition in Iraq through terrorism. Applying this technique allowed for

deep analysis and led to the clear identification of consistent factors that influenced decisions.

Justification of Research Method

This approach is the best way of examining an issue where individual decisions and influences are being considered. Baxter and Jack (2008) explained that qualitative case studies are the best method of researching to explain events and influences in the context in which they occurred. This is best accomplished by using multiple sources of data to gain a more holistic understanding of the conditions surrounding the event and decisions. Yin (2011) offered that among rigorous qualitative case studies, explanatory case studies are the most difficult because explanatory case studies cannot prove anything with certainty. Despite this fact, explanatory cases have a unique research value in that they offer meaningful cause-and-effect relationships regarding the subject. In this case, a case study involving Sunni Iraqis can explain what events and circumstances caused individuals to determine that the democratic transitional government was not preferred and supporting terrorism offered a better future even if it does not prove any facts. In cases such as this, an explanatory case study offers the best source of clues and explanation to a subject that is not right for experimentation and is influenced by conditions, making explanatory case studies better than leaving the phenomenon unstudied (Yin, 2011).

Context of the Study

This research is based on a single explanatory case study with embedded units' method of data collection and analysis. The scope of the research is centered on Iraq from

2003 to 2011 and those members of the Sunni Iraqi sect who chose to resist government transition by participating in or supporting terrorism. The Sunni sect was the ruling minority sect in Iraq since 1920 despite comprising only 32% of the Iraqi population. The United-States-backed Constitution of Iraq was approved and implemented in 2004, transitioning the government of Iraq to an official democratic government under which the Shia majority voted itself into power in 2005.

The Role of the Researcher

The Researcher's Role and Biases

Creswell (2012) stated that in qualitative research, the role of the researcher is that of the primary data collection instrument. As the primary data collection instrument, the researcher's biases and assumptions shape his or her research. As the researcher in this study, my four years' experience working as an intelligence officer in Iraq is a primary source of bias. My work in Iraq was primarily within the northern region, where most Sunni Iraqis reside. This direct experience with events in Iraq during the time studied provided me an understanding of the context of events that enhanced the research. When research participants conveyed experiences and events, I was able to place them in context quickly. I am also a member of the U.S. Army. This provides me a military perspective of events. Although this perspective was likely different from the perspective of research participants, it allowed me to balance participants' comments and observations and provide a more in-depth analysis. Every effort was made to ensure objectivity; however, these biases may have shaped the way I viewed and understood the data collected. I approached this research understanding that people, including Iraqis, are

complex and diverse in thought and action and the researcher's experience did not apply to all participants or experiences.

Ethical Considerations

The use of secondary data helps to limit ethical concerns in this research. All data used in this study were previously published and available to the public. The only unpublished data were the personal interview notes taken by Kukis in the process of conducting interviews. Notes centered on the conditions surrounding the interview and helped me to understand the setting and better apply context to the interview transcripts. These interview data were used and stored on a locked external hard drive, ensuring the data were secure and inaccessible to others. All interviewees were given code names in the initial interview notes, so there was no ethical risk of interviewee names or personal data accidentally being released. All other data were publicly available.

The greatest ethical challenge in this research was narrowing down the vast amounts of data while ensuring equal attention and coverage of various perspectives. To mitigate this, a strict research protocol was applied. The research protocol entailed the fundamentals of content analysis, focused on identifying factors and units of analysis. A thorough *triangulation* through multiple previously published sources of data available to the public also helped to mitigate bias. A potential bias lay in understanding the cultural norms of the Iraqi people. Because I was not from the same culture as the subjects of the case study, values and morals between the participants and the researcher varied. The subject audience was less sensitive to violence and conflict than the researcher, and the subject audience lived by a different set of morals. Therefore, all data must be viewed

through the culture and values of the Iraqi population. This was achieved based on my 4 years in the country of Iraq and extensive training in the culture and thinking of the Iraqi people.

Assumption, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions are things presumed by researchers and readers of research (Creswell, 2012). Two assumptions underlie this research. The first assumption is that the participants experienced a change in their thoughts and behaviors. Specifically, participants did not previously support terrorism, but events or factors led them to a change in attitude and perspective that influenced them to support terrorism. A second assumption was that factors being considered (i.e., political, military, economic, social, religious, terrorist strategy, and personal experience) encompassed all factors that played a major role in the decision to support terrorism over a transition to a democratic government.

Limitations are those influences that the researcher cannot control (Creswell, 2012). The primary limitation of this research was the sole use of secondary data due to a lack of access to the subject population. Security issues in Iraq prevented access to the Iraqi people and limited the researcher's ability to collect original data. As a result, this research relied solely on secondary data. Use of secondary data restricts the ability to ask follow-up questions and risks the use of biased information based on the original researcher's purpose for collection and analysis of the data.

The second limitation involved the decision to limit this research to members of the Sunni sect. The decision to eliminate other sects from this study, specifically

members of the Shia sect, was due to the research objective of examining terrorism as a means of resisting a transition to democratic government. In general, members of the Shia sect participated in terrorist acts to influence and shape the new democratic government of Iraq, not as a means of resisting the transition to democracy. As a result, the Sunni sect was the better sample population to measure resistance to a democratic transition.

Delimitations are those boundaries set by the researcher to manage research and expectations (Creswell, 2012). There were two primary delimitations in this research. The actual practices of nation building, to include policy decision to conduct democracy building or to execute military intervention to promote democracy was not discussed. The intent of this research was not to determine whether democracy promotion is a valid tool for national security or the best means to execute democracy-building operations. The intent of this research was limited to understanding why individuals or groups would think terrorism is a better option than a transition to a democratic government.

Subject Population

The subject population in this case study is those Sunni Iraqis who supported terrorism instead of a transition to a democratic government in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by Unites States forces. Secondary data, in the form of documents, were collected through a library search and various Internet-based search engines. Data included journal articles, government publications, news articles, white papers, and previous research to explain the factors that led them to this decision. This study did not use original data collection sources due to civil unrest within Iraq at the time of the

research causing a lack of access. Secondary data sources protected the identities of all sources through false names. Additionally, no individuals under the age of 18 were used in any data applied to this study.

Selection of the location, period of time, ethnic sect, and setting of this research was based on criterion sampling. Iraq, specifically highly Sunni populated areas, between 2003 and 2009 meets the criteria of a large group of individuals within an ethnic sect that decided to resist democratic transition through the support for terrorism after the collapse of the country's authoritarian regime. Convenience sampling was used to identify the individual interviews used as a data source in this study. Due to limited access to the population, secondary data were the exclusive data source in this research. Selection of 15 previously conducted interviews with Sunni Iraqis who supported terrorism against the transitioning government was based on access to the interviews and all interview notes.

Theoretical Foundation

In an attempt to gain insight into the factors that led participants to support terrorism over a transition to a democratic government, the political access subset of rational choice theory within the context of Crenshaw's (2007) 3 levels of causation for terrorism was used. It provided the framework for collecting, describing, and explaining the factors in each individual's decision to support terrorism over a transition to a democratic government.

The political access subset of the rational choice theory was proposed by Sandler and Lapan (1988) and further developed by Enders and Sandler (2012). Rational choice

theorists assert that terrorism is the result of rational and informed decisions. By suggesting that terrorism is primarily a means to obtain a desired political result, Enders and Sandler refuted many specialists who believed that terrorism was the result of pathological or illogical behavior. Within rational choice theory, Eyerman (1998) proposed that terrorist organizations, being rational groups seeking political resolution, would act within legal, non-violent means if they believed that non-violence would change their society. Krieger and Meierrieks (2011) further developed Eyerman's theory, concluding that offering a non-violent and cost-efficient means of conflict resolution through political access does, in fact, reduce political violence. Known collectively as the political access school of rational choice theory, this approach provides a basis for examining terrorism as a political act with an expected end. The political access school of rational choice theory allows the researcher to consider why radicals might select terrorism (a form of political violence) as a method of resolution over other viable non-violent political alternatives and means of political access.

In this research, the political access school of rationale choice theory was used in the context of Crenshaw's (2007) 3 levels of causation: (a) the social, military, and economic situation in Iraq at the time; (b) the strategies used by terrorist groups that influenced the population; and (c) the identifiable attitudes, common experiences, or patterns of behavior shared by the individual participants. In this qualitative study, these levels of causation allowed for the identification of factors that influenced the decision to support terrorism. Factors included political conditions or beliefs, social conditions such as tribal affiliation, economic conditions or circumstances, the military situation or

violence, religion or religious beliefs, the strategy of recruitment or pressure applied by terrorists and terrorist organizations, and any personal experience an individual has. A conceptual matrix was used to categorize the factors by case and to identify patterns (see Figure 2). This portion of the study is deductive in that it used Crenshaw's theory as a guide for examining similarities and differences in the individuals' decision making. The study was clearly qualitative, however, in that the research must interpret all of the similarities and differences in an inductive manner. A case study approach allows theory to guide the study but facilitates an interpretive understanding of all factors and how they influenced the outcome.

Variables	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6	Case 7	Case 8	Case 9	Case 10	Case 11	Case 12
Political												
Social												
Economic												
Military												
Religion												
Terrorist Strategy												
Personal Experience												

Figure 2. Components of causation within rationale choice theory. The variables are adapted from Crenshaw's (2001) three levels of causation.

Data Collection

Creswell (2012) emphasized that in a case study, data collection is very extensive and draws data from multiple sources that should include documents, observations, interviews, archival records, and physical artifacts. Unlike the conventional case studies Creswell addressed, this research relied on secondary data analysis as the primary data

source. Secondary analysis involves the analysis of data that were gathered for a previous study to address a new research question (Long-Sutehall & Addington-Hall, 2011). Fielding (2000) recommended the use of secondary analysis of data as a source when addressing a sensitive area of research or when studying a population that is not accessible due to lifestyle or danger.

In addition to these recommended occasions for use, authors have historically used secondary analysis of data to:

- Pursue interests other than those of the original data collector (Hinds et al., 1997);
- Perform additional analysis on original set of data (Heaton, 1998; Hinds et al., 1997);
- Apply a new perspective or a new theory to original research or data (Heaton, 1998); and
- Describe the current or historical attributes and behavior of individuals, societies, groups, or organizations (Corti & Thompson, 1995).

Kukis (2011) collected the original qualitative data set that was used as the primary data source for this research from 2003 through 2009 in Iraq. Kukis published interviews with 68 Iraqis affected by the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces and the acts of terror that followed. Consistent with qualitative research, participants and sites were purposefully selected to best help understand the effects that the U.S. invasion of Iraq had on Iraqis. Interview participants came from various regions in Iraq and were interviewed at their homes or public locations. Participants included former public officials, terrorists, and victims. Of the 68 participants, 15 individuals ultimately supported terrorism as a

means of resisting the transition to a democratic government. Kukis' work represents the best source of secondary data due to the complete and thorough interview data he provided in his published work. Each interview includes the circumstances of the interview, the questions asked, and the complete responses, making this a unique source of data on the thoughts and motivations of the participants.

Additional data collection for this research included document analysis and historical analysis.

Document Analysis

The primary method of data collection used in this study was document analysis applying the inductive analysis approach. Bowen (2009) observed that document analysis, as a systematic way of reviewing documents, requires that data be interpreted to gain meaning, understanding, and knowledge regarding the subject. According to Thomas (2003), "the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (p. 2). Documents subject to analysis may include archived records, newspaper articles, meeting minutes and attendance logs, personal journals, letters, or any written text pertinent to the subject. Labuschagne (2003) explained that the technique of document analysis involves finding, selecting, making sense of, and synthesizing data and then organizing it into major themes and explanatory examples through content analysis.

Yin (2011) noted that document analysis is a key technique in qualitative work, as it allows researchers to draw upon multiple sources of evidence, thus, breeding credibility

into their research. This is known as triangulation, a technique in which researchers make use of multiple sources to provide corroborating evidence of their findings and conclusions (Creswell, 2007).

Historical Analysis

Historical analysis is the effort of reconstructing the past through a systemic process that entails objectively collecting, evaluating, verifying, and synthesizing data to establish facts and reach conclusions (Babbie, 2007). This study began by providing a detailed description of events in Iraq from March 2003 until October 2009. This period begins with the initial decision by some members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to resist the interim government and to support terrorism and concludes when the Sunni supporters of terrorism chose to resist Al-Qaeda and to participate in the new democratic government of Iraq. This review identified key historical events relevant to the decision to resist the transition to a democratic government and to interpret them in a way pertinent to the objective of the study.

Historical analysis has been criticized as biased and slanted when it uses inaccurate information (Georgi & Mason, 1994). However, historical analysis remains applicable to qualitative research since the intent of the research is to explain the thinking, decision cycle, and worldview of research participants. Although multiple sources were used in this research to avoid participant bias, participant bias is acceptable as a means of understanding personal perspectives, thoughts, and explanations of the events (Babbie, 2007). Historical data outlined in the timeline of Iraqi events were used to validate participant views and document analysis.

Research Sources

All data used in this research came from unclassified sources available to the public. Most data were taken from government collections and databases assembled for the purpose of identifying lessons learned from past or historical military activities. The sources for this secondary data included the following:

- Interviews conducted by Mark Kukis (2011) published by Columbia University Press.
- The Combined Arms Research Library, which is the research center for the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Combined Arms Center, which also serves military scholars and researchers throughout the U.S. and overseas.
- The Walden University Research Database.
- The Center for Army Lessons Learned, which provides oversight to the Army Lessons Learned Program and serves as the manager of the Army's central electronic repository for lessons learned information and historical documentation.
- The Combating Terrorism Center, West Point, which is an independent, privately funded, research and educational institution that contributes to the academic body of knowledge on combating terrorism and informs counterterrorism policy and strategy.

