The Islamic State's Provinces on the Peripheries: Juxtaposing the Pledges from Boko Haram in Nigeria and Abu Sayyaf and Maute Group in the Philippines

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Abstract

Despite the loss of territories in Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State's "provinces" have all remained loyal to the organization's "core" and its Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Boko Haram's successor, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), and the jihadists in the Philippines in the Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf, which were labeled "East Asia", have both continued coordinating with the Islamic State. ISWAP now not only fields Caucasian foreign fighter commanders but also receives directives from the Islamic State on matters ranging from negotiations to attack plans while the jihadists in the Philippines would not have engaged in the short-lived conquest of Marawi if not for them taking into account the demands of the Islamic State "core". Prior to merging with the Islamic State the jihadists in Nigeria and the Philippines restructured their internal organization and proved they could hold territory, which indicated they could meet the conditions the "core" required of them to be designated as provinces. By juxtaposing the relationship of the Islamic State "core" to the jihadists on the peripheries in Nigeria and the Philippines this article demonstrates the importance of the provinces for the Islamic State project and the different ways jihadists in the provinces have interacted with the "core".

Keywords: Boko Haram, Islamic State, Mergers, Philippines, Abu Sayyaf, Maute, ISWAP

Introduction

Since Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's declaration of a Caliphate in 2014, the Islamic State has become a terrorism phenomenon for three main reasons. First, the group administered large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq in the heartland of the Middle East. Second, the group directed massive terrorist attacks in Europe and at least inspired other attacks in countries ranging from the United States to Russia to Indonesia, while also attracting tens of thousands of foreign fighters from around the world to the battlefields of Syria and Iraq. And, third, the group won pledges of allegiance from jihadist groups around the world and incorporated them into its organization as "provinces".

These provinces have been vital to the Islamic State project, and the Islamic State will no sooner abandon the provinces than the provinces will abandon the Islamic State "core" despite the struggles it faces in holding its territory in Syria and Iraq. The provinces are also integral to understanding why the Islamic State became a terrorism phenomenon: the perception that the Islamic State was a global Caliphate with provinces around the world contributed to the surge of thousands of foreign fighters joining the group in Syria and Iraq after 2014. These foreign fighters, in turn, contributed to the group's conquests of territory in Syria and Iraq and the execution of external operations in Europe and elsewhere around the world. The provinces' continued loyalty to the Islamic State has also helped the Islamic State maintain credibility even after the loss of territory in Syria and Iraq. As a counterfactual, had the provinces abandoned the Islamic State in 2018, it may have dealt a knockout blow to the organization's legitimacy and proven it was truly a "paper state".[1]

On its peripheries, the Islamic State's westernmost province is in Nigeria and its easternmost province is in the Philippines. The jihadist groups in those two countries and in Libya, Egypt ("Sinai") and Afghanistan ("Khorasan") are the most active of the Islamic State's provinces outside of Syria and Iraq. In Nigeria, most "Boko Haram"[2] members and some Ansaru[3] members merged to become the Islamic State in West Africa Province, or "ISWAP", in 2015. And in the Philippines, Abu Sayyaf[4] and several other jihadist factions, including the Maute Group, merged and were labeled by the Islamic State as " East Asia" in a list of its provinces in its media in 2017, including the al-Bayan daily bulletin. However, whether this was a designation as a

"province" according to the leadership of the Islamic State is unsubstantiated. In contrast, for example, al-Baghdadi's spokesman himself, Abu Muhammed al-Adnani, explicitly stated ISWAP was a province in March 2015.[5]

ISWAP and the jihadists in the Philippines, moreover, were unique compared to the provinces in Libya, Sinai, and Khorasan because they had less physical interaction with the Islamic State fighters in Syria and Iraq. Nevertheless, even in the case of ISWAP despite that the communication with the "core" was conducted mostly virtually, there was a still an impact on the province. This article will therefore demonstrate how the Islamic State has functioned and presumably will continue to function even if it loses all of its territory in Syria and Iraq and needs to rely on virtual communication with its provinces and an increasingly dispersed "core".

The merging and uniting of jihadist groups and factions within one country, such as Nigeria, or one region, such as Southeast Asia, and tamkin (territorial authority) have been the Islamic State's two main requirements for groups to gain recognition as a province. This, in turn, has meant the jihadists in Nigeria and the Philippines have altered their internal organizational structure and strategic decision-making to meet the demands of the Islamic State. For example, as this article will demonstrate, the jihadists in Nigeria united in 2015 for the sake of becoming a province, although they had already obtained tamkin before then. Similarly, the jihadists in the Philippines both united and obtained short-lived tamkin in Marawi to prove themselves worthy of becoming a province in 2017.

This article proceeds with an examination of the literature on the Islamic State in Nigeria and the Philippines and an explanation of how this article provides distinct analytical and methodological contributions to the field. The article then follows with an analysis and comparison of the pledges to al-Baghdadi from the jihadists in both countries. An assessment of whether the relationship benefitted more the Islamic State "core" in Syria and Iraq or the groups on the peripheries in Nigeria and the Philippines is also conducted. Lastly, counter-terrorism implications are considered in the conclusion.

Literature and Methodologies Related to the Islamic State in Nigeria and the Philippines

Just as there is debate over whether local or international forces were more influential in creating "the Boko Haram phenomenon" in Nigeria, there is also debate over the significance of Boko Haram's merger with the Islamic State to become ISWAP in March 2015.[6] The main proponents of the school that views Boko Haram as a local phenomenon, who tend to be writing at Western-based institutions, have considered Boko Haram's relationship to the Islamic State to be superficial. The distinguished professor at Oxford, Abdul Raufu Mustapha, for example, expressed agreement with Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos and argued it was a "correct reading of the evidence" to "caution against the tendency to view Boko Haram as part of a wider global network of Islamist terrorism."[7] While Mustapha's claim was in 2014, that perception still holds today. A 274-page book published by the French Agency for Development in 2018 and edited by Pérouse de Montclos titled "Crisis and Development: Boko Haram and the Lake Chad Region", for example, describes Boko Haram's "links" with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State as "alleged" and conducts no further strategic, military, media or funding assessments on those relationships.[8] Similarly, Kyari Muhammed argued in a 2018 book chapter on Boko Haram's origins for "The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics", which was edited by Carl LeVan and Patrick Ukata, that Boko Haram's "links to international jihadist networks" are "alleged" and that Zenn was "obsessed" with "mining the Internet for snippets of information to link Boko Haram to international jihadist networks", as if physical documents or field interviews with ISWAP leaders or mediators who communicate with them would reveal that Boko Haram was, in fact, not "linked" to the Islamic State currently or al-Qaeda or al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) previously.[9] Kyari Muhammed managed to discuss Boko Haram's entire history from its origins until April 2015 without mentioning AQIM (or its predecessors) one time, including when explaining the emergence of Ansaru; this is remarkable even for those who believe local factors have played a more significant role than international factors in Boko Haram's evolution. In general, therefore, those who adopt the local perspective tend not to place much stock in the idea that Boko Haram is "linked" to

the Islamic State, let alone having restructured its internal organization, increased its military capabilities or receive influenced in other ways as a result of the pledge.