Data Analysis Method and Coding: Systems Analysis

Consistent with inductive data analysis, merging themes (or factors) were developed by repeatedly studying the transcripts of previously conducted interviews and identifying possible meanings and how these meaning fit with themes and patterns that were identified and developed. Specifically, interviews were studied to group segments of text by theme and diagrams were created to focus on what was emerging and to link interview participants themes and dominant factors together to reach conclusions. Towards the end of the study no new themes emerged, which suggested that major themes had been identified and the data saturated (Marshall, 1999, p. 419). Once the analysis of each unit was complete, a cross-case analysis was performed across all interviews to further categorizing each interview or case within factors of causation. The collected data identified patterns in the decisions by the 15 interview participants regarding their support for terrorism and resistance to a new democratic government. These findings were compared to data collected through document analysis, archival records, and historical analysis as a means of triangulation.

For the purpose of this study, data collection focused on six factors: (a) political, (b) military, (c) economic, (d) social/religion, (e) terrorist strategies, and (f) personal experience. This facilitates a systems approach to explaining the decision cycle of terrorism supporters and helps to identify the main factor in the decision to resist democratic transition and support terrorism. This main factor is what military analysts refer to as the *center of gravity*. The center of gravity is the source of power or motivation that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act (U.S. Joint

Chiefs of Staff, 2013). A *system* is defined as a functionally-, physically-, or behaviorally-related group of regularly interacting or interdependent factors forming a unified whole resulting in, in this case, the decision to resist a transition to a democratic government through support for terrorism (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013). One way to think of the environment of terrorism and political violence is a set of complex and continually interacting political, military, economic, social, religious, and terrorist-influenced factors as depicted in Figure 3. The central idea of systems analysis is based on an analogy with biology. Just as the heart, lungs, and blood function as a whole, so do the components of social and political systems (Borgatti et al., 2009). When one component changes or comes under stress, the other components will adjust to compensate (see Figure 3). I used this approach to analysis to identify the key and influential factor that triggered support for terrorism and to determine how that factor influenced other factors to result in violent resistance to a transition to a democratic government. All effort was made to identify the factor that was most significant in the decision to support terrorism (the center of gravity) to identify it for an early address in future democracy building operations.

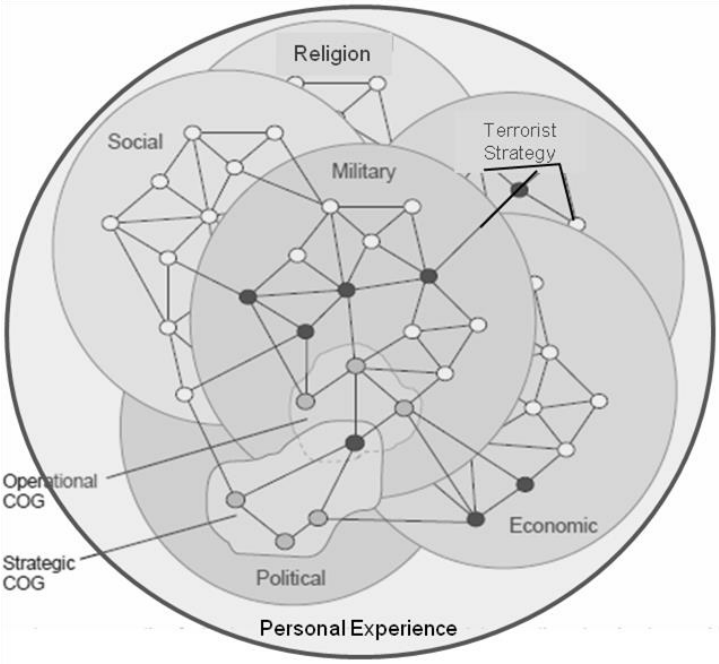

Figure 3. A sample of an interconnected operation environment adapted from United States Joint Chiefs of Staff (2013).
Note. A systems perspective of causation facilitates understanding of how various factors or variables interrelate to shape a person's experience and perspective on an issue such as terrorism.

Political factor: In this study, the term political refers to a government system empowered to regulate the structures for a group through governance. This factor measures how the roles of governance, regulation, and political structure, as well as government interaction in the participants' lives, influenced their decisions to support terrorism. The measures of politics included affiliation with a political group or party, motivation by a government system or structure, concern regarding power sharing, or a lack of governance in society. In this case study, since the largest assessed population of Sunni terrorists are former Ba'ath Party members, a political factor may include a participant's affiliation with the Ba'ath Party under Saddam Hussein.

Military factor: In this study, the term military measures the influence military activities had on the individual's decision to support terrorism. Military activities may include influence due to prior military service, the presence of foreign military and extremist forces in the country, and violence and threat activity. This includes violence against government forces and institutions, against foreign military forces, and against civilians.

Economic factor: The economic factor measures the effects economic and financial conditions had on participants in their decision to support terrorism. Economic influence may be caused by a lack of income and poor economic conditions or the promise of revenue and increased economic conditions following support for terrorism.

Social factor: The social factor measures the effects current social conditions had on a participant's decision to support terrorism. Tribe, family, and local leader influences define social conditions. Social conditions also included the use of social media and public gatherings as a means of influencing decisions by participants. In this research, this factor includes the status of the Iraqi Sunni sect, which was the ruling minority prior to the transition to a democratic government.

Religious factor: The religious factor measures the role religion or membership in a religious sect played in a participant's decision to support terrorism. In the context of this study, this factor measures whether an individual's religious desire to form an Islamic caliphate or to ensure Islamic or Sunni domination within Iraq drove their support for terrorism.

Terrorist strategies: For the purpose of this study, terrorist strategies refer to persuasive instruments that active terrorists used to gain supporters. This may include media, direct contact, or mass communication methods as well as message catalysts. Previous terrorist strategies have been couched in patriotic or religious terms, have focused on a need of the recruit, promised social advancement, or have been couched in the excitement of revolution.

Personal experience: Personal experience measured whether an event or series of events experienced by an individual influenced that individual's decision to support terrorist activities. Personal experience may include negative contact with government, military, or foreign forces. Personal experience may also include the death or injury of an associate. Under the systems approach to analysis, an experience can lead to a perspective shift when it comes to other factors and serves as a facilitator for behavior such as support for terrorism.

Coding

All data used in this research were analyzed using inductive coding both during and after collection in order to codify the data. A researcher codifies data by applying codes during collection and reapplying them during analysis. The act of codifying allows the data to be segregated, grouped, regrouped, and applied to a systems approach to understanding meaning and explanation (Saldana, 2012). Inductive coding was used in this research. The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow findings to emerge from frequent, dominant or significant themes identified in the raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006). Per this strategy,

emerging themes (or factors) were developed by studying the transcripts of interviews and considering possible meanings and how these fit with developing themes. This inductive approach aids in understanding complex data through the development of summary themes or categories from the raw data ("data reduction") (e.g., Backett & Davison, 1995; Stolee, Zaza, Pedlar, & Myers, 1999).

Instrumentation and Materials

I did not use instruments to collect data as part of this study, and this research did not require informed consent forms because it relied on secondary data, specifically interviews collected by Mark Kukis for another purpose. Prior to turning the interviews over to me, Mr. Kukis signed an informed consent form. Once signed, Mr. Kukis provided recorded interviews for transcription.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1990) established that trustworthiness of research involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. These four factors were used to determine the trustworthiness of this investigation.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1990) defined *credibility* as confidence in the truth of the findings in research. Techniques for establishing credibility include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checking. Credibility in this research was established by applying two of these techniques: triangulation and peer debriefing.

Triangulation encompassed the use of documents and historical analysis in addition to interview data to corroborate and test the validity of findings. This ensured that accounts of events in the case study are robust, comprehensive, and well developed.

Peer debriefing is the process of exposing the research and findings to a disinterested peer for exploring aspects of the research that might otherwise be implicit or overlooked (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). This was achieved through the use of multiple peers who deployed to Iraq as members of the U.S. Army. Peer reviewers were selected based on various experiences in terms of location and activities in Iraq to ensure that various aspects and perspectives are used to test and defend emerging hypotheses.

Transferability

Transferability is demonstrating that findings have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). The technique applied to this research was *thick description*. Thick description, a way of achieving external validity by describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail, allows the researcher to evaluate the extent to which conclusions drawn are transferable to other cases (Holloway, 1997). By applying this technique, the researcher made explicit patterns of cultural and social relationships to the factors studied, thus, putting them in a context that can be applied to other cases.

Dependability

Dependability entails ensuring that the research findings are consistent and can be repeated (Creswell, 2012). The technique applied in this research to ensure dependability was an *external audit*. External audits involve having an outside researcher not involved in the research process examine the process and products of the research study to evaluate

accuracy and interpretations (Creswell, 2012). This process is built into the dissertation process to some degree via a committee.

Confirmability

Confirmability involves the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and research data and not the researcher's bias (Malterud, 2001). This research applied two techniques for ensuring confirmability: an audit trail and triangulation. An *audit trail* entails maintaining a transparent description of the research steps taken from the origin of the research to reporting findings (Malterud, 2001). An audit trail is achieved through the dissertation process. As discussed previously, triangulation was achieved with the use of multiple sources, document, and historical analysis.

Summary

This chapter described the research design, explanatory case study, to be employed in this study to understand the relationship between political access and domestic terrorism by identifying the factors in the decision of a local population to support terrorism over a transition to a democratic political system. This chapter provided the rationale for using this specific qualitative tradition of inquiry. This chapter detailed the use of secondary data analysis, applying the content analysis research approach used in collecting and analyzing data, facilitating analysis of the decisional factors of the participants.

Chapter 4: Data, Analysis, and Findings

Introduction

This study used an explanatory case study approach to identify those mechanisms (viewed as the complex interaction of causes or systems) that led members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to move from a position of neutrality or support for their government transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic system to resisting that transition through terrorism. The intent of the study was to understand this shift in behavior from the individual perspective to minimize similar effects in future nation-building operations. This study focused on Iraqis who came in direct and regular contact with and the use of terrorism. Their contact ranged from personal participation and support of attacks, family and community ties, and resistance to the democratic transition of the Iraqi government following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces. This case study used secondary analysis of data; specifically interviews of Sunni Iraqis conducted by Kukis, and applied the content analysis research approach to answer the primary and secondary research questions. I did not review interview data for emerging themes; instead, I coded the data using factors from Crenshaw's (2007) 3 levels of causation theory.

This chapter presents the results of the data coding and analysis. I used interview excerpts to demonstrate the presence of the 3 levels of causation laid out by Crenshaw (2007). The findings identify the combination of conditions that led to each individual's change from support for a democratic transition to resisting that transition through terrorism. Furthermore, the data show that for some people not all causal factors were present, but the data reinforce the complexity of the interaction of causal factors and how

they worked together to form conditions. Chapter 5 summarizes this analysis, the lessons learned, and recommendations for future research.

Given my involvement in this qualitative assessment of terrorism against the transitioning Iraq government, I present a brief background to understand my perspective regarding this research topic better. Creswell (2007) described analyzing this characteristic of qualitative research as the researcher becoming an instrument of the study.

I am a military intelligence officer in the U.S. Army with a background in political science, public administration, and terrorism. I have worked in the intelligence field for 20 years. I completed four combat deployments to Iraq, including a deployment from the start of the invasion in March 2003 through March 2004 before the interim government of Iraq was established. My activities during this time included significant contact and interaction with members of the local population as U.S. forces and Iraqis worked together to establish local governments. I returned to Iraq in 2005, after the establishment of the Iraqi transitional government and an increase in violence. I completed two additional deployments to Iraq in 2007 and 2010. These deployments to Iraq allowed me to witness the local population's initial support for the removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein and its support for a transition to democracy; however, I also witnessed a steady increase of Sunni resistance to the new government. This allowed me to understand the environment and context of the data collected in support of this research. Seeing the change in Iraqi perspectives and the negative effects violence has had on the Iraqi society have driven me to understand the decision-making process of the

Iraqi people and to understand better how the subsequent violence could have been avoided.

The Sample

Once the Office of Research Ethics and Compliance granted approval of Walden University's Institutional Review Board application, I contacted four sources of original interview data, individually requesting use of their initial interviews with Iraqis. The individuals contacted had all published interviews with Iraqi Sunnis who fit the criteria of this case study. Of the listed authors contacted (see "Title of Section" section), one individual, Mark Kukus, responded that original interview recordings were available and agreed to release these interviews for use in this research.

After completion of a signed data use agreement, Kukus provided 112 audio-recorded interviews for review and possible inclusion in this investigation. Kukus conducted these interviews to provide Iraqis a way to tell their stories of the war. These interviews were informal and not structured uniformly. The interviews varied in length from 22 minutes to 159 minutes, depending on how much the participant wanted to share. Kukis asked all interview questions in English and translated into Arabic. Participants responded in Arabic to ensure the comfort, ease, and free flow of information from all participants. The interviewer used open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences and thoughts on life since the 2003 invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces. Because of this structure, even though the interviews were not intended for the purpose of this study, respondents spoke freely about the government transition to democracy and their ultimate resistance to that transition.

Once provided copies of the recorded interviews, I used an Arabic speaker familiar with the Iraqi dialect to translate them, and all interviews were transcribed for review and consideration in this study. Once the review was complete, 15 of the interviews were determined to meet the criteria outlined for inclusion as subunits in this research. The 15 interviews were analyzed to identify *mechanisms*, defined as the combination of conditions, circumstances, and influences that led members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to go from a position of neutrality or support for government transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic government to resisting this transition through terrorism. Identification of these mechanisms allowed for the identification of causal explanations for this change in position by participants and offered insight into the use of terrorism to resist democratic transition.

Interview Participant Data

The intent of this study was to use individual experiences to understand the significant resistance, through the use of terrorism, to Iraq's transition to democracy. Table 1 shows the age variation of interview participants, and each participant comprises a subunit of this study. Consistent with the makeup of the Sunni insurgency, most of the participants (including 9 of 13 participants) were of military age (between 15 and 49 years old; Eisenstadt & White, 2005). The age range of participants in this study was from 30 to 69, providing a wide variety of perspectives.