In contrast, there are other scholars, such as Andrea Brigaglia and Alessio Iocchi, who argued in a 2018 report for the Capetown, South Africa-based Centre for Contemporary Islam that "international connections … should be central to any attempt to understand the evolution of the [Boko Haram] phenomenon." Moreover, according to Brigaglia, the "failure to appreciate the depth of the participation of Nigerian actors into quintessentially global Jihadi networks reinforces the idea of an 'African Islam' essentially isolated from or impermeable to global influences."[10] The extent of Nigerian Muslims' international interactions, including Sufi leaders who received funding from Libya and Iran to counter Saudi and Kuwaiti support to Salafis in the 1980s, are well documented in the academic literature.[11] However, it was through "religious elites" in the Salafi community that in the 1990s the "Jihadist tumour" entered Nigeria. Brigaglia acknowledges those clerics have for more than a decade "genuinely, but ineffectively tried to 'slice off' the Jihadist tumour" they contributed to create in Nigeria. While debate on the local and international dimensions of the "Boko Haram phenomenon" should be encouraged and occur in an ethical and constructive way, the "minimizing attitude" of certain other members of the academic community towards "documenting the global dimension of the Boko Haram phenomenon" has "exonerated" those religious elites who have "muddled the waters" about the group's origins.[12] This, in turn, "does not serve the interests of an oppressed community"—namely marginalized groups that have been targeted and victimized by jihadist groups such as ISWAP that hold takfiri theologies and have persisted in "undermining the body of the Global South."[13]

In interpreting a key primary source document written by ISWAP leader Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi in context of prior analyses of jihadism in Nigeria, Brigaglia further argued that Nigeria has both "been a front of Global Jihad and of the Global War on Terror for quite some time, probably since the early 2000s."[14] Although this author initially argued in a 2012 Occasional Paper on Boko Haram that "a partnership between al-Qaeda and Nigerian militants was never forged in the 2000s", in view of other recent work by scholars in Sokoto State, Nigeria, such as Tijjani Talba Kafa and Abdulwahab Habib, it is now this author's contention that Nigeria became "a front of Global Jihad" not in the early 2000s, let alone the mid-2000s when Alexander Thurston argues Muhammed Yusuf "tried to smuggle in jihadist thought" into Nigeria, but rather the mid-1990s.[15] That period is when the Boko Haram founder, Muhammed Ali, was sent by a group of Salafi clerics to meet with Usama bin Laden's inner circle in Khartoum, Sudan and the first Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) operatives began operating in Nigeria with the consent of certain "religious elites".[16] While this author argued in a 2018 article that the support from al-Qaeda and AQIM's predecessors, such as the GIA, did have a "significant impact" on the early Boko Haram, this author would still caution that Carl LeVan's interpretation of the early al-Qaeda and GIA relationship with the Nigerian jihadists as indicative of Boko Haram being "born of a global jihadist conspiracy" unnecessarily exaggerates their interactions; the relationship was instead predicated mostly on "start-up" funding and training to the Nigerian jihadists of up to $3 million from Bin Laden or his inner circle and up to several dozen Nigerians trained by the GIA in the Sahel.[17]

Since the 1990s, there have been two "accelerations" in al-Qaeda support to Boko Haram: after the destruction in late 2003 of the "Kanama camp" that Muhammed Ali founded in 2002; and after the extrajudicial killing of Muhammed Ali's successor, Muhammed Yusuf, and up to 800 of his followers in 2009.[18] In both those instances, Boko Haram members retreated to the Sahel and received harbor and training from AQIM's predecessor, the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and AQIM, respectively (the GIA was the predecessor of the GSPC). This article, however, focuses only on the ways Nigeria has continued as a "front of Global Jihad" since Boko Haram's pledge of loyalty to the Islamic State in 2015. In this regard, the article relies on the author's field interviews in Borno State, Nigeria in 2018 and observations of attack trends and internal primary sources from ISWAP.

The article finds the Islamic State has had an impact on ISWAP's internal organization, military tactics, media outputs, and negotiation positions, which advances the position that "international connections"—specifically with the Islamic State—have mattered to ISWAP. The article therefore contributes a different perspective than an emerging conventional wisdom among some scholars who do recognize at least some "links" exist; whereas

they suggest ISWAP's relationship with the Islamic State is "primarily rhetorical", this article contends that although messaging is important there are also other forms of collaboration and influence that warrant analysis and that may be more important than messaging.[19] Nevertheless, this article will also adopt the approach of Virginia Comolli, who argues "there is a connection" between Boko Haram and the Islamic State but that "one should… acknowledge differences remain."[20] This article will therefore also highlight examples of ISWAP seeming to defy Islamic State directives and influence in the conclusion.