Table 1

Age Variance

Age range (y)	Total
30–35	2
36–40	4
41–45	1
46–50	2
51–55	2
56–60	1
61–65	0
66–70	1
Unknown	2

Due to movement restrictions, most of the interviews were conducted in Baghdad (see Table 2). As a result, Baghdad is by far the primary city represented by interview participants. According to O'Hanlon and Campbell (2006), more insurgent-related violence occurred in Baghdad, including attacks on government personnel, than in any other region in Iraq. With this statistic and the diverse population in Baghdad, its significant representation adequately supplies the sources needed for this study. Due in large part to the lower social status of females in Iraq's culture, the number of female interview participants was low. Only 3 of the 15 participants were female (see Table 3).

Table 2

Location

City of Origin (Province)	
Baghdad	11
Fallujah (Al Anbar)	1
Hit (Al Anbar)	1
Amarah (Misan)	1
Muqdadiyah (Diyala)	1

Table 3

Gender of Participants

Subject Gender	
Male	12
Female	3

One interview participant, referred to in this study as Allawi, did not meet the profile or criteria laid out for this study. Unlike other participants, he was a Shia Muslim, and he did not participate in, nor directly provide, support for terrorist activities against the transitioning government. Instead, Allawi served as the interim Prime Minister of Iraq from 2004 to 2005. Although Shia, Allawi was a former Ba'athist who advocated for Sunnis during his time as Prime Minister, and he was frequently the only Sunni advocate in the government. He forcefully warned the U.S. against activities that would isolate the Sunni population, and he worked to overturn many policies enacted by the U.S. He left his elected office in May 2005 due to his frustration with secular politics and an inability to form an inclusive government. He was included in the interview pool because of his unique insight into the political culture in Iraq during the period being studied. Allawi also understood Sunni political exclusion and understood the use of terrorism by Sunnis due to their lack of political opportunities.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the primary research question of what combination of conditions, circumstances, and influences contributed to members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to decide to move from a position of support or neutrality for transition to

a democratic government in Iraq to resisting the transition through either the use of or support for terrorism following the invasion of U.S. forces. In answering this question, I explored the following secondary research questions:

1. What conditions (i.e., political, social, military, and economic) in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces contributed to the decision by members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to support armed resistance and the use of terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did any particular factor have a greater influence on this decision than other factors did?
2. How did terrorist groups use these conditions to encourage Iraqi Sunnis to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did terrorists use any other factors as a means to gain support for their activities against a transitioning government?
3. What are the identifiable attitudes, common experiences, or patterns of behavior shared by those individuals who supported terrorism against a transitioning democratic government of Iraq?

Secondary Research Question 1: Conditions

The following summaries and quotations illustrate the conditions that emerged from the interviews in regard to these research questions, beginning with Secondary Research Question 1: What conditions (i.e., political, social, military, and economic) in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces contributed to the decision by members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to support armed resistance and the use of terrorism against a

transitioning democratic government? Did any particular factor have a greater influence on this decision than other factors did?

As demonstrated in Table 4, important themes were regarding what conditions influenced the decision of interview participants, or their friends and relatives, to resist the transitioning government of Iraq through terrorism were identified. While major similarities were identified between the interviews, some distinctions were also noted. Table 4 provides a summary of the influences the various factors had on the decision to use terrorism. In building this table, factors identified in each individual's interview were ranked beginning with Number 1 representing the primary factor in his or her decision through Number 5 as the factor that least affected her or her decision. As a result, the lower the total number, the greater effect that factor had. Results showed that all conditions named in Secondary Question 1 had an effect on the decision to use terrorist tactics against the transitioning government. Political factors were the factors most discussed by participants, followed by military factors, then social and religious factors, and then economic factors.

Table 4

Measure of Factor Effect

Factor	RoR[1]
Political	32
Military	40
Economic	62
Social	46
Religious	46

Note. RoR[1]: Ranking of responses reflects the total of all interview rankings (1-5) with 1 being the factor that had the greatest influence on decisions. Therefore, the lower the number, the greater the effect of that factor.

Political factor. Of the 15 interview participants, 14 identified the political situation in Iraq as a reason for their use of terrorism to resist democratic transition, and 6 participants identified it as the primary reason. Political events and conditions would logically have the greatest influence regarding what is largely a political issue, the transition of a government to a new political process. However, what is most valuable in the identification of the political environment as the primary factor is the identification of specific and direct political causes that precipitated the use of terrorism. Participants identified a lack of opportunity for Sunnis to participate in the new government of Iraq as the underlying condition, precipitated by (a) the Unites States implementation of Iraq's democratic government, (b) de-Ba'athification, (c) constitutional development, and (d) the political parties' use of violence and terror to shape the political atmosphere. These underlying issues had the greatest effect on participants' decisions to resist the transitioning government through terrorism. These 4 underlying issues also demonstrate that, consistent with causal mechanisms or systems thinking, individual factors such as political, military, economic, social, and religious factors are best understood in the context of relationships with each other. Instead of considering them in isolation, these factors are best understood as interrelated components.

Transitional political environment. Iraq's transitional political climate was one of top-down political transition led by the U.S. and a small group of Iraqi elites. This approach resulted in a failure to include opposition groups in the political process and left some major unresolved differences and disagreements. To fully grasp what participants identified as the political exclusion of Sunnis, a historical consideration of Iraq's political

transition and resulting political conditions is warranted. After the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, the U.S. created the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), led by Presidential Envoy L. Paul Bremer III, a career diplomat who arrived in Iraq in early May 2003 after President Bush declared the end of combat operations in Iraq. His mission was to lead Iraq to a democratic future (Bremer, 2006; Ferguson, 2009; Pfiffner, 2010; Reese & Wright, 2015). With executive, legislative, and judicial authority over the Iraqi government until June 28, 2004, the CPA used its temporary power to do things perceived by the public as undemocratic, including shutting down television and newspaper offices, enacting curfews, and prohibiting protests (Pollack, 2006).

Though the CPA was only in official control of Iraq for 14 months, its influence was long-lasting. The CPA had intended to allow Iraqi religious, ethnic, and political leaders to vote in a post-war transitional government by the end of May 2003. However, it rapidly became apparent that the leaders of these groups were unable to reach an agreement, and U.S. officials began to see that this group might not be able to make political decisions (Ricks, 2006). This stalemate was reflected in a memorandum from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (2003) in which he acknowledged:

> Regardless of what the Coalition does, it will be assumed that the Coalition set up the Interim Iraqi Authority. . . . Therefore, we should accept that fact, not worry about that, and get on with the task and make sure it succeeds. (p. 2)

He further instructed that the coalition engage in "hands-on political reconstruction . . . consistently steer[ing] the process (and interim government) in ways that achieve stated U.S. objectives" (Rumsfeld, 2003, p. 2). Following this guidance, the U.S. formed a 25-

member Iraq Governing Council (IGC). The IGC was given the role of guiding reconstruction under the leadership of the CPA. The CPA remained in control in Iraq until June 2004 when it, once again, appointed members to the interim government rather than holding any type of Iraqi vote (Lorimer, 1993).

The CPA sought to control Iraqi policies. For example, Diamond (2004) quoted one British official discussing the CPA's desire to maintain control of activities in Iraq: "CPA [officials] didn't want anything to happen that they didn't control—and this has been impossible to hide from the Iraqis" (p. 41). These remarks were made in regard to the CPA vetoing plans by British officials to hold elections for local councils in Basra province in May 2003. Instead, the CPA wanted military forces to form councils by appointing members, not electing them, as the CPA ultimately did with the appointment of the IGC, an advisory authority at the national level. This process resulted in governing councils at the local, provincial, and national level that had no power or resources to enact change or fill power vacuums created by the removal of the previous regime. This lack of authority of local governing bodies led to a significant decrease in legitimacy and public trust in the transitioning government.

Also, the U.S. intended for the IGC, though only an advisory authority to the CPA, to be an indigenous national authority representative of the Iraqi population. The CPA appointed members of the IGC based on political party affiliation. Because the former regime outlawed all political parties other than the Ba'ath Party, all political parties active in the creation of the IGC operated from Europe and were led by Iraqi exiles. This political situation resulted in an IGC that was comprised primarily of Iraqi

exiles of the Shia sect, as the Sunni sect had no similar established political party (Blaydes, 2013). As a result, the IGC included the two largest Kurdish parties, two major Shia political parties that existed underground and outside of Iraq under the Ba'ath Party, and some smaller parties that existed during the reign of the Ba'ath Party, including the Communist party with 5 independent Sunni representatives. The Sunni members of the council lacked political skills and knowledge since Sunni personnel with these skills were members of the Ba'ath Party and excluded from government participation. The lack of Sunni participation within the IGC significantly affected Iraqi Sunni's perceptions of political exclusion, especially since the governing council enforced de-Ba'athification policies.

The U.S. appointment of a governing council and interim government personnel also had significant effects on how Iraqi Sunnis viewed all governing bodies in Iraq. All governing entities were seen as representatives of the CPA and not as designated representatives of the Iraqi population. A State Department poll conducted during the period of the IGC found that most of the 25 members of the IGC were entirely unknown to the population. In fact, only 7 of them were sufficiently familiar to 40% or more of the population. As a result, most had no opinion of IGC members at all (Pollack, 2006). As a result, appointment to the governing council became a means to achieve political power, with all its associated benefits, for those who likely would not have been elected by a well-informed popular vote.

The appointment of unknown and largely unvetted members to governing bodies and the exclusion of representation from all parts of Iraqi society combined to create a

political climate in Iraq in which corruption, theft, and political violence were rampant. The IGC set the tone for later Iraqi governments, particularly the transitional governments of Ayad Allawi and Ibrahim Jaafari, as these issues continued. According to Katzman (2013), many of the governing council members were corrupt and reported to be illegally taking money from the public treasury. These officials built up militias and then integrated them into various security services in an effort to control the political climate. In addition, some members of the governing council used their positions to exclude political rivals and rival sects from gaining any economic, military, or political power. An example of such political influence is Ahmed Chalabi, who controlled the de-Ba'athification program in Iraq. He used his position to have a large number of Sunnis excluded from the political process to include having them removed from office and excluded from elections (Pollack, 2006).

In conclusion, the U.S. and its Iraqi allies, primarily exiles, managed the critical period of transition to democracy in Iraq in the form of a top-down regime, due to the lack of elections and voter input early on in the transition. With this lack of representation and controversial policies, many Iraqis did not actively support the transition, with members of the Iraqi Sunni sect evolving into active resistors with violence and terror as their principal means of resistance.

The U.S. implementation of Iraq's democratic government. A review of the interviews with Iraqis shows that all 15 participants identified, at some point in their interviews, the fact that the U.S. imposed democracy on Iraq as the initial, and, therefore, foundational, issue for resisting the transitional government of Iraq. Participants found it

difficult to differentiate between resisting the U.S.' occupation of Iraq and resisting the new Iraqi government, as they frequently identified them as one entity. For example, Omar explained why he began preparing for an insurgency before the U.S. actually invaded:

> I knew from my reading of history what was coming—an occupation. None of us figured Saddam's regime would survive the American invasion. The only question on our mind was what to do after the collapse. We needed to destroy occupiers and let Iraqis run the state, as long as occupiers made decisions in Iraq, we would fight. The new government is a decision by the occupiers and is not Iraqi and needs to be stopped. (personal communication)

Others commented that the democracy the U.S. brought to Iraq was not truly a democracy, but rather another form of government that restricted the freedoms of the Iraqi people. The lack of distinction between the U.S.' governing of Iraq and the transitional Iraqi government is understandable, given the process under which the democratic government of Iraq was established.

De-Ba'athification. All participants in this study identified Sunni removal from government positions and restriction from participation in elections and government work, under de-Ba'athification, as a key contributor to the belief that Sunnis were not welcome to participate in the newly forming government. De-Ba'athification was initially enacted by CPA (2003) Order Number 1, which states the following:

> Full members of the Ba`ath Party holding the ranks of 'Udw Qutriyya (regional command member), 'Udw Far' (branch member). 'Udw Shu'bah (section

> member), and ‘Udw Firqah (group member) are hereby removed from their positions and banned from future employment in the public sector. (p. 1)

In all, this order included 85,000 Iraqis who were banned from work within the government of Iraq (Bremer, 2006; Ferguson, 2009; Ricks, 2006). The order clearly states the intent was to “ensure that representative government in Iraq is not threatened by Ba`athist elements returning to power and that those in positions of authority in the future are acceptable to the people of Iraq” (CPA, 2003, p. 1). The effect of the order, however, was the elimination of the leadership and technical capacity from all hospitals, public service organizations, university, transportation, and electric and communications elements within Iraq, which had been held predominately by Sunnis (Chandrasekaran, 2007; Ferguson, 2009).

For example, a review of National De-Ba’athification Council records shows that by March 2004, 82% of the over 40,000 teachers who had been removed from teaching were Sunni (Pfinner, 2010). Teachers and professors were so strongly affected by this move because the requirement to join the Ba’ath Party was strongly enforced among teachers and university professors.

However, the effects of de-Ba’athification went even further than the elimination of skilled educators and professors. Mustapha, for example, was able to keep his job at the Department of Agriculture because he was considered a very low-level Ba’ath member. He explained that all of the senior officials had “vanished,” and no one was in charge. The posts left opened by the “vanished Ba’athists” were filled by people who claimed to “be doing the bidding of Shia religious authorities.” Important offices were

now being run by "thieves, incompetents, and illiterates," and Shia religious posters were on all of the walls. Mustapha went on to explain that because of this new sectarian tension, the remaining Sunnis located their workspaces in halls and closets to avoid harassment. Not only did this hostile atmosphere affect the operations of the ministry, but many Sunni members began to receive threats, and they were pressured to leave their jobs. As a result, Mustapha and others he knew joined insurgent groups for protection from Shia extremists and to fight what he saw as a "Shia government trying to edge Sunnis out."