Much of the disagreement over the Islamic State and ISWAP relates to sources and methods. Although neither the "local" nor "internationalist" school is uniform, the former tends to not use any of the key primary sources about Boko Haram or ISWAP, including eulogies, memoirs, or histories written by ISWAP or AQIM leaders about the jihad in Nigeria, letters by or about Nigerian jihadists that were found in Usama bin Laden's compound, or leaked audio recordings from the ISWAP shura. For example, none of the key primary sources that deal with Boko Haram's origins in the years before 9/11 or its founding in 2002 or from the mission in 2003 of the first al-Qaeda operative who was sent from Pakistan to Nigeria to meet Boko Haram and GSPC leaders in Nigeria were mentioned or cited in Kyari Muhammed's 2018 book chapter specifically on Boko Haram's origins.[21] He was also among the five academics who questioned the legitimacy of "jihadist primary sources" in 2018 by equating them with "Nazi sources" without distinguishing between internal documents (whether captured or released by the group), which are generally more reliable, and speeches or articles for the public, which are generally more biased when assessing a group's strategy, organizational structure, military capabilities, alliances, and history but not necessarily false. One of the problems with avoiding altogether or stigmatizing primary sources is that it makes it more difficult for academics to "update" their analysis once new information from the past or especially the present emerges, which is why Kyari Muhammed's 2014 book chapter on Boko Haram in a Pérouse de Montclos-edited volume was virtually the same as his 2018 book chapter.[22]

Alexander Thurston suggested more recently in 2019 that a "certain kind of approach" to primary sources could be a form of "terrorology" that "often implicitly de-prioritizes other sources", such as "what ordinary people say, what journalists say, what the counter-sources say, etc."[23] However, the risk of Thurston's recommended sources when assessing the relationship of the Islamic State to its provinces, which is the focus of this article and the conference for which it was written, is that "ordinary people", including victims of terrorism, and "journalists" also have biases and the tendency to exaggerate. Moreover, ordinary people and most journalists are unlikely to be familiar with the leadership-level discussions and agreements between the Islamic State and ISWAP. In fact, all sources should be recognized for having advantages and drawbacks and the need to be scrutinized in terms of "source criticism" and "counter-sources."

There is no need to single out primary sources for scrutiny or assign them subjective and academically imprecise labels, such as "terrorology", that can be applied with a broad-brush to discredit or create doubt about legitimate sources, protect orthodoxy, including shielding vulnerabilities in one's own analysis from critique, and undermine the truth-seeking objective of the academic enterprise.[24] One might, however, acknowledge Thurston's proper call for more "source criticism" of primary sources—but still without employing academically imprecise terms such as "terrorology"—and argue there should also be more "source criticism" of interviews of jihadists and other secondary literature as well.[25] An Oxford University Press book on Boko Haram in 2018, for example, perpetuated the still unsubstantiated, indefensible and harmful claim that first entered the academic discourse in 2012 that "Christians masquerade as Boko Haram while attacking other Christian congregations."[26] Unless primary sources are proven to be a specific problem in academic discourse, which is difficult to claim especially in light of the aforementioned calumny about Christians and Boko Haram that has existed now for five years in secondary literature, then it would be worth scholars evaluating all sources with a critical eye and not having a "minimizing attitude" towards any of them in particular.

Certain primary sources, such as audios obtained from the shura of ISWAP, which this author received during fieldwork in Borno State, reveal the types of orders that the Islamic State has provided to ISWAP. These orders, in turn, have affected who ISWAP has killed—and intends to kill—both in internal purges within the group and among the civilian population. These sources are therefore highly relevant from a humanitarian perspective. However, they may not be ideal for understanding certain humanitarian issues, such as the needs of displaced

civilians seeking access to healthcare, shelter, or schooling for which accounts of "ordinary people" would be more reliable. Scholars must determine the appropriateness and reliability of sources depending on context, circumstance and the focus of study. For the purposes of the theme of this article interviews with mediators who have personally dealt with ISWAP's leadership and internal audios from ISWAP's leadership are privileged over interviews with "ordinary people" who do not have access to knowledge about ISWAP's dealings with the Islamic State "core". The data from these sources are naturally considered and triangulated alongside attack data sets, secondary literature and other related sources.

In contrast to the debate on ISWAP and the Islamic State, analyses of jihadism in the Philippines, including by Maria Ressa of the Manila-based Rappler and Rohan Gunaratna of Nanyang Technology University in Singapore, tend to be in agreement that the Islamic State communicated with the jihadists in the Philippines and provided some financing and strategic advising to them before Islamic State media mentioned "East Asia" among its provinces.[27] In that regard, this article seeks to take advantage of the distance in time since the major battle in Marawi in 2017 to offer a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the public statements and communications of the jihadist factions in the Philippines and the Islamic State both before and after that battle than has previously existed. It is hoped this will generate a clearer picture of how the factions united and why they decided to attempt to acquire tamkin in Marawi to meet the conditions that the Islamic State demands of prospective provinces. Unlike the case of ISWAP where there are several internal primary source documents that have emerged from the group's leadership, there have been fewer, if any, internal discourses from the jihadist leaders in the Philippines that have become publicly available. Therefore, this article assesses the activities of the jihadists in the Philippines vis-à-vis the Islamic State primarily by interpreting attack patterns and public messaging.

More broadly, it is hoped this article provides valuable insights for scholars of the Islamic State "core", who may have a tendency to focus on the organization in its "heartland" in the Middle East but overlook the organization's activities in the provinces and how the "core" interacts continuously with the provinces and vice-versa. This, in turn, will contribute to scholars of the "core" acquiring a greater understanding of not only the "core" itself, but also the Islamic State as a complex organization with global reach.

The Case of the Islamic State and Nigeria

Behind-the-Scenes of ISWAP's Pledge to the Islamic State

ISWAP formed in March 2015 when Boko Haram leader Abu Bakar Shekau pledged allegiance (baya') to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and al-Baghdadi's spokesman, Abu Muhammed al-Adnani, accepted it in a speech five days later. Although Shekau acknowledged that al-Baghdadi was a legitimate Caliph, he originally did not want to make the pledge. Shekau suspected (rightly, as it turned out) that his commanders would exploit the pledge and use the Islamic State's authority to depose him from leadership. Considering Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi's description of group's commanders as welcoming the emergence of the Islamic State because they hoped it would lead Shekau to moderate his violence, Shekau must have also known that if he did not make the pledge he could face an internal rebellion or risk sub-commanders making the pledge without him, which they threatened to do.[28]

One of the reasons why Shekau was beholden to other commanders of the group when it came to the issue of the pledge was that these commanders were in communication with Boko Haram's North Africa-based Islamic State intermediaries by both written correspondences and text messages (including from prisons in Nigeria).[29] These intermediaries, in turn, managed the relationship with the Islamic State "core" in Syria and Iraq. There is no evidence Shekau or his top commanders, such as Man Chari, or spokesman, Abu Zinnira, communicated with the Islamic State directly; rather Man Chari and Shekau both indicated after the August 2016 demotion of Shekau from ISWAP leadership that Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi had been controlling the group's communications with the Islamic State.[30]

These Islamic State intermediaries, however, were so enamored of Shekau that it is possible—even probable—

that the Islamic State would not have accepted the pledge to al-Baghdadi from anyone in Boko Haram but Shekau. Adding to the irony, the Boko Haram commanders who were communicating with those North African Islamic State intermediaries, such as Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi, were repulsed by Shekau's brutality in territories the group conquered in northeastern Nigeria starting in 2013.[31] These commanders nevertheless seem to have hidden the extent of their repulsion of Shekau from the North African Islamic State intermediaries because the semblance of opposition to Shekau could have jeopardized their ability to become a province.[32] They did, however, imply to the Islamic State that there were internal matters that could delay Shekau's pledge and that the Islamic State should be patient about determining when to announce the new province. In a best case scenario, which later occurred in August 2016, these commanders hoped the Islamic State could remove Shekau from the group's leadership.[33] In this sense the Boko Haram pledge to the Islamic State was done out of genuine belief in al-Baghdadi as Caliph but it also was opportunistic and the result of intra-group politicking.

Islamic State Impact on ISWAP Tactics

After holding a shura in February 2015, Boko Haram finally united and Shekau made the pledge to al-Baghdadi on March 7, 2015.[34] The most visible immediate impact of the Islamic State on the new ISWAP was the Islamic State's incorporation of ISWAP into its global media apparatus. The Islamic State provided ISWAP with media equipment for that purpose.[35] However, there are only reports of small financial transfers through Western Union from the Islamic State to Ansaru militants who traveled to Libya and were presumably among the Ansaru members who Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi later reported in his book joined ISWAP.[36]

The pledge also seemed to have an impact on ISWAP targeting. ISWAP, for example, struck N'djamena, Chad with suicide attacks claimed by the Islamic State with martyrdom photos for the attackers for the first time and increased its attacks in Niger and Cameroon in the weeks after the pledge.[37] This coincided with an ISWAP media effort to focus on its holding of territory in Nigeria and present its broader pan-West African credentials, especially highlighting attacks in Niger, Cameroon and Chad.[38] At the time in 2015 several Islamic State supporters from Senegal, who were part of the same social networks as Senegalese Islamic State members in Libya, also joined the group in Nigeria and met with Shekau, received money from him, and then returned to Senegal where they were arrested.[39]

It is probable that the Islamic State also provided some tactical advice to Boko Haram. This was exemplified in ISWAP rocket-making photos in 2015, which closely resembled the rockets the Islamic State made in one of its own videos from "al-Fallujah Province" in Iraq.[40] That "al-Fallujah Province" video was also found on the cell phone of an ISWAP member who was captured in Cameroon in 2015, suggesting ISWAP may have learned rocket-making in part from the video itself.[41] Nevertheless, such rocket-making advising was not decisive for ISWAP; the group had already conquered territory with the weapons, funding and training it had received before the pledge, including from AQIM in the 2009 to 2011 period.[42] Therefore, it did not need, but still may have benefitted from, these rockets to succeed on the battlefield.

Another form of tactical support that the Islamic State provided to Boko Haram was up-armored suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosives devices (SVBIEDs). These SVBIEDs were reported by ISWAP insiders as early as 2017 but they only appeared in an ISWAP video in 2018 and subsequent pictures released by the Nigerian army in 2019.[43] In theory ISWAP could have learned to make up-armored SVBIEDs without direct contact to the Islamic State, but if that is the case, one questions why neither Shekau's faction after he was removed from ISWAP in August 2016 nor AQIM and its Mali-based affiliate have used them and why ISWAP used them only after pledging loyalty to the Islamic State in 2015. (AQIM and its Mali-based affiliated conducted SVBIED attacks but not with the signature "up-armour" of the Islamic State).

The reported Islamic State tactical advice to ISWAP on attacking military barracks in northeastern Nigeria has also contributed to ISWAP controlling more territory than it ever has since the collapse of the Nigerian military back in 2014. Indeed, if ISWAP can communicate with the Islamic State as frequently as it does to claim attacks—21 times in December 2018 and 17 times in January 2019, for example—then it is easy to see how the Islamic State could advise ISWAP on attack plans on an almost daily basis and take advantage of its decade-plus of insurgency experience in Iraq and later Syria.[44] The biggest issue in ISWAP's communications with the

Islamic State, in fact, according to an ISWAP shura audio in Kanuri language in 2018, has simply been finding a strong enough Internet connection around Lake Chad, while the presence of a Caucasian commander with a long beard and a unique military uniform in a January 2019 ISWAP video indicates the group has been able to steer a foreign fighter all the way to Borno State for the group's major attack in Baga on December 28, 2018. [45] Therefore, Islamic State tactical influence should also be considered an important military contribution to its province.

Islamic State Impact on ISWAP's Internal Organization

What had the most decisive effect on ISWAP has been the Islamic State's decision to announce Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi as ISWAP leader in August 2016 and to order foot soldiers to join him. The foot soldiers then took part in major battles led by former Ansaru-leaning commander Abu Fatima on the side of al-Barnawi and defeated Shekau's loyalists.[46] During the course of these battles, the Islamic State dropped Shekau from the ISWAP leadership position, as Shekau had originally feared.[47] As a result of this leadership change, ISWAP has administered its territories in northern Nigeria under the leadership of al-Barnawi in a way al-Barnawi's representatives have described as a "hearts and minds" approach.[48] Interviews, evidence from attack data sets, and anecdotal reports from the ISWAP territories under al-Barnawi's leadership indicate that the group generally does not target civilians, such as farmers, herders, and villagers but only "collaborators" with the government (such as NGOs) and the military.[49] This is much different than the group under Shekau's leadership, which targeted virtually anyone who was not a member.[50]

If not for the leadership change in ISWAP ordered by the Islamic State's more "moderate" theological faction,[51] then it is plausible al-Barnawi would not have come to power in ISWAP.[52] Now that al-Barnawi is in power in ISWAP, it is more likely than when Shekau was the group leader that the group can sustainably administer the territories under its control and win the support or at least acquiescence of the population. This will make it more difficult for Nigeria to reclaim some of the territories in the country's northeast that have remained under insurgent control since 2013.