The second order issued by the CPA, the *Dissolution of Entities* (Talmon, 2013), had the potential for even greater effects on members of the Sunni sect. Order 2, issued on May 23, 2003, disbanded all of Saddam Hussein's military and intelligence institutions. According to Fallows (2005), this move left at least half a million men with military training, in a militarized society, jobless. Much like government positions, senior military personnel, including the vast majority of officers, were Sunni from the Sunni triangle region. This political decision by the U.S. served to isolate these Sunnis from the new Iraqi government, as Shabeeb complained in his interview.

Shabeeb explained that as of 2003 he became a retired brigadier general in the Iraqi army. He tells the story of what is likely the case for thousands of former members of the Iraqi military, as he explained his desire to continue to fight what he called "the occupation" even after the military had been disbanded. In his interview, he expresses anger that the U.S. was dictating policy such as removing Ba'athists from public positions. Until 2005, he believed that both the interim government and transitional

government of Iraq were merely extensions of the occupation and not representative of the Iraqi population.

The perception that the interim government of Iraq is an extension of U.S. policy is understood when viewed through its historical context. A memorandum from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld dated May 8, 2003, applied such context. In this memo, Rumsfeld (2003) acknowledged the following:

> Regardless of what the Coalition does, it will be assumed that the Coalition set up the Interim Iraqi Authority. . . . Therefore, we should accept that fact, not worry about that, and get on with the task and make sure it succeeds. (Rumsfeld, 2003, p. 2)

He further instructed that the coalition engage in "hands-on political reconstruction . . . consistently steer[ing] the process in ways that achieve stated U.S. objectives" (Rumsfeld, 2003, p. 2). This approach to reconstruction was made visible to the average Iraqi citizen through acts such CPA Order 5, the formation of the Iraq De-Ba'athification Council.

Order Number 5 created an Iraqi entity that was responsible for implementing the de-Ba'athification order. It was made up entirely of Iraqi nationals handpicked by Ambassador Bremer and charged with identifying the extent of Ba'ath Party involvement of all party members and their current location and status (Isakhan, 2011). To execute this order, the Iraqi governing council formed the Higher National De-Ba'athification Commission (HNDC). Ambassador Bremer subsequently acknowledged this commission and transferred authority for de-Ba'athification to it (Dagher, 2004). The HNDC was

chaired by Ahmad Chalabi, a Shia who left Iraq in 1956 at the age of 12 and did not return until 2003. However, he had remained active in Iraqi politics during his absence. Chalabi was known among Iraqis as a staunch anti-Ba'athist, and he had strong ties to Iran (Roston, 2009). Once he was given the position as head of the HNDC, Chalabi initiated a media campaign. In this campaign, he made clear to the Iraqi population that he estimated approximately 28,000 employees with Ba'ath Party ties remained employed in the government, and he planned to identify them and ensure they were removed from their positions. He strongly advocated that allowing any former Ba'ath members to be involved in public sector jobs was not acceptable (Crane, 2004).

In his interview, Allawi stated that he had warned U.S. officials that de-Ba'athification would cause serious divisions in Iraq:

> I was a steadfast opponent of de-Ba'athification, and I thought that this would cripple the country and cause a lot of divisions, and I warned the Americans. I said if this . . . if these actions continue, then in a few months you will have a resistance in Iraq. I thought you know that this was absurd and it's impossible that a reasonable, responsible politician would ever do this to Iraq, not only because of the vacuum that was created, that could have been created then, but also because the region as you know is already full with problems, Iran, Turkey, Israel. So here you have here a country which is one of the pillars of stability in the region, suddenly evaporates. Nothing. No power, no army, no police, nothing at all. So this was a shock to me that such a bold decision was based on maybe either individual views or it wasn't really weighed carefully.

Such opinions were popular among Iraqis.

According to a report produced by the International Center for Transitional Justice and the Human Rights Center at University of California Berkeley, which included extensive data regarding Iraqi public opinion of, among other things, de-Ba'athification, the majority of participants, of which the sample represented all primary religious and ethnic group in Iraq, believed that only the senior decision makers within the Ba'ath Party should be subject to de-Ba'athification activities. Respondents overwhelmingly thought that Iraqis, in general, understood the need to join the Ba'ath Party under Saddam Hussein, and they believed that the activities of the HNDC were the result of the CPA and other outside influences (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2004).

The effects of de-Ba'athification, and its direction and implementation by the U.S., directly affected the life of Iraqi Sunnis at the individual level, as expressed in the interviews used in this study. A major effect was the continued feeling of isolation and exclusion of members of the Sunni sect and the belief that their position in society would be marginalized within Iraq's new government. As its last official act, the CPA issued an order on June 28, 2004 entitled *Transition of Laws, Regulations, Orders, and Directives Issued by the Coalition Provisional Authority*, which rescinded CPA Order Number 1, *De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society*, and CPA Order Number 5, *The Establishment of the Original De-Ba'athification Council* (Talmon, 2013). This order stated that any authority of the HNDC should be withdrawn by the Iraqi interim government (Pavel, 2012). The order was an attempt by Ambassador Bremer to distance the U.S. from ongoing de-

Ba'athification and place the issue with Iraqis; however, the effects of de-Ba'athification and U.S. policy were already affecting Sunni involvement in the new government.

Constitutional development. Although only two respondents directly named constitutional development as an issue that contributed to Sunni perceptions of political isolation, 13 of the 15 interview participants acknowledged that the manner in which the nation was designed to operate placed sect as the primary criteria for government representation, leaving the Sunni minority group underrepresented. Article 7 of the Iraqi constitution gave the de-Ba'athification commission authority to continue operating until it had "completed its functions" and banned people subject to de-Ba'athification from participation in the Presidency Council, Prime Minister-ship, Parliament, and other equivalent judicial, provincial, and state positions (Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, 2005). Though the constitution was significant, the primary issues with constitutional exclusion of Sunnis in the new government of Iraq began prior to the actual drafting of the constitution.

The first major step in Iraq's constitutional process was the election of a transitional national government that occurred on January 30, 2005. The transitional national government was to prepare a draft constitution that would be put to a national referendum in October of 2005. As a result, the 2005 election in January was critical, as it would determine the balance of power in the transitional government and shape the permanent constitution (Feldman & Martinez, 2006). In November of 2004, the most prominent Sunni political party in Iraq, the Iraqi Islamic Party, withdrew from the interim government of Iraq to protest American-led attacks in Fallujah. The perception that the

Iraqi interim government was sanctioning or supporting these attacks was widespread, and by January of 2005 many Sunnis believed that the interim government and the elections for a transitional national assembly were a corrupt byproduct of early U.S. policy and influence on the new government of Iraq, largely fueled by de-Ba'athifiation (Malkasian, 2006). In his interview, A.M.R. emphasized that the interim and transitional governments of Iraq were disloyal to Iraq and were only there to serve American interests. When asked why he did not like the current Iraqi government, Wahab stated, "It is put in place by Americans. We Iraqis had a better life under Saddam. We did not have a sectarian problem or the gangs. The government gave everyone food. Now things are just bad everywhere." Wahab's opinion was shared by all 15 interview participants.

As a result of Sunni frustration, voter turnout in January of 2005 in the Sunni-dominated areas was as low as 2% (Terrill & Crane, 2005). Pressure to boycott the election came from Sunni religious leaders and the Muslim Scholars Association, Iraq's most influential Sunni religious organization. The reason largely given for the call to boycott was a concern for security and claims that, due to violence, Sunni Iraqis would not be able to make it to the polls and vote. However, 46 political groups openly signed on to boycott the election, citing the fact that multiple candidates had been removed from the ballot because the HNDC determined they had ties to the former Ba'ath Party (Meijer, 2005). The most problematic result of this low turnout was the near-total absence of Sunni delegates to the transitional national assembly. Lack of representation within the assembly meant that the Sunni community would not have representation during the development of the constitution.

Two research participants, both involved in Iraqi politics during the preparation of the constitution, offered their insights on how this lack of representation affected the position of Sunnis in Iraqi society. First, Azhar explained that the process of constitutional development "soured" as members of the appointed writing group began to focus only on sect and preserving a position of power and wealth in society for their sect at, what she perceived to be, the cost of the Sunni sect. This view is echoed by Allawi who, in his interview, recognized the final constitution as a product of "political deals between Shias and Kurds." He went on to tell of how, in the interest of making deadlines, Sunni representation was bypassed by using small subgroups to write parts of the constitution, subgroups that did not include Sunnis.

The final result was a constitution that met Kurdish and Shia demands, mainly in the area of federalism. Both Kurdish and Shia representatives wanted the establishment of semi-autonomous federal regions within Iraq. The establishment of such regions would allow Shia provinces to control oil-rich federal regions in the south, while Kurds controlled the oil-rich areas in the north (Feldman & Martinez, 2006). According to Allawi, "creating oil-rich federal regions in Southern Iraq would leave the Sunni-dominated center without natural resources of its own and without any economic means to support Sunni-dominated federal regions" (Morrow, 2006, p.9).

Use of violence and terror to shape the political atmosphere. Eight of the 15 interview participants made reference to the use of militias and terror by political parties to shape or control the political climate in Iraq during the period of transition. These respondents reported that militias executed violent and terroristic attacks against

government opponents and officials, and 3 individuals directly acknowledged that the violence was a means of exerting political control by political parties and government representatives.

For example, interview participant Khalid witnessed the death of his father-in-law, a former army general officer who had begun working for the Iraqiya political party. He cooperated closely with party leaders to reform the Iraqi Army and to build a secular political organization. Khalid stated that the local police informed his family that his father-in-law was killed because he was working for Iraqiya. Then police began interrogating other members of his family about their involvement with Iraqiya. Khalid said:

> It did not take time to realize these were Shia police. Everyone knows the Ministry of the Interior is corrupt and controlled by Shia militia. We knew we had to get away from the police before we were killed also.

Khalid went on to explain the danger the entire family was in due to his father-in-law's efforts to form a secular political party.

In another case, interview participant Baha'a was reinstated in the Iraqi Special Order Forces in July of 2003. Responsible for enforcing law and order, he discovered that in many areas the increased violence was a result of corrupt military and police forces. In his words:

> People were using their authority and power to make arrests for personal and political motives. We were at a time in Iraq when arrests were used to shape the government and keep some people from having influence. The ministry of the

> interior was corrupt and its members executed arrests and killings for political leaders who promised them things like cars, money, and jobs.

This example demonstrates that the use of violence was not isolated among militias and violent extremists, but that it was also a prominent tool used by members of the government to shape the political environment in their favor.

Interview participant Allawi credits this problem with a rush to democracy:

> Iraq faced a bleak future because we were rushed into democracy prematurely. Elections do not make a democracy. They are only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath you should have rule of law and the institutions that will protect the democracy. You need to have courts and honest means to enforce rules. Without these things we have violence as a means of political control and democracy is a joke rather than a true thing.

Here, Allawi explained that violence became the primary means of political influence in Iraq due to the absence of institutions in Iraq intended to protect and promote democracy.

As portrayed by these individuals, Iraq lacked the institutional foundation to enforce democratic principles such as freedom of choice and fair elections; therefore, violence became a substitute for democratic procedures to obtain desired end states both in and out of political circles. In this atmosphere, Iraqis who established opposition political parties risked violence and death for themselves and their families. All eight interview participants cited the al-Mahdi Army as the source of political terror. The al-Mahdi Army was formed by Muqtada al-Sadr in June 2003 to fill the security vacuum in Shia-dominated areas after the government of Iraq fell in 2003. The group dispensed aid

and assistance to fellow Shias, and it operated shadow governments in Shai communities in Baghdad through the establishment of religious courts to enforce the law (Diamond, 2004). The al-Mahdi Army was known to be popular among Shia law enforcement personnel, and it became the well-known paramilitary force of Saddar's political organization, the Al Saddar Movement. This movement became part of the National Iraqi Alliance Coalition (Cordesman & Ramos, 2008). Because most Sunni police officers were removed from their posts because of de-Ba'athification, the al-Mahdi Army was able to control key police headquarters in Baghdad and exert influence on behalf of Muqtada al-Sadar and his political allies. Such an example suggests how violence by militia and paramilitary groups was used to shape and control the political conditions in Iraq during the period of governmental transition.

Military factor. The military factor measures the influence that prior military service, the presence of foreign military and extremist forces in the country, Iraqi security forces, and the levels and types of violence and threats exerted on the participants and their decisions to use or support the use of terrorism against the transitioning government. The military factor ranked second behind the political factor. All 15 participants identified the military conditions in Iraq as a reason for their use of terrorism to resist democratic transition, and 2 participants identified it as the primary factor. An analysis of participant interviews identifies the following points as the initial military conditions leading to their decisions: (a) the presence of foreign military forces, (b) violence levels in Iraq, and (c) the lack of trained and capable Iraqi security forces.

The presence of foreign military forces. All participants commented about the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq during the government's transition to democracy, and five participants identified the presence of U.S. forces as a major factor in their decision to resist the transitioning government of Iraq. For example, the participant known as A.M.R. demonstrated why it was difficult to distinguish between the presence of U.S. forces and other military factors as he explained his decision to commit himself to the resistance. His commitment began in late 2004 when he saw a minibus full of people who had been shot and killed by U.S. forces. He refused to explain how he knew that U.S. forces did the killing, but he determined the following at that time:

> The rulers of Iraq are disloyal to Iraq. The ministries and government agencies are all infiltrated by American thinking and Iranian agents. There is no real loyalty to this country, or these people (the Americans) would not be here to do such things. That is why I will fight them (the government) because they are one with America.

Participant Omar voiced similar outrage, stating "Islam tells us we have to resist occupation, and instead they welcome it. We will get rid of the Americans, and those who have tried to shape Iraq in their ways." Many Iraqis believed that this situation was a repeat of history and Iraq would once again be controlled by a Western government.

Although other participants did not draw as strong a correlation between U.S. forces and the government of Iraq, some of those who identified the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq as a factor believed that Iraq's problems began with the U.S. Specifically, they thought the interim government of Iraq was condoning and even sanctioning U.S.

forces activities and were, therefore, responsible for those activities. For example, A.M.R. stated he realized "how heavily we (the Iraqi people) are suffering under the occupation, we are without our will." All 15 participants supported this sentiment to one degree or another.