At the same, the Islamic State may not be finished intervening in ISWAP's internal affairs. In September 2018, the Islamic State ordered ISWAP commanders to purge Mamman Nur, a longtime ally of Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi and Abu Fatima, the latter who died in 2017.[53] The Islamic State also ordered ISWAP hardliners to execute two female Muslim NGO workers in September and October 2018, respectively, in a "Jihadi John"-style video with an ISWAP militant next to an Islamic State-style black flag declaring he was carrying out the orders of al-Baghdadi before shooting.[54] According to the Islamic State's previous guidance to the group on the Chibok kidnappings, Muslim women could be executed for being apostates, such as working for "Christian" NGOs, but not "enslaved" like Christian women could be.[55] The mediator between ISWAP—and formerly Boko Haram—and the government subsequently noted in 2018 that all decisions now go up the level of the Islamic State.[56]

As a result of the deaths of pro-Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi members of the Islamic State, such as Nur and his loyalists and Abu Fatima, other more hardline Islamic State members may now be attempting to negotiate not only a ceasefire, which currently exists, but also a reconciliation or some level of broader coordination between ISWAP and Shekau; either way the ideologies of both ISWAP and Boko Haram are apparently converging.[57] Such a broader agreement with Shekau would likely require Shekau to make certain concessions, such as not engaging in female 'suicide' bombing and abiding by certain Islamic State guidelines that were sent to ISWAP in March 2015 about limiting targeting of Muslims, but Shekau is known for his recalcitrance and may refrain from any further deal-making unless he is named as ISWAP leader again.[58]

In this regard, it is notable that the relationship between ISWAP and Islamic State has remained strong and consistent notwithstanding the deaths of several interlocutors between them, including the North Africans who segued the relationship before the March 2015 pledge, the Islamic State theologians who advised ISWAP after the March 2015 pledge, such as Abu Malek al-Tamimi; and others in Sudan who have reportedly been involved in liaising between ISWAP and the Islamic State. The relationship has shown the ability to endure the test of time and circumstances thus far.

The Case of the Islamic State and Jihadists in the Philippines

The pledge and post-pledge process for ISWAP with the internal battles between Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi and Shekau loyalists involved greater intra-group friction than what occurred in the Philippines. In the Philippines—or Southeast Asia more broadly (to include Indonesia and Malaysia)—the dilemma with the pledge to al-Baghdadi was not so much tension between jihadists but rather coordinating between diverse factions across a wide geographic space and convincing the Islamic State of their unity and ability to demonstrate tamkin.

Southeast Asian Allegiances to Al-Baghdadi

In June 2014, when al-Baghdadi declared the Caliphate in Mosul, the leader of Mujahidin of East Timor (MIT) in Indonesia, Santoso, which has been the main jihadist group in Indonesia since the demise of Jemaah Islamiya (JI) in 2010, immediately pledged allegiance to him.[59] Another Indonesian group, Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), also stated it was "ready" to make the pledge and was "monitoring" the situation. Like MIT, JAT was also a remnant of JI, which was founded by the Indonesian cleric, Abu Bakar Baasyir. Despite serving a sentence in Jakarta for sponsoring a terrorist camp in Sumatra, Indonesia where, among others, Santoso trained in 2010, Baasyir was able to call on his supporters to pledge allegiance to al-Baghdadi from his prison cell.[60] At the time of those pledges, MIT and JAT were the foremost jihadist groups in an otherwise weakened environment for jihadists in Indonesia as a result of the security forces dismantling most of JI in previous years. Nevertheless, it was notable that these JI remnants had given such positive signals to the Islamic State despite having originally been close to al-Qaeda networks in Southeast Asia since the 1990s. Moreover, there was little sign of residual pro-al-Qaeda sentiment or resistance from other factions within those groups.

In the neighboring Philippines, dozens of inmates in a prison also immediately pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi in a July 2, 2014 video distributed by the pro-Islamic State al-Battar media group.[61] Days after that video from the prison, jihadists in Abu Sayyaf also posted a video on Facebook declaring their allegiance to al-Baghdadi. Still several more days later, on July 23, 2014, longtime Abu Sayyaf commander Isnon Hapilon and around a dozen other militants followed with their own video pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi in Yakan dialect and Arabic.[62] Also in that video was a well-known Malaysian militant from what Hapilon called the Ansar al-Shari'a Brigade and another Philippine jihadist from a group called al-Ansar Battle Brigade (Mu'arakat al-Ansar). Hapilon noted in the video that these groups had made pledges separately but were now coming together. This suggested he knew the Islamic State required a unity of factions for a pledge to be accepted and was attempting to fulfill that obligation. Nevertheless, there did not appear to be coordination with MIT, JAT, or any other Indonesians at that time.

The Islamic State acknowledged that various pledges were in process from jihadist groups around the world in its November 2014 edition of Dabiq, including mentioning the Philippines and Nigeria specifically (but not Indonesia).[63] However, the Islamic State noted a "direct line of communication" had yet to be set up with some groups and that others, presumably including the jihadists in Nigeria and the Philippines, had yet to unify under a single leader appointed by the Islamic State to make the pledge: in reality Shekau was yet to commit (or be convinced to make the pledge) and Isnon Hapilon was among several contenders to represent the Philippines. The Islamic State noted three months later in the February 2015 edition of Dabiq that certain "conditions and requirements" had to be fulfilled before a group could gain the approval of the Islamic State leadership to become "officially recognized as a [province] of the Islamic State."[64] Such conditions included:

- documenting their bay'at [allegiance],

- unifying the jama'at who have given bay'at,

- holding consultations to nominate a wali [governor] and members for the regional shura assembly,

- planning a strategy to achieve consolidation [tamkin] in their region for the Khilafah so as to implement the Shari'ah, and

- presenting all this to the Islamic State leadership for approval.

Less than one year after that Dabiq edition was released, in January 2016 the jihadists in the Philippines reiterated their allegiance to al-Baghdadi under a single leader, Hapilon, when they released a video representing Abu Sayyaf, Ansar al-Shari'a Brigade, and the al-Ansar Battle Brigade making the pledge to al-Baghdadi together. [65] However, four notable groups that had separately pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi were missing from that video:

- Ansar Khilafah Philippines, which was an Islamic State-inspired group comprised of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) defectors that had networks to jihadists in Indonesia and Malaysia, including by marriage;

- The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), which included MILF defectors who disagreed with MILF's 2012 peace deal with the government;

- The Maute Group, which was led by an al-Azhar university graduate, Abdullahi Maute, and his brother, Umar Maute, who both pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi in 2015 and were based in their native Lanao del Sur and had close ties to former JI and Abu Sayyaf members, including Hapilon;[66] and

- Indonesian jihadists, such as Santoso, who would be killed in July 2016.

This did not mean those four groups were not loyal to al-Baghdadi or there were internal tensions in Southeast Asia like the case in Nigeria, but suggested there was a lack of communication between those groups.[67] In December 2015, for example, a video of a training camp of 10 Islamic State fighters in the Philippines was released that called on jihadists to "kill infidels whether you are in Luzon, the Visayas, or Mindanao."[68] Although it was not ascribed to any group, the background music was the same as a previous Ansar al-Khilafah Philippines video, implying the fighters were from that group and were still loyal al-Baghdadi even though they were "missing" from the previous video.

The January 2016 video with Hapilon seemed to have an effect on the Islamic State. In its al-Naba magazine that same month, the Islamic State acknowledged Hapilon's pledge and indicated that the Islamic State learned of his 20 years of operations in Basilan, southern Philippines and that the jihadists in the Philippines had united their ranks under him.[69] The Islamic State could have simply "googled" that information about Hapilon, but it is equally, if not more likely, that it consulted with Southeast Asians in Syria and Iraq who knew him to vet him. In addition, the Islamic State employed the same methodology that it did when it issued videos on a twitter account it created for Boko Haram before Shekau's pledge in March 2015 to introduce Nigeria to its global jihadi followership. In the al-Naba article about Hapilon, for example, it also provided some basic background information on the Philippines to introduce the Philippines to followers unfamiliar with the country. The Islamic State also claimed in the article that appointing of a local Islamic State leadership under Hapilon would present a threat to the Philippines and would lead to the capture of territory. This occurred in Marawi more than one year later in 2017.

Conquest of Marawi

As the courtship between the Islamic State and the jihadists in the Philippines was underway, the Islamic State began claiming attacks in Southeast Asia. The first one was in Jakarta, Indonesia in January 2016 when a suicide bomber detonated near a Starbucks, killing several people.[70] Although Indonesian authorities first suspected a Syria-based Indonesian was responsible for the attack, it later accused—but without providing detailed evidence—JAT leader, Aman Abdurrahman, of masterminding the attack. The attack, therefore, was classified by the Indonesian government as "Islamic State-inspired" but not "directed". Aman Abdurrahman was in the same prison in Jakarta as Abu Bakar Baasyir and had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in June 2014 at the time of the attack. Days before the attack, he had issued a fatwa stating, "If you cannot emigrate then wage jihad with spirit wherever you are," which suggests he may in fact have inspired the attack.[71] In 2017, he was sentenced to death for ordering the attack and other attacks from his prison cell. Baasyir, for his part, subsequently renounced his support to al-Baghdadi, alleging he was misinformed about the Islamic State

while in prison.

Another Islamic State-influenced operation in the Philippines seemed to occur two months later in March 2016, when the Saudi scholar A'id al-Qarni was nearly assassinated in the southern Philippines. The Islamic State had named him as "wanted" its January 2016 edition of Dabiq.[72] The assassin, who was killed during the operation, was seemingly responding to that Islamic State call even though the Islamic State did not claim his operation nor did he seem to have communicated with the Islamic State. The first Islamic State-claimed operation in the Philippines was, however, also in March 2016, when its affiliated news agency, Amaq, stated its members captured 20 Philippine soldiers in Marawi, which was the base of the Maute Group. This was a precursor to the Maute Group's operation to actually conquer and occupy Marawi in 2017.

In December 2016, the Islamic State again began hinting at future operations in Marawi when it claimed its fighters captured towns south of Marawi in an operation that left "dozens" of Philippine soldiers dead. This claim was corroborated by media reports in the Philippines about Maute Group militants fighting Philippine soldiers and raising the Islamic State flag over an abandoned town hall in Lanao del Sur.[73] It also foreshadowed the subsequent May 2017 Islamic State-claimed "conquest" in Marawi, which became international news after the Maute Group and other jihadists alongside Hapilon, some regional foreign fighters, and Abu Sayyaf and BIFF members burned down buildings and attempted to take over a hospital and a prison in Marawi, which ultimately led to the conquest of most of the city.

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TODAY'S NEWS

Meanwhile, two children were killed and 7 others were wounded as a result of American Crusader airstrikes near Masjid an-Nawawi in the city of Raqqah.

❖ **Karkuk Wilayah:**
Two inghimasi soldiers of the Khilafah carried out an attack on a Peshmerga military base where American soldiers were present, located at the Tuz Khurmato airbase.
Meanwhile, two 4-wheel drive vehicles carrying Peshmerga fighters were destroyed after being targeted with two explosive devices in the village of Kaysumah, and in the area of Dibs west of Karkuk, leading to two Peshmerga fighters being killed.

❖ **East Asia:**
An armored vehicle belonging to the Filipino Crusader army was destroyed using a rocket projectile, and 5 Filipino soldiers were killed and 9 others were wounded in clashes in the neighborhood of Laylud Madaya in the city of Marawi.

❖ **Barakah Wilayah:**
A number of Islamic State soldiers carried out an assault on a Rafidi army barracks near the Tall Sufuk border crossing. Clashes took place that led to three murtaddin being killed, a number of others being wounded, and one of their barracks being burned, with the mujahidin returning safely back to their positions.
Likewise, a number of Islamic State soldiers carried out an inghimasi attack targeting a PKK position in the city of Shaddadi.
Meanwhile, support detachments targeted PKK positions in Shaddadi, and in the area of Kashkash Jubur, and in the villages of 'Azzawi and Zu'ayli with 68 mortar rounds and 6 Grad rockets.
In the north of the wilayah near Dawwar as-Siyahi in the city of Qamishli, a vehicle carrying PKK fighters was targeted with an explosive device, leading to the vehicle being destroyed and those inside being killed and wounded.
Meanwhile, 12 members of a single family were killed, most of them women and children, as a result of an American Crusader airstrike on a home in the area of Tall al-Bashair near the artificial border.

❖ **Salahuddin Wilayah:**
Four Rafidi Mobilization barracks were targeted near the village of Shuwayratan and at the Makhazin Bridge and on the Hadithah – Bayji road with four SPG-9 rockets and 26 mortar rounds.