As with A.M.R., late 2004 appears to be the period in which the military situation became a major factor for many individuals moving toward violent resistance to the transitional government of Iraq. In November of 2004, Iraq was preparing for its first free democratic elections, which were to be held in January of 2005. U.S. forces, accompanied by newly trained Iraqi security forces, conducted a mass assault on Fallujah on November 7, 2004, to free the city of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, terrorists who had controlled the city since September. The U.S. reportedly timed the assault to not only free the area of Al-Qaeda control but also to ensure that the population of Fallujah was able to participate in the upcoming election. The result of actions in Fallujah and the perceived Iraqi government sanctioning of attacks against Sunnis caused a significant increase in attacks throughout Iraq. These attacks were aimed at the government of Iraq and included violence and terrorist activities against government officials. One example of terrorist-type activities was the kidnapping and eventual murder of 3 of acting Prime Minister Allawi's relatives. Reportedly, these individuals were kidnapped to punish Allawi for sanctioning U.S. activities in Fallujah (Bennis, 2004). Late 2004 also saw political activities that undermined Sunni representation in the government such as the Iraq Islamic Party pulling out of the interim government of Iraq and boycotting the upcoming

election, reportedly as a result of Iraqi government support of U.S. activities in Al Anbar (Graham, 2005).

Overall, the number of civilian deaths in Iraq rose to 1,827 in the month of November, the highest of any month since the U.S. invasion. During this same time, the Sunni population had a major political party withdrawal from the January 2005 elections (O'Hanlon & de Albuquerque, 2005). In the words of A.M.R., "In the beginning, most people in the city were against Saddam [Hussein] and wanted a new government. With the occupation, now most want him back." The political turmoil of 2004 supports the idea that holding elections was premature and should have been postponed until the Iraqi government obtained more anonymity from the U.S.

Lack of trained and capable Iraqi security forces. Of the 15 participants, 10 commented about the lack of a viable security force in Iraq or of the security forces' inability to keep the population safe. Participant concerns stemmed from CPA Order Number 2 that dissolved the Iraqi Army. Participant Allawi articulated the issues this presented to Iraq when he discussed the decision to dismantle the Iraqi Army. He noted the following:

> I thought they knew that this was absurd and it's impossible that a reasonable, responsible politician would ever do this to Iraq, not only because of the vacuum that was created, that could have been created then, but also because the region as you know is already full with problems, Iran, Turkey, Israel. So here you have here a country which is one of the pillars of stability in the region, and it suddenly evaporates. Nothing. No power, no army, no police, nothing at all. So this was a

> shock to me that such a bold decision was based on maybe either individual views or it wasn't really weighed carefully (personal communication).

Allawi spoke in detail in his interview regarding the critical role military and police forces had in establishing and enforcing the rule of law and its essential role during a change in government.

Allawi's concerns have remained a major issue for the Iraqi government to this day. Building a viable military force proved more difficult than anyone had imaged. By January 2005, Iraq reportedly had 57,398 fully trained police. These police were less than half of the established goal of 142,190 police by the start of 2005. The government's goal was to have 272,566 fully trained Iraqi security force personnel by 2005. Instead, they had only 126,961 personnel, and many of whom were only partially trained. This lack of police corresponded with the insurgency in Iraq conducting its highest levels of violence and terrorism since the start of the war.

Participant Baha'a explained this slow regrowth of security forces through his own experience. It was not until 2005 that he, a general officer in the army under Hussein, was allowed back in the military because of de-Ba'athification and his senior rank. Once he and other senior commanders were allowed back into the force, he stated that the security force was "like a circus. Security forces were arresting people because they did not like one another or for political things. There was no integrity or honor, just random things executed for random reasons." At the time of his interview in 2008, Baha'a stated that misuse of power and abuse of authority within the ministries of defense and interior were still prevalent.

Other participants noted that the lack of Iraqi security forces, or the security forces' inability to secure them from insurgents and militias, greatly contributed to their involvement with terrorist groups as a means of securing their families and forcing the government to recognize the violence and destruction that the government transition had caused. For example, the participant known as Ahmed told of how he moved his family to Syria because of threats and violence and that no Iraqi security forces were capable of protecting them. Ahmed stated that he returned to Iraq only when U.S. forces built a military base near his family home, believing the presence of U.S. forces would make the neighborhood safer. Ahmed went on to state that once the government of Iraq established the Iraqi security forces, they were corrupt and divided along sectarian lines.

Alternatively, participant Baher moved his family from Baghdad to Hit in Al Anbar province because of a fear of both Iraqi security forces and U.S. military forces. He explained how these forces began doing multiple raids in his neighborhood in Baghdad and were "rough" with the people and their belongings. His family moved to Hit where there were few U.S. forces and no Iraqi security forces. The result was the emergence of Al-Qaeda is the area. By late 2004, Al-Qaeda controlled Hit, and the population was looking for security forces to help free them of Al-Qaeda and the violence, but they rarely saw security forces in the area.

Overall, participants described a significant security vacuum created with the dissolving of Iraqi security forces. Insurgent groups and militias filled this void as they took control of areas, pushing people from their homes to avoid violence. Once established and active, security forces were corrupt and often acted out of loyalty to a

political group or sect rather than to enforce law and order. The result was high levels of violence and rampant corruption.

Violence levels in Iraq. Five participants stated they joined terrorist organizations for protection from other organized groups and violence in general. These individuals each discussed how the increase in violence and the purposeful targeting of people who did not support terrorist organizations led them to seek out membership in terrorist organizations for protection. Participants identified late 2004 to summer 2005 as the period they felt most vulnerable to increased violence in Iraq. This period corresponds with periods of high violence reported by the Brookings Institute, which reported that the largest number of Iraqi civilians killed was between October of 2004 and December of 2004. As depicted in Figure 4, during this time, 1,867 Iraqis were murdered by non-military-related violence (O'Hanlon & Campbell, 2007). This number increased significantly between July of 2005 and October of 2005 when a reported 2,489 civilians were killed by non-military violence in Iraq. The same report showed that violence levels corresponded with the estimated strength of the insurgency in Iraq with October through December 2004 reaching an all-time high of more than 20,000 estimated insurgents as depicted in Table 5. This estimate dropped to 16,000 through May 2005 and increased once again to 20,000 (O'Hanlon & Campbell, 2007).

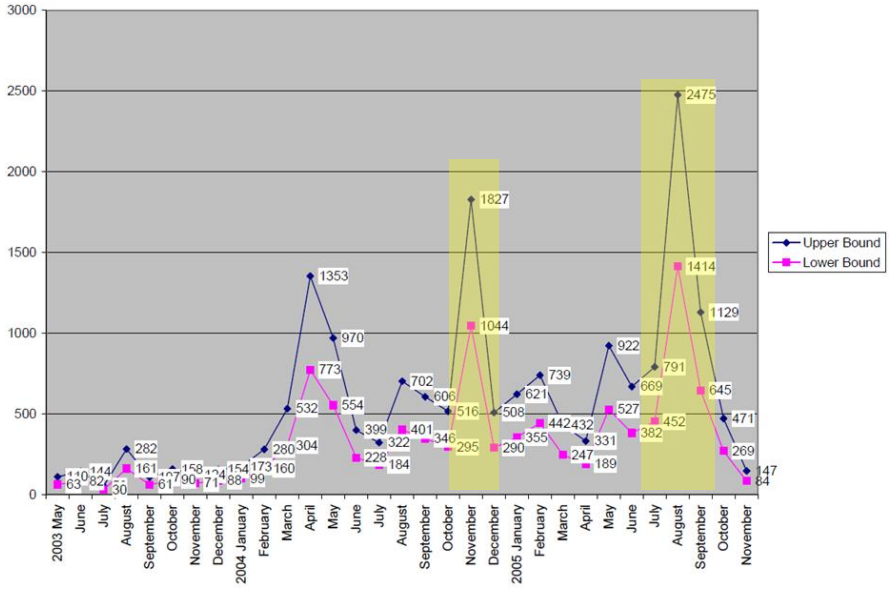

Figure 4. Iraqi civilians killed as a result of war.

Table 5

Estimated Strength of the Insurgency Nationwide by Month

Month	Estimated strength of insurgency nationwide
November 2003	5,000
December 2003	5,000
January 2004	3,000–5,000
February 2004	N/A
March 2004	N/A
April 2004	5000
May 2004	15,000
June 2004	15,000
July 2004	20,000
August 2004	20,000
September 2004	20,000
October 2004	20,000
November 2004	20,000
December 2004	More than 20,000
January 2005	18,000
February 2005	18,000
March 2005	16,000
April 2005	16,000
May 2005	16,000
June 2005	15,000–20,000
July 2005	No more than 20,000

These periods of increased violence correspond to key political events. Late 2004 and January 2005 saw the run up to and the execution of the legislative election. Violence in Fallujah and the withdrawal of Sunni political groups from government activities marked this period. In May 2005, the interim government of Iraq was replaced by the transitional government. These periods of intense political activity resulted in the use of violent militias to shape the political conditions in Iraq, and they help to explain the dramatic increases in nonmilitary violence and vulnerability the population felt during these periods.

Participant Saman explained the situation well in his interview. He stated:

> Things started to change for the worse at the beginning of 2005. There were multiple car bombs in our neighborhood, and we began to hear about a new Shia militia group forming, the Mahdi Army. They began to force Sunnis out of their homes so the Mahdi Army could control Baghdad. The Mahdi Army started killing Sunnis and their families if they were involved with the government or politics. Soon Baghdad split along sectarian lines, and insurgents and militias set up checkpoints. The government could not keep us safe, mainly because they were the same Shia leaders the Mahdi Army worked for. I had to ask a group, not al-Qaeda but like them, for protection, so I began to belong to them. There was no other way to stay safe (personal communication).

Like Saman, participants in this study who joined terrorist groups for protection resided in Baghdad. As the largest city in Iraq and very urbanized, Baghdad provided

terrorist groups locations to hide from security forces by blending into the population, making the threat from these groups particularly high in the area.

Social and religious factors. Although originally intended to be approached as separate factors in this study as detailed in Chapter 3, the findings show that participants did not distinguish between social and religious factors. For the purpose of this study, social factors were defined as the social conditions that had an effect on a participant's decision to support terrorism. Tribal, family, and local leadership influences define social conditions. Social conditions also included the use of social media and public gatherings as means of influencing decisions by participants. In this research, this factor includes the status of the Iraqi Sunni sect, which was the ruling minority prior to the transition to a democratic government. Participants demonstrated that social conditions are not separate from religious factors, defined as religion or membership in a religious sect. Instead, religious sect defined a person's social environment in Iraq during the period under study. As a result, social and religious factors have been combined for the remainder of the study.

Each of the 15 participants offered discussion and explanation of events according to a religious sect, specifically regarding how events in Iraq affected them as Sunnis differently than it affected Shias. All of the participants believed that social conditions, primarily shaped by a religious sect, had some effect on their decision to move from supporting the government transition to democracy to supporting the use of terrorism against the transitioning government. 3 participants named it as the primary reason. Of note, participants who ranked another factor over religious sect talked of how being a

Sunni contributed or caused that primary factor in their life. For example, participant Rassim's interview revealed that politics was the factor that most drove his decision to support terrorism against the transitioning government. In his discussion of politics, however, what he perceived as government favoritism of Shias over Sunnis was his main issue.

The presence of religious sect in all discussions identifies it as the center of gravity as discussed in Chapter 3. This helps demonstrate more than any other factor the interdependence of the factors studies here and highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between factors and how they combine to create the causal mechanism being studied. In this case, the social conditions in Iraq, the combination of religious, family, economic status, and tribal existence, cannot be separated from other conditions such as those discussed previously under political and military factors. Instead, the social and religious factors are best understood in the context of relationships with other factors. Specifically, when participants discussed the political environment, they did so in regard to the challenges they faced as Sunnis. In regard to violence, the discussion always focused on violence toward them as members of the Sunni sect. The factors of sect and social standing were an underlying issue in all discussions. This issue is not new in Iraq but extends backward in time for generations.

The Sunni-Shia divide within Iraq itself is one of a complex combination of factors. Nearly 1,400 years old and rather than having its roots in a solely religious conflict, the conflict started as a dispute over the succession of leadership in the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (Rogerson, 2006). Though this

marks the beginning of the Sunni-Shia divide, complex struggles for control and power within Iraq and the Arab world greatly complicated matters. Within Iraq, Sunni and Shias share a common Arab ethnicity as well as other cultural norms such as language, dietary traditions, and clothing. Despite the similarities and efforts by various rulers to create a Pan-Arab identity within Iraq, religious divides have never been overcome in Iraq.

The Sunni sect governed Iraq prior to the 2003 invasion, beginning with centuries of Sunni Ottoman control over Iraq from the mid-16th century until the Second World War (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 2001). Sunni power and control of Iraq continued under Saddam Hussein, himself a Sunni Arab. As a result of this continued control and power within the sect, Sunnis who reside in urban areas are generally of an educated secular middle-class, working as doctors, lawyers, and administrators, and they were primarily employed by the government prior to the U.S. invasion in 2003. In contrast, Iraq's Shia's were discouraged from sending their children to school under the Sunni Ottoman Empire. Once Pan-Arab efforts began, Shias were largely absent from the education system (and political system) that developed under the Ottoman Empire.

This exclusion of Shia's from Iraq's political and education system was largely solidified in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In what was primarily a dispute over land and boundaries, the Iran-Iraq war lasted from 1980 to 1988 and strengthened the divide between Shia and Sunni Iraqis (Karsh Karsh, 2002). The decision to attack Iran was propelled by Shia Iraqis participation in anti-Ba'ath riots in late 1979. Saddam Hussein began to fear that the Iranian Revolution inspired these riots and would inspire an insurgency among the Shia majority who were not represented in the government of Iraq.