Al-Bayan Radio Bulletin in English Language on June 19, 2017, including "East Asia"[75]

The Islamic State played up the "conquest" of Marawi with a video on June 1, 2017 that showed grainy footage of jihadists shooting at Philippine soldiers and claiming to have killed 75 of them. Several days later, on June 7, 2017, the Islamic State also released an interview of Hapilon in its magazine Rumiyah that referred to the

"soldiers of the khilafah in East Asia" and discussed the battles in Marawi.[74] Two weeks later, the battle in Marawi proved to be sufficient to warrant the creation of a province for the jihadists in the Philippines. On June 19, 2017, for example, the Islamic State's al-Bayan daily bulletin mentioned attack claims in Marawi from "East Asia" along with its list of attacks in other official provinces, although notably the words "East Asia" and "Province" were never all together. On June 22, 2017, the Islamic State also released a video showing a beheaded Philippine soldier as well as the beheadings of "agents of the Crusader coalition" at the hands of Philippine, Malaysian and Indonesia Islamic State militants in Raqqah, Syria, in an effort to show a connection between the Southeast Asian jihadists in the Philippines and Syria and to urge jihadists in Southeast Asia to fight at home if they could not make it to Syria. The video also showed four previously unknown brigades in the Philippines pledging allegiance to al-Baghdadi. This was presumably to emphasize that the Philippine jihadists had united under Hapilon.

Loss of Marawi

The Islamic State occupation of Marawi lasted from June 2017 until August 2017 when key members of the Maute Group, including both Maute brothers, and Hapilon were killed and the Philippine army finally retook the city building-by-building. While the Islamic State infographic specialists in al-Yaqin media claimed the jihadists inflicted 489 casualties, official statistics from the Philippine government suggested that 160 soldiers and 47 civilians were killed and more than 350,000 people were displaced from the city. According to some uncorroborated reports, the Islamic State—even al-Baghdadi himself—ordered the attacks on Marawi.[76] That would be consistent with al-Baghdadi apparently "ordering" ISWAP's killing of the female NGO workers, but it would seem more probable al-Baghdadi's representatives would communicate with the jihadists abroad given his intense security cordon.

Although there were credible reports of hundreds of thousands of dollars of financing that the Islamic State provided to Isnon Hapilon through a Malaysian intermediary by cash delivery and other funds through Western Union, the main tactical influence of the Islamic State on the jihadists was seemingly in the Maute Group's urban combat techniques.[77] Just like the Islamic State did in Syria and Iraq, for example, the Maute Group successfully stationed guns deep within houses so they could shoot through holes in walls and windows in a way that the Philippine army could not detect the origin of the fire.[78] This helped the jihadists, who were historically accustomed to jungle warfare, last longer they otherwise would have in occupying Marawi.

It seems the Islamic State wanted the jihadists to conquer Marawi because the Maute Group already had a base of support there and attacking a city as big as Marawi was certain to attract significant international attention. Had the Philippine jihadists instead attacked a town in the more remote islands of Mindanao like Sulu and Basilan, where Hapilon was formerly based, then it would have been more difficult for the Islamic State to portray its fighters in the Philippines as having "conquered" a city analogous to the conquest of Mosul in 2014 itself. This would have been a lesser propaganda victory for the Islamic State.

The question arises as to who benefitted from the "conquest" of Marawi. The Islamic State in Syria and Iraq was able to leverage it in a major media campaign that distracted from its struggles in Syria and Iraq but more importantly portrayed the Islamic State as still expanding to new far-reaching territories. Yet, even despite the "success" of occupying the city for several months there was virtually no chance the jihadists would be able to hold Marawi for the long-term in the face of the Philippine army's counter-attack with military support from the U.S., Australia, and China, among other countries. As a result, the jihadists in the Philippines were exposed and their leaders, including both Maute brothers and Hapilon, were killed. It is unlikely the jihadists in the Philippines are any better off in the long-term as a result of the occupation of Marawi even if the Islamic State is able to send some additional foreign fighter reinforcements to the group's hideouts in Mindanao, who are attempting to introduce yet other new tactics to the jihadists there, such as suicide bombings.

Moreover, as part of the reconstruction of Marawi, the Philippine government plans to turn the city into a new "tourist attraction".[79] It is unclear if the displaced people, some of whom may have sympathized with the Maute Group, will ever return to their original homes and, even if they do, large parts of the city may be gentrified such that the previous inhabitants of Marawi will never have their former way of life back. The

Philippines is also working with China in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts.[80] If China's policies in its own Xinjiang Region are any indication, the reconstruction of Marawi may be accompanied by a resettlement of Christian or other non-Marawi Filipinos to the new "modern" Marawi. While this may exacerbate tensions with the previous inhabitants of Marawi, it will also make it harder for jihadists to establish networks with their ethnic kin there again.

Conclusions

While the Islamic State "core" seems to have benefited more in the short-term from the publicity and narrative of the Marawi "conquest", the jihadists in the Philippines may still benefit in the long term if Islamic State fighters are able to travel to the Philippines and provide them with new skills, if not also funds. Such has already occurred in the Philippines with a Moroccan having carried out one of the only suicide bombings in that country's history in August 2018 and the Islamic State having claimed a massive bombing at a church in Jolo in Mindanao on January 29, 2019, which killed more than 20 people and was apparently carried out by a woman in what would therefore be an innovation for the jihadists in the Philippines.[81] Yet, they will be far from being able occupy territory again, as they have lost that element of surprise.

In the case of Nigeria, however, the Islamic State has benefitted from ISWAP being among its most active provinces and frequent contributors to its media releases about winning battles. At the same time, ISWAP has actually moderated as a result of the Islamic State's influence on its internal organization, and the Islamic State has provided some beneficial strategic advice to the group. Thus far, therefore, the relationship has been "win-win". While the relationship shows no signs of weakness, it is relevant to note that there have been no random killings claimed by ISWAP outside of the main battle zone in northeastern Nigeria, such as a video-recorded stabbing of a foreigner or a police officer in Lagos or other major city. In addition, there have been no anti-al-Qaeda polemics from ISWAP in its videos and, in fact, ISWAP has only reflected about its former "strong ties" to AQIM.[82] Moreover, ISWAP has issued some of its own videos with no Islamic State branding, such as during the hostage-taking of professors of University of Maiduguri in 2017, which it seems to have negotiated without Islamic State intervention. Therefore, should ISWAP ever need to survive and function on its own or assert its independence from the Islamic State it has the infrastructure and capability to do so.[83]

More broadly, by tracing the pledge processes of the jihadists in Nigeria and the Philippines, one finds that the jihadists in both countries did, in fact, undergo internal organizational restructuring before making the pledge to al-Baghdadi. Both groups of jihadists also had at least an initial line of communication to the Islamic State's media network and were able to make the pledge to the Islamic State and have the Islamic State recognize them once they demonstrated to the Islamic State they had united under a single leader and had—or could obtain—tamkin.