Iraq expropriated the properties of 70,000 civilians they suspected of being Iranian by origin and expelled them from Iraq (Brogan, 1989). In most cases, those expelled were truly Iraqi in their heritage as represented by the fact they were Arabic-speaking Shias rather than Persian speaking with little to no family ties with Iran. This increased tensions between Iraq and Iran but also caused Shia Iraqis to become more isolated within Iraq (Mackey and Harrop, 1996). The eight years of war that followed may have inadvertently escalated Shia Sunni tensions in Iraq and had the impact of causing deep distrust in Iran.

Efforts made by Shias to receive better representation, in terms of religious history and culture, in the classroom following the Iran-Iraq War caused a further divide between the sects rather than uniting them as Arabs. This divide was due to the Pan-Arab government seeing these efforts as promoting religion over the state (Bowlus, 2013). The lack of representation of Shia culture and religion in schools and government combined to leave Iraqi Shias feeling isolated within Iraq. Only now, for the first time in history and due to the U.S.' enacted democratic government, is the Shia sect largely represented in the government of Iraq, not to mention having majority control of the government of Iraq despite Shias being the majority sect in Iraq since Ottoman times. In fact, this is the first time that a Shia has governed any Arab state in the Middle East (Pelham, 2008).

Pan-Arab advocates did not set out to exclude any sect within Iraqi society. Rather, this exclusion was an unintended consequence of a system built on criteria of loyalty, usually driven by kinship, tribe, or shared experience (Dawisha, 1999). This study brings to light the fact that the average Sunni was not aware of any difference in treatment between Sunnis and Shias under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Though

differences were present, efforts by Saddam Hussein and Pan-Arabism to promote state over religion, differences were not openly addressed in society. Participants commonly remarked that never before in Iraq did anyone care what sect a person was. Most cited marriages in their own family that resulted in the comingling of Sunni and Shia sects, a common occurrence in modern day Iraq. Participants believed that concern above religious sect has only risen due to Shia control of the government. For example, participant Mustapha told of the tension that arose in the ministry of agriculture as the Shia majority government took over. He remarked:

> As things grew tenser, people began changing offices. The remaining Sunnis all put their offices in certain halls, and Shias did the same in others. No one would ever have thought of doing this at the ministry in the old regime. We were all just colleagues at the Ministry of Agriculture. None of us cared who was a Sunni or who was a Shia before. We would never think of such a thing (personal communication).

Prior to the 2003 invasion, participant Maysoon worked for an endowment, an independent government agency dedicated to assisting impoverished Iraqis. In 2004, the government divided this endowment and formed two separate endowments, one to help Shias and one to help Sunnis. Maysoon believed it was this act, and similar actions taken by the government to separate sects, that caused sectarian violence in Iraq. Maysoon left the endowment shortly after the Iraqi government divided the organization due to her strong belief that this attitude would cause the downfall of Iraq. She stated in her interview, “it was never like this before. It is this attitude and government separation of

sects that will destroy Iraq." Although nothing can validate Maysoon's specific claims, discussion under political and military factors demonstrates the significant role decisions regarding sect played in both political and military contributions to the transition of participants to supporting terrorism and resisting democratic transition.

Economics. Of the 15 participants, 8 identified economics as a factor that contributed to their decision to participate in or support terrorism against the transitioning government of Iraq. Of the eight, two participants identified it as the primary factor, and six respondents reflected it as one of the top five causes. These numbers are significantly lower than any other factor measured in this study. This finding runs contrary to the opportunity-cost theory of distracting potential recruits, the theory upon which most aids programs by governments seeking to rebuild social and political order are based. The logic of the theory is that gainfully employed young men are less likely to participate in political violence, implying a positive correlation between unemployment and violence in locations with active insurgencies (Berman, Callen, Felter, & Shapiro, 2011). As noted in the discussion of the military factor, the highest level of violence during the period studied here was between the fall of 2004 and the summer of 2005. During this time, Iraq saw its first decrease in unemployment since the start of the war. The change was only 3%, but it does show that economic conditions were improving. Improvement in economic conditions was also reflected in the rise in oil revenue from 1.75 to 2.47 and by the non-oil related gross domestic product increase from 8.3 to 10.9 during the same period violence levels peaked (O'Hanlon & Campbell, 2007).

Participant Ka'ab was one of two participants who began supporting terrorism for economic reasons. Following the invasion by U.S. forces, Ka'ab was out of work and lost his savings to looters. Many Iraqi soldiers abandoned their weapons in his neighborhood as U.S. forces advanced. He began collecting the weapons and selling them to support his family. When asked if he realized the individuals buying arms were insurgents and fighting against the government, Ka'ab responded "Yeah, I'm not that dumb. I knew where the weapons were going, but it was kind of fun to know I was involved with these badasses." Later, he elaborated:

> We knew sectarian violence was coming, and families needed guns to protect themselves. We were providing a service in that sense. At the end of the day, to be honest, I didn't care where the guns went or how they were used. My family was out of money. I had to do something to earn, so we could eat (personal communication).

In these statements, Ka'ab articulated that he did not start out to support violence against the government, but rather he was indifferent to the effect his choice would have on violence levels. Although his actions fit with opportunity cost theory, he and participant Hamdia were the only two in the group.

In the case of Hamdia, she was a divorced mother of five at the start of the war. She had no employment and received rations to support her family before the invasion. Following the invasion, she was not receiving rations and had no means to support her five children. Her only healthy son, 10 years old at the start of the war, would get paid to serve as a lookout for insurgents placing improvised explosive devices or building

bombs. She stated, “I did not want my son involved in this, but I had to look out for my other four children. There was no other way.” Though these two individuals believed supporting terrorism was the only way to support their families, the low number of participants who recognized economics as any contributor to their decision to participate in or support violence against the government shows that economics was not a strong factor among Sunnis in Iraq during the period studied.

Secondary Research Question 2: Terrorist Strategies

In addition to the five factors already discussed, Crenshaw’s causation theory (Crenshaw, 2007) identified terrorist group strategies and personal experience as the two remaining causes of terrorism. For the purpose of this study, terrorist strategies referred to persuasive instruments that active terrorists used to gain supporters. Previous terrorist strategies have been expressed in patriotic or religious terms, have focused on a need of the recruit, promised social advancement, or emphasized the excitement of revolution.

The following summaries and quotations illustrate the terrorist strategies that emerged from the interviews in regard to Secondary Research Question 2: How did terrorist groups use these conditions to encourage Sunni Iraqis to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did terrorists use any other factors as a means to gain support for their activities against a transitioning government?

Table 6 demonstrates the identification of themes in regard to terrorist use of conditions to influence participants to support or participate in terrorism. Each interview was studied to identify what conditions terrorist groups in Iraq used to influence participants to join or support them. Conditions used by terrorists were ranked beginning

with Number 1 representing the primary factor terrorists used to contribute to their decision through Number 5 representing the factor that least affected their decision. As a result, the lower the total number, the greater effect that factor had.

Table 6

Measure of Terrorist Use of Condition to Influence Population

Area	RoR[1]
Political	36
Military	41
Economic	43
Social/religion	39

Note. RoR[1]: Ranking of responses reflects the total of all interview rankings (1-5) with 1 being the factor that terrorists most used to influence participants to use or support terrorism. Therefore, the lower the number, the greater the effect of that factor.

Results showed that terrorist groups used all conditions named in Secondary Question 1 to persuade participants to use terrorist tactics against the transitioning government, with the political factors being the factors most discussed by participants, followed by the religious and social factors, then military factors, and then economic factors.

Of the 15 participants, 13 discussed how persuasive activities by terrorist groups contributed to their decision to support or participate in terrorism. Of the 13, four identified persuasive activities as the primary reason for their decision to move from supporting government transition to democracy to participating in terrorist attacks against the transitioning government. A review of participant interviews indicates that terrorist groups used the same factors examined in Secondary Question 1 to influence participants, with very similar results, with the exception of religion. Terrorist organizations placed

more emphasis on religious sect in recruiting support for terrorist activities than participants. Participants specifically noted the use of mosques and Imams to recruit support for terrorist activities. Also, participants noted that terrorist organizations would advertise the need to prevent Iran and Shias from gaining control of Iraq and forcing Sunnis into isolation and exclusion.

Political factor. Political conditions were the primary issue that terrorist groups used to persuade participants to join or support them in resisting the transitioning government. Of the political conditions discussed as part of Secondary Question 1, the presence of U.S. forces and the new democratic government of Iraq being installed by the U.S. were the most influential factors terrorist groups used. 3 participants named terrorist group propaganda regarding U.S. forces and the U.S. implementation of a democratic Iraqi government as the most persuasive condition exploited by terrorist groups.

Participant A.M.R. explained how he committed to a terrorist group after traveling by bus to Baghdad. His bus passed another bus in which all passengers had been shot dead. U.S. forces were on the bus, leading a fellow traveler to convince A.M.R. that the U.S. forces killed the passengers. His fellow traveler, referred to by A.M.R. in his interview as Mr. X, talked to A.M.R. for the remainder of the trip about how Iraq was suffering due to the occupation by U.S. forces. Shortly after the trip, A.M.R. went to Iran for training in terrorist tactics, arranged by Mr. X. Although most participants did not have the individual contacts A.M.R. had, mosques, media, and rumors of terrorist activities had similar effects on other interview participants.

As thought-provoking as the political conditions that participants identified as exploited by terrorists is what they did not identify. Secondary Question 1 found that political exclusion of Sunnis by the majority Shia sect was a major factor in support for or participation in terrorism. However, no participant identified terrorists using this particular condition in Iraq as a means to recruit support. Exclusion of the Sunni sect from politics does not appear to have been exploited by terrorists directly, despite it being identified as the primary factor leading to the support of terrorism against the transitioning government.

Social and religious factor. The social and religious factor ranked third among the four factors (political, military, social and religious, and economic) assessed as contributing to the decision by participants to join or support terrorist groups, but it ranked second in persuasive factors used by terrorist groups to generate support and membership. Nine of the 13 participants who discussed terrorist group influence as a factor in their decision to participate in or support terrorism identified the social and religious factor, specifically religious sect, as a factor used by terrorists. The same number of participants identified political conditions as a factor exploited by terrorists.

Participants identified the use of mosques and religious clerics to promote the use of terrorism and sectarian differences as the two means by which terrorists used social and religious conditions to persuade participants.

Participant Luay began supporting the insurgency by mounting guns on trucks following messages by Al-Qaeda from the local mosque. Luay explained, “As a Muslim, when I heard a cleric or a sheikh in a mosque asking us for the holy fight against the

invaders and their puppets, I had to respond." Luay was one of 3 participants who responded to the call to support terrorism from a local mosque. The use of mosques by terrorist groups to recruit support was the catalyst for Luay's initial involvement with the insurgency. This example illustrates how terrorist organizations used traditional social and cultural means of influence to convince the population to support them in their quest to evict U.S. forces and to remove the democratic government of Iraq.

Terrorist exploitation of tension between religious sects was an underlying factor in all nine interviews that identified terrorist groups' use of social and religious conditions to gain support. As discussed earlier, the religious factor influenced all other factors in Iraq during the period under study. Terrorist organizations exploited this and brought religion to the forefront for many participants. Terrorist organizations, through propaganda and violence, exploited Iraqi Sunnis' fear of Iranian influence, Shia domination, and violence against Sunnis. Five participants credited terrorist propaganda with helping them to realize the effect Shia domination of Iraq was having on them as Sunnis.

For example, participant Saman told of daily attacks in his neighborhood by a Shia militia. Sunni families fled the area under threats of death. Saman frequently attended his mosque to hear Sunni terrorist groups explain how this militia was an extension of Iran and represented Iranian control of Iraq. Participant Baha explained that the population would listen to these terrorist groups and their explanation of violence because terrorist organizations successfully convinced the population that security forces

were corrupt and serving a corrupt government influenced by Iran and the U.S.. He explained:

> If the people cannot trust security forces, they have to rely on the insurgents; they have no one else to trust. The main problem is that only the insurgent groups are talking to the people, no one else talks to people or earns their trust, so they believe what the terrorists are telling them.

In this, Baha summarized how terrorist organizations exploited Sunni fears of Iran and occupying forces to generate support.

Military factor. Four participants identified military factors, including violence levels in Iraq during the transition period and sensationalizing violence, as reasons for opposing the transitional government. The military factor often became a tactic for terrorist organizations to maintain support once they gained it through other means. Luay explained that in his case, the call from mosques to support the insurgency was followed up by the arrival of a large number of foreign fighters. As a result, individuals no longer supported the insurgency by choice but rather by force. He stated the following:

> When they (foreign fighters) started to come in a lot of numbers, they outnumbered us and they start to force us to do things . . . and we almost became slaves to them because of their power. They are all very well-armed, and we had to support them.

This was a common tactic in Iraq in which terrorist organizations would integrate influence and physical operations to achieve their desired outcome (Denning, 2004).

In another example, participant Wahab explained in his interview how Al Qaeda gradually emerged in his neighborhood. Al-Qaeda's presence began with graffiti and spread to the mosques. Gradually, announcements from the mosques began encouraging people to rebel, and men at local mosques described the excitement of attacking government forces. Wahab described how his neighborhood became divided and how those who did not join the terrorist group or support them would have their homes bombed. Seeing these men in the neighborhood regularly, Wahab told how it just became an accepted way of life and how before anyone realized it, they were all part of Al-Qaeda and were housing foreign fighters or helping with attacks.

Both interviews illustrate how violence associated with terrorist organizations emerged gradually among the population. Its gradual emergence largely went unrecognized by the population. Once the local people recognized the presence or extent of terrorist organization activities in their communities, individuals felt compelled to continue their involvement or, at a minimum, feared retribution if they refused involvement or support.

Economic factor. 3 participants identified economics as a factor terrorist organizations used to influence them to either become involved or stay involved in the use of terrorism against the transitioning government of Iraq. Within Baghdad, terrorist activities started with gangs in the local neighborhoods looting and stealing. To illustrate, participant Ahmed described how the presence of Al-Qaeda in his community began. He noted the following:

> At first, they (terrorists) were interested mainly in just thieving. Gradually they grew more violent. By June of 2004, many residents from our area of Ameriya were leaving because the neighborhood was going bad. It was not a sectarian thing at this time. The crime was just too much for many (personal communication).

Though none of the participants discussed their personal involvement in these gangs, Ahmed's neighborhood helps illustrate how the harsh economic conditions following the invasion by U.S. forces became a catalyst for terrorist activities.

The two remaining participants who identified economic conditions as a strategy by which terrorist organizations used to gain their support both found that only terrorist organizations offered them a means to support their families. In both the case of participant Ka'ab and Hamdia, there was no desire by participants to become involved in violence or resist government transition, but terrorist organizations offered them a form of income and means to support their economically deprived families.

Secondary Research Question 3: Personal Experience

For the purpose of this study, personal experience measured whether an event or series of events experienced by an individual influenced that individual's decision to support terrorist activities. Personal experience may include negative contact with government, military, or foreign forces, or the death or injury of an associate. Under the systems approach to analysis, an experience such as one of these examples can lead to a perspective shift when it comes to other factors and serve as a facilitator for behavior, including providing support for terrorism. Participants in this study were specifically

asked by the original interviewer to share their personal experiences since the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces. As a result, all participants expressed some level of personal experience in their decisions to support terrorism and violence against the transitioning government. Because of this, this study does not allow for full exploration or accurate measure of the role personal experience played overall in the decision by Iraqi Sunnis to resist the transitioning government, though some common themes were identified.

The following paragraphs outline themes identified in regard to the personal experiences that emerged from the interviews in regard to Secondary Research Question 3: What are the identifiable attitudes, common experiences, or patterns of behavior shared by those individuals who supported terrorism against the transitioning democratic government of Iraq?

Two themes emerged in regard to this research question, negative interaction with the Shia majority and reduced government employment, including military service. Of these, the primary theme that emerged in regard to personal experiences contributing to an individual's decision to support terrorism against the transitioning government of Iraq was negative contact and interaction with the Shia majority as they moved into a position of power in Iraq.

Four participants discussed their negative interaction with the Shia majority in Iraq. These experiences were primarily in the area of violence by Shia militias toward Sunnis and Sunni communities. For example, participant Rasim stated:

> The Mahdi Army had basically taken over our neighborhood by the middle of 2006. They were very open about it. They established checkpoints on the main

> roads to search cars coming and going. At the end of my street was a big house that belonged to a family that had been forced to emigrate by the old government to Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. The only person in that house for years had been a guard and caretaker hired by the family to watch over the place. When the Mahdi Army moved into our area, they told the guard to leave and made the place a safe house of theirs. There were always rumors that they were torturing people inside (personal communication).

Similar to the experience of 3 other participants, the experience Rasim had with violence and fear of emerging Shia militant groups led him to join a Sunni terrorist group to prevent Shia majority rule of the government.

The second theme that emerged was reduced government employment. 3 participants were employed by either government ministries or universities, and two were in the military under Saddam Hussein. Although these participants had varying reasons for ultimately supporting terrorist organizations, all five individuals expressed what could be interpreted as a degree of loyalty to the previous regime or, at a minimum, an appreciation for and desire to maintain the status quo. Individual access to income, a standard of living, and social prestige associated with a regime job ultimately contributed to the desire of these individuals to avoid the changes brought on by the transitioning government.

Summary

This research was performed to contribute to understanding what combination of conditions, circumstances, and influences contributed to members of the Iraqi Sunni sect

to decide to move from a position of support or neutrality for transition to a democratic government in Iraq to resisting the transition through either the use of or support for terrorism following the invasion by U.S. forces. The information gained from the 15 interviews was significant.

What the research has confirmed is that conditions, circumstances, and influences combined to create an environment in which participants believed the best or most rational option was to either support or participate in terrorism. The research also indicated that the factor that most contributed to an environment in which supporting terrorism was considered the best alternative was the political factor, with 93% of the participants identifying it as a factor in their decision to support terrorism. Other factors examined here—including military factors, social and religious factors, and economic factors—were found to contribute to a political environment in which these Sunni participants felt they were marginalized and would be excluded from future political participation or influence.

As indicated in Table 7, all participants, with the exception of participant Allawi who was identified earlier in this chapter as not fitting the standard profile of participants, displayed five to seven of the causal factors examined here. This supports the assessment that these factors combined to create an environment conducive to supporting terrorism. Interviews indicate that the fact that democratization of Iraq was initiated by the U.S. and largely carried out by Iraqi exiles of the Shia sect, and the decision of those implementing democracy in Iraq to execute de-Ba'athification, contributed to an increase in violence

and social and religious conflicts and to a significant decrease in economic conditions for Sunnis previously associated with the regime.

Table 7

Causal Factors

Participant	Political	Military	Economic	Social	Religious	Terrorist Strategy	Personal Experience	Number of Factors Case Displayed
AMR	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Ahmed	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
Mustapha	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Rassim	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Azhar	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
Ka'ab	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5
Hamdia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Omar	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
Wahib	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
Baher	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
Saman	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	5
Baha'a	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Luay	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
Mayson	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
Allawi	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
No. of cases displaying factors	15	15	8	15	15	13	6	

Note. Causal factors are those identified within Crenshaw's (2007) 3 levels of causation theory. In the table, 1s indicate that the factor was present and 0s indicate it was not. The far right column represents the number of cases that identified that set of factors as present in their migration toward terrorism as a means of resisting democratic transition in Iraq. The bottom row summarizes how many of the 15 participants identified that factor as present.

Further, terrorist organizations appear to have been successful in exploiting the conditions in Iraq following the invasion by U.S. forces. Terrorist organizations actively used political conditions and Sunni fears of marginalization as their primary means of recruiting support and participation. Specific factors used by terrorist groups to influence the involvement by these participants were found to be consistent with the factors individuals identified as environmental factors that independently influenced their

decision, with one exception. Terrorists were found to use political factors, then social and religious factors, followed by military factors, and, last, economic conditions. This demonstrated that terrorist groups relied more heavily on social and religious factors in their efforts to recruit and influence the population than individual participant rankings show. Finally, personal experience with violence at the hands of Shia militias was the greatest personal influence affecting an individual's decision to support terrorism.

Chapter 5 evaluates the findings of this research to assist policymakers in gaining a better understanding of what combination of conditions, circumstances, and influences contributed to an individual's decision to move from supporting the democratic transition to resisting that transition through terrorism. In addition, the chapter explores research outcomes to illustrate support for social change, express the final outcomes of the research, and illustrate the continued need for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

I used an explanatory case study approach to identify mechanisms (viewed as the complex interaction of causes or systems) that led members of the Iraqi Sunni sect to move from a position of neutrality or support for their government transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic system to resisting that transition through terrorism. I addressed the following primary research question:

What combination of conditions, circumstances, and influences contributed to members of the Sunni sect moving from a position of support or neutrality for the transition to a democratic government in Iraq to resisting the transition through either the use of or support for terrorism following the invasion of U.S. forces?

In answering this question, the author explored the following secondary research questions:

1. What conditions (i.e., political, social, military, and economic) in Iraq following the 2003 invasion by U.S. forces contributed to the decision by members of the Sunni sect to support armed resistance and the use of terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did any particular factor have a greater influence on this decision than other factors did?
2. How did terrorist groups use these conditions to encourage Sunni Iraqis to support terrorism against a transitioning democratic government? Did terrorists use any other factors as a means to gain support for their activities against a transitioning government?

3. What are the identifiable attitudes, common experiences, or patterns of behavior shared by those individuals who supported terrorism against a transitioning democratic government of Iraq?

The findings in Chapter 4 highlighted the presence of all casual factors laid out in the primary and secondary research questions and introduced the powerful role religious sect played in all factors. The study findings confirmed that political conditions were the primary causal factor in each individual's decision to support or participate in terrorism against the transitioning government but that it was the complex interaction of causal factors that drove participants to support or participate in terrorism. The factors I examined in this study strongly underscored the role religious sect played in shaping all factors in Iraq following the United States invasion. The results revealed that Sunni Iraqis were denied political access, unequally subject to violence, and denied jobs and economic stability because they were members of the Sunni sect, creating conditions in which Sunnis did not believe they would be given equal opportunities under a democratic form of government.

Interpretation of the Findings

The theoretical foundation for this study was established in rational choice theory (Sandler & Lapan, 1988) and examined in the context of Crenshaw's (2007) 3 levels of causation, illustrated in Chapter 2. The convergence of these two approaches to understanding terrorism allowed for the identification of political access as the primary issue contributing to Sunni support for or participation in terrorism against the government of Iraq, with the military factor as the second factor and economics as the

last factor influencing their decision. In addition, this study identified that it was a combination of at least two of these factors that created conditions in which individual participants thought resistance to democratic transition was necessary. Participants believed that with the implementation of democracy, Sunnis were being disenfranchised rather than given equal access and representation and democracy promised. This concern of disenfranchisement is significant owing to Iraq's history of excluding religious sects and Sunnis historical position of superiority within Iraq.

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed a dearth of peer-reviewed literature directly related to the subject of terrorism and democracy to set the foundation for examination of Iraq. To address the specific circumstances in Iraq, the literature review was expanded to address historical issues in Iraq to include domestic terrorism; approaches to democracy promotion; authoritarian rule in Iraq and resulting ethnosectarian issues; and the effects of military occupation to include the lack of security in Iraq. The literature showed a variety of independent theories and explanations that contribute to understanding why members of the Sunni sect chose to resist democratic transition through terrorism.

Despite Sunnis being Iraq's minority sect, Sunnis were the elite in Iraq going back to medieval times. Their position of power was solidified by the British who turned to the Sunni elite to lead Iraq in World War I. As the nation's elite, members of the Sunni sect prospered under Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party. They lead the nation in education, income, and positions in Iraq's government. The literature review revealed that once stripped of their position and status in society afforded by the Ba'ath

Party, this disenfranchised population, including government and military members, comprised the majority of Iraqis using terrorism to resist the democratic transition. The implication of this literature is that the primary condition leading to resistance through terrorism was the loss of status in Iraq, to include economic, social, and governmental.

The case study approach of this investigation was designed to understand better the reasons for individual Sunnis' belief that the changes they were experiencing with the advent of democracy were so extreme and negative as to warrant resisting democratic transition through terrorism. The research findings in Chapter 4 supported the literature in that the loss of conditions Sunnis experienced prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq was the cause of their resisting democratic transition, although with some significant points of disagreement. Greater understanding of these views is critical to avoiding similar levels of violence during future military operations.

The data collected from interviews with Sunni Iraqis who moved from a position of support or neutrality for government transition to democracy to one of resistance through terrorism revealed that it was the combination of conditions experienced by Sunni Iraqis that led them to support terrorism, conditions largely attributed to de-Ba'athification, targeting of Sunnis by the newly empowered Shia sect, and political exclusion. Iraqi culture tends to be tribal and sect-oriented despite efforts at Pan-Arabism by Saddam Hussein. Iraqis have found this approach necessary both as a means of survival in the face of historical disenfranchisement in the form of uprisings and war and as a means of maintaining each individual religious sect's own cultures. The data collected in this study revealed that the U.S. underestimated the role tribe and

religious sect played in Iraqi society and took actions, primarily de-Ba'athification and use of Shia exiles to shape government, which ultimately led Sunnis to feel excluded from the transforming government.

There is no united authority, cause, or identity driving the Sunni movement, which makes it difficult for Iraqi Sunnis to engage with the state and adapt to changing circumstances. Specifically, Sunnis had no skilled political voice to represent their views or needs in the formation of Iraq's transforming government because independent political parties were not authorized under Saddam Hussein and all leaders of the Ba'ath Party were banned from participation in the new government. With most educated and experienced members of the Sunni sect banned from government participation, Sunnis lacked involvement in the leadership and direction of Iraq to include the police force, military, and constitutional development. This left Sunnis feeling excluded and often targeted by Shias attempting to shape the political, economic, and military landscape in their favor as they vied for power.

By comparison, the Shia sect was well represented in all aspects of government to include the senior levels, as Shia exiles were used to form the transitioning government, were appointed to the highest level of office, and were able to lead political parties thanks to the development of exiled Iraqi efforts. As an oppressed sect in Iraq from its earliest history, Shias intended to take full advantage of the presence of the U.S. and the advent of democracy to assert their position as the majority in Iraq. Fear of the power the Ba'ath Party had over them and Iraq led them to take extreme steps in ensuring the Ba'ath Party would not reemerge. These steps resulted in the

banning of Ba'ath Party members from national politics. As various Shia political parties struggled for power, they used their newfound authority to direct police and military actions against rival political groups but primarily against Sunnis. The elimination of the Ba'ath Party, and the lack of Sunni political representation, when coupled with Shia needs to exert power and influence to the point of violence against Sunnis, resulted in a combination of factors that left Sunnis believing democracy, with the majority Shia sect in power, was going to leave them subject to violence, with no political or economic opportunities. Fundamentally, the democratic transition was intended to give all members of Iraq a voice. However, in practice, it led a group of educated, well-trained, military-aged men with experience in war and trained to fight, to believe they had no future under democracy.

In addition, this study validated the following theoretical assumptions highlighted in Chapter 2:

- Sunni Iraqis sought national stability with inclusion in the transforming government of Iraq. Sunni Iraqis believed they were not only being denied inclusion in the new government, to include constitutional development, political representation, and elections, but they believed steps were being taken to specifically exclude them from the government (personal interviews). This is consistent with rational choice theory in that these were rational actors who determined their actions were in their own best interest. The desire for inclusion, coupled with de-Ba'athification, banning of Sunnis from the election, constitutional limitations based on sect, and increased violence targeting Sunnis,

demonstrates how research participants had thought through their problem rationally and saw options for non-violent response being taken from them (Enders & Sander, 2011).

- Insurgent and terrorist groups grew as Sunnis felt the need to affiliate with a group for security and group cohesion. Crenshaw (2007) highlighted how terrorist organizations views and activities attract individuals seeking inclusion and shared concerns.
- As conditions grew worse in Iraq, participants voiced a level of desperation and sought a means to create more positive conditions for themselves and their family. According to causation theory, pressure experienced by a group of people, dependent on their political, social, and economic context, can lead to terrorism (Crenshaw, 2007). Pressure, such as the pressure participants felt to improve the conditions under which they and their families lived, can lead to a response along a continuum from peaceful change to violent change dependent on an individual's means and circumstances (Enders & Sander, 2011).

Other key theoretical-based observations include:

- Change that inadvertently or intentionally dismantled Iraq's ruling party decreased government services, disenfranchised the population, and caused a spike in violence.
- Allowing former Ba'ath members to participate in the government process as representatives that the Sunni population trusts will lead to stability.
- In Iraq, both Shia and Sunni associated political groups and government

officials will use violence and terrorism to balance the system to their advantage.

- Trust in any political framework is non-existent among Iraqi sects, making anything beyond authoritarian rule and strict military control a security risk and unlikely.
- The less coalition combat presence; the less cultural resistance to change.
- The higher the degree of traditional, largely tribal, influence, the higher the perceptions of positive political development among Sunnis.
- Sunni Iraqis believe Shias are determined to deny them a role in Iraq's future and minimize their opportunities in the future.
- Cultural resistance to change may manifest itself as increased instability and violence. This is caused by a lack of national unity vis-à-vis religious sect, a history of war and violence as a nation, and unfamiliarity with self-rule.

Limitations of the Study

The case study approach of this investigation relied on a criterion sample as a purposeful sampling strategy with secondary data as the interview source. This produced a small group of study participants (N = 15), which allowed for in-depth exploration of issues related to the decision by members of the Sunni sect to resist democratic transition in Iraq following the U.S. invasion of 2003. Use of rational choice theory as the foundation of this study presents a limitation in that participants of the study may not qualify under all parameters of the theory. The theory was applied in this study in recognition that participants have thought out their decision to support or

participate in terrorism rather than their involvement being irrational and in reaction to less thought out issues.

As a case study, this investigation focused on interviews and personal experiences of participants. The study did not seek to identify discrepant cases; all participants were selected based on meeting the specific criteria of having personal experience regarding the Sunni transition from support or neutrality for a democratic transition to resisting it through either support for or participation in terrorist attacks against the transitioning government of Iraq. This creates a risk of minimal transferability to other situations despite how similar they may appear. However, identification of factors that led to the decision of members of the Sunni Iraqi sect to resist democratic transition can help focus other researchers' attention on those factors, screen out others, and provide a basis for further research in the field.

A third limitation is that participants did not speak heavily on interaction or exposure to terrorist groups leading to only marginal consideration to terrorist group activities as an influence on participants' decisions. Also, the decision to restrict this research to members of the Sunni sect can be perceived as a limitation. The decision to eliminate other sects from this study, specifically members of the Shia sect, is due to the research objective of examining terrorism as a means of resisting a transition to democratic government. In general, members of the Shia sect participated in terrorist acts to influence and shape the new democratic government of Iraq, not as a means of resisting the transition to democracy. As a result, the Sunni sect is the best sample population to measure resistance to a democratic transition.

The final limitation identified was capturing the full intent and view of participants. Interview participants were originally interviewed for a different purpose than this study. As a result, there was no opportunity for follow-up questions or clarification of statements; all interviews were conducted in Arabic and translated into English, which offers an opportunity for loss of intent.

Recommendations

Considerations for further study and policy development, drawn from analysis of participant interviews and experiences, in addition to document analysis discussed in Chapter 4, are presented below. This study highlights the complex environment in which military operations focused on changing processes ingrained in a country for centuries, occurs. It highlights that a decision to enter a country and lead it through government transition is not one the U.S. should enter without a thorough understanding of a country's history, culture, and unique issues brought on by minority rule and authoritarian governance. To prepare the military for operating in such a complex environment, military policy provides guidance that is directive or instructive, stating what is to be accomplished in response to a perceived national threat. It reflects a conscious choice to pursue certain avenues and not others. Once this choice is made, strategy defines how operations should be conducted to accomplish national and military policy objectives, and then doctrine presents considerations on how to accomplish national and military objectives (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013a). As a result of this relationship, the following will address recommendations for policy, strategy, and doctrine.

Policy/Strategy Recommendations

1. Research should be conducted on U.S. policies and strategies on nation building and democracy to determine the most effective approach to democracy promotion. Iraq indicates that the political approach to democracy building is not effective in countries with no government institutions or security foundation. Further study should be conducted, utilizing these findings, to determine how the factors highlighted here can be addressed in the nation building process as to avoid prolonged conflict.
2. Research should be conducted on the most effective means of conducting democracy transition in countries transitioning from a single party and/or authoritarian rule. Complications study participants experienced during democratic transitions may be the result of how democracy was implemented, specifically the political approach rather than the developmental approach as discussed in Chapter 2. Issues participants identified to include security, employment, and representation in political processes could possibly have been avoided utilizing the developmental approach to democracy.
3. Further research is needed regarding the use of military forces to implement democratic reform in the future. This study did not address whether it was appropriate for a military operation to serve as the basis for leading a country through an abrupt transition to democracy but did identify decisions implemented by the U.S. and executed by military forces that complicated government transition. Prior to similar operations, research must be conducted by policy

developers to determine whether the use of military forces complicated the situation in Iraq and if the use of troops is an effective means of executing U.S. strategy.

Doctrine Recommendations

U.S. military counterinsurgency doctrine serves as the main form of written guidance military forces have in executing national military strategy during post-combat operations in countries such as Iraq (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013). This doctrine states that counterinsurgency (counterterrorism) operations require the integration of elements of security, economic development, and information through a political strategy. It advises that this political strategy must establish and sustain the host nation's government control and reinforce its legitimacy and effectiveness, reducing insurgent influence over the population. This guiding doctrine clearly instructs the military to focus efforts on legitimizing the host nation government. It does not provide any guidance on addressing host national government behaviors that are contrary to democratic principles to include excluding sects of the population from government participation such as in Iraq.

As a whole, current military doctrine provides little guidance or direction into how military forces should conduct operations involving a nation without effective governing mechanisms and processes. However, our experience in international engagements to include Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq finds U.S. forces operating within failed or failing states and nations experiencing government transition (Rigby, 2003). In all, current doctrine does not adequately address the requirements and order of execution of these tasks as a primary mission to transition a nation to democratic governance.

Development of new doctrine that addresses nation building, democratic transition, and conflict resolution would help fill the current void in doctrine and minimize conflict during nation building and a democratic transition.

Research must be conducted to develop doctrine that helps U.S. military personnel execute democracy building operations given lessons learned such as those highlighted in this study. Central to this is an understanding of the difference between conflicts in democracies and non-democracies to understand the mindset of actors in transitioning countries. This should be centered on the fact that users of the doctrine are accustomed to conflicts being resolved through negotiation as they are in a democracy. In a democracy, losing a political battle does not result in the loss of political rights or exclusion from future political competition and violence is not an acceptable means of resolving conflicts in a democratic environment. This research has demonstrated that in nondemocratic states, however, people are socialized in an atmosphere where political rivals who lose a conflict are completely excluded and are regularly removed from the process. Coercion and violence are more widely accepted as legitimate means for resolving political disputes. Doctrine must help military personnel understand these various mindsets and to use that understanding in their interaction with transitioning political leaders and those who feel excluded from the political process. Doctrine centered on the sources of conflict in non-democratic states as addressed here will provide military personnel a means by which to help resolve conflicts in a transitioning government rather than simply creating legitimacy for a new government that may not be

embracing the democratic principles the U.S. is working to implement, as is the case in Iraq.

Recommendations for Further Study

Some of the themes that arose from this research are relevant to problems that should be investigated further to better the overall role the U.S. plays in promoting democracy abroad while minimizing terrorist responses. Themes that warrant further study include:

- These findings must be explored against other transitioning government situations to determine if the findings are transferable to similar circumstances.
- The implications of non-socially cohesive societies on democratic transition.
- The effects of Islam on democracy and democracy on Islam.
- The effect of war on an abrupt transition to democracy and the implications of political vice developmental approaches to democracy development.
- More in-depth studies of factor analysis themes (political, military, economic, terrorist group activities, and personal experience) should be conducted to validate its utilization in the context of democratic transition.
- Research needs to be conducted to help determine if political access and inclusion were truly the primary instigators of terrorist support. This would entail comparing these findings to an abrupt democratic transition in which all elements were given equal opportunity for political participation, yet, terrorist support emerged.

- The findings in this study need to be examined against similar historical cases to determine if the findings are transferable.

Implications for Positive Social Change

This research will contribute to a positive social change by identifying factors that act as catalysts for terrorism during democracy building operations so that these factors may be addressed early in future similar operations. These finding can help individuals feel that grievances and issues are being addressed rather than feeling the need to revert to terrorism. In turn, this will help reduce the length of conflict and contributing to the peaceful address of grievances.

According to Crenshaw (2007), terrorism is the result of a gradual growth of commitment and opposition, a group development that furthermore depends on government action. This supports the notion that if addressed early, grievances may not grow into a commitment to terrorist actions against the transitioning government. In addition, these findings highlight what actions by U.S. forces and the transitioning government of Iraq contributed to the gradual transition to resistance through terrorism that participants experienced. In future operations with similar environments, potentially Syria, errors by the U.S. and Iraqi governments that made individuals feel threatened and excluded can be better understood and avoided.

According to Crenshaw (2007), vengeance on behalf of comrades or a constituency (in this case the Sunni sect) is the primary emotion that drives individuals to support terrorism. The theory goes on to state that a regime encourages terrorism when it creates victims or individuals to be avenged. The interviews conducted in this study

support this statement. In all participant interviews, 100% of the participants spoke of their religious sect as a catalyst for the factors examined in this study. All 15 participants believe the treatment of the Sunni sect in the transformation of the government of Iraq created the conditions in which terrorism was the best alternative for protecting their sect. As a result, religious sect, or identification as Sunni, was the center of gravity, or primary factor that combined with other factors created the conditions in which individuals decided terrorism against the transitioning government was the best option they had. Avoiding actions that lead portions of the population to believe they have acts to avenge will reduce support for terrorism in transitioning countries.

This research has shown that individuals respond with violence and terror when they believe they are excluded from transition and fear for their futures in a transitioning state. The inclusion of minority groups, especially when these groups move from a position of power and control, was identified as critical if a transitioning government wishes to contain violence and terrorism. In Iraq, no mechanisms were in place to ensure the Sunni sect had an adequate voice in politics and government once the Ba'ath Party was dissolved.

To fully have a positive social change, a military strategy must account for post-conflict planning to include adequate preparation for government transition. During this preparation time, strategists must examine national culture against the factors studied here to identify how these factors could combine to create an environment where any segment of the population in the transitioning country believes their constituency needs to be avenged or protected. It is critical that all aspects of the population are well understood

and engaged early to identify grievances and possible pitfalls the transitioning government may encounter. In the case of Iraq, these included using exiled Iraqis to lead the transitioning government, not diversifying security forces and government ministries, and preventing Ba'ath Party members from participating in any level of the new government, thus, denying the Sunni sect experienced political representation.

Conclusion

The issue assessed by this study was resisting government transition to democracy through the use of or support for terrorism. An assessment evaluated the factors that contributed to an individual's decision to support or participate in terrorism against the transitioning government of Iraq in the context of Crenshaw's (2007) theory of causation.

Data from the study suggest that the primary factor leading to participants' support for terrorism was political exclusion due to their religious sect. Participants, members of the Sunni sect, identified the lack of Sunni representation in the interim government, within government ministries, especially the ministries of interior (police) and defense (military), and lack of Sunni representation in the development of the national constitution as the basis for their belief that Sunnis were denied participation in the transitioning government.

The findings suggest that the military factor, including the level of violence in Iraq, targeting of Sunnis by Shia extremist groups, and the lack of Sunni representation in the military and police forces was the second leading factor.

Although a factor, economics was the lowest factor in participants' decisions to support terrorism. Those who were influenced by economics believed that as Sunnis they were denied opportunities for employment and government rations.

These findings highlight that religious sect, specifically the fact that participants were Sunni, influenced all other factors considered in this research. This was initially going to be considered as a separate factor, specifically the social/religious factor. However, results demonstrated that, according to participants, no factor could be assessed in isolation but rather must be examined in the context of religious sect. Religious sect was the primary method terrorist organizations used to influence participants to support or join their organization and was the primary element that shaped participants' individual experiences.

This research process was a reflection opportunity for me as it afforded me the opportunity to answer questions from my experience in Iraq. As it was stated, I work as a military intelligence officer in the U.S. Army and deployed to Iraq on four occasions. The data that were collected helped address an intelligence gap identified during operations in Iraq as analysts struggled to identify what was leading to increases in the size of and support for terrorist organizations. From this, it can be assumed that biases could occur. However, interviews were not conducted by the researcher, but rather consisted of second-hand data originally collected for a separate publication.

In utilizing predetermined factors, including political, military, economic, terrorist group influences, and personal experience, against which to conduct an analysis of the data collected assumptions regarding participant motivations were made. However, once

the interviews were analyzed, all factors and influences discussed by participants fell within the factors provided by causation theory. The greatest surprise to me was that participants attributed all influences within each factor to the fact that they are Sunni. As an example, participants did not believe that the lack of jobs or employment as a result of war was the factor that led them to support terrorism but rather they identified the influence as the fact that they had no job opportunities because they were Sunni.

The identified factors that contributed to participants' decisions to support terrorism indicate a lack of understanding about what leads individuals to support terrorism during the democratic transition. Transition to democratic governance indicates the value to all members of society being represented within government and a government's commitment to human rights. The findings in this research suggest that the actions of the U.S. and the transitioning government of Iraq were contrary to the principles of democracy and equal representation. To uphold the principles of democracy government transition intends to achieve, greater planning and policy development must go into the execution of government transition during future democracy building operations. Each country must be examined against the factors used in this study to identify potential issues and causes for terrorism and support of terrorism during the transition.

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