Analysts can benefit from considering not only the Islamic State's training, funding, arming, and advising of provinces on the peripheries, but also assessing how the restructuring of these groups' internal organization and their need to demonstrate tamkin to the Islamic State has affected their leadership, strategy, and operations. In terms of counter-terrorism, had Nigeria done this it may have been more prepared to play one faction (al-Barnawi's) against the other (Shekau's), and in the Philippines the army may not have been caught off-guard by the "sudden" conquest of the Marawi. Similarly, now that the Islamic State has lost control of much of its territory in Syria and Iraq it is necessary to estimate how that development will affect the Islamic State's relationship with these provinces. Will it lead to Islamic State "core" jihadists traveling to the peripheries to join these groups and the swifter diffusion of tactical transfer from Syria and Iraq to the peripheries? Will the deaths of Islamic State members in Syria and Iraq lead to other members taking over the communications with the provinces and possibly favoring one faction (such as Shekau) over another (such as al-Barnawi) or encouraging a shift in attack targets? These are among the key analytical questions that will be important to answer for counter-terrorism forces in Nigeria and the Philippines and their international partners as well as humanitarian organizations in preparing for the next phases of the war in both countries.

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Notes:

[1] Cole Bunzel, "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State," The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, No. 19, March 2015; URL: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-ideology-of-the-Islamic-State.pdf .

[2] "Boko Haram's" self-given name is "Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna lil-Da'wa wa al-Jihad", meaning "Sunni Muslim Group for Preaching and Jihad."

[3] "Ansaru" is an abbreviated version of the name "Jama'at Ansar al-Muslimin fi Bilad as-Sudan" or "Group of Supporters of Muslims in Black Africa". For a discussion on the emergence of Ansaru, see Andrea Brigaglia and Alessio Iocci, "Some Advice and Guidelines: The History of Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by AQIM and the Islamic State," *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, 14, 2017, 27-35; URL: https://www.academia.edu/37964841/_Some_Advice_and_Guidelines_The_History_of_Global_Jihad_in_Nigeria_as_Narrated_by_AQIM_al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb_ . For a discussion of individual Ansaru members' reintegration into Boko Haram and joining ISWAP (but noting that Ansaru as an organization opted out of ISWAP after a shura held on February 9, 2015), see Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram's Conquest for the Caliphate: How Al Qaeda Helped Islamic State Acquire Territory," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:5, 13 March 2018; URL: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1442141 .

[4] Though written one decade ago, the following provides a useful backgrounder on Abu Sayyaf: Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Abu Sayyaf: Al-Harakutl Al- Islamiyyah, Essays on the Abu Sayyaf Group", Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (PIPVTR), 2008; URL: https://www.academia.edu/1921767/Al_Harakatul_Al_Islamiyyah_Essays_on_the_Abu_Sayyaf_Group_by_Rommel_Banlaoi .

[5] Abu Muhammed al-Adnani, "So They Kill and Are Killed," *Jihadology*, March 12, 2015; URL: https://jihadology.net/2015/03/12/al-furqan-media-presents-a-new-audio-message-from-the-islamic-states-shaykh-abu-mu%E1%B8%A5ammad-al-adnani-al-shami-so-they-kill-and-are-killed/ .

[6] See, for example, Jacob Zenn, "A Primer on Boko Haram Sources and Three Heuristics on al-Qaida and Boko Haram in Response to Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Volume 12, Issue 3, June 2018; URL: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2018/issue-3/06---special-correspondence-a-primer-on-boko-haram-sources-and-three-heuristics-on-al-qaida-and-boko-haram-in-response-to-.pdf . Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston, "A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Volume 12, Issue 2, April 2018; URL. https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2018/2018-02/higazi-revised.pdf.

[7] Abdul Raufu Mustapha, "Understanding Boko Haram," in A. R. Mustapha, ed., *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 147–198

[8] Géraud Magrin, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Emmanuel Chauvin, Charline Rangé, and Christine Raimond, "Key variables," in Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, ed., *Crisis and Development: The Lake Chad Region and Boko Haram* (Paris: French Agency for Development (AFD), 2018), pp. 211; URL: https://www.afd.fr/sites/afd/files/2018-08-04-37-14/Crisis%20and%20Development.%20The%20Lake%20Chad%20Region%20and%20Boko%20Haram.pdf .

[9] See Kyari Muhammed, "The Origins of Boko Haram," in A. Carl LeVan, Patrick Ukata, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics* (Oxford University Press (December 18, 2018), pg. 584.

[10] Andrea Brigaglia, "Slicing off the Tumour": The History of Global Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by the Islamic State," *Politics and Religion*, No. Vol. XII, 2018; URL: https://www.politicsandreligionjournal.com/index.php/prj/article/view/320/332 . Andrea Brigaglia and Alessio Iocci, "Some Advice and Guidelines: The History of Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by AQIM and the Islamic State," *Annual Review of Islam in Africa*, Issue No. 14, 2017, 27-35; URL: https://www.academia.edu/37964841/_Some_Advice_and_Guidelines_The_History_of_Global_Jihad_in_Nigeria_as_Narrated_by_AQIM_al-Qaeda_in_the_Islamic_Maghreb_ .

[11] Roman Loimeier, "Islamic Reform in Twentieth-Century Africa," (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

[12] An example of this is where Alexander Thurston claimed in an article for Oxford Islamic Studies Online, whose editor-in-chief is Dr. John L. Esposito, that, "After graduating from IUM [Islamic University of Medina] in 1993... [Shaykh Ja'far Mahmud Adam] was also one of the most outspoken critics of Muhammad Yusuf, the founder of the violent movement Boko Haram." However,

Thurston blatantly overlooks that from 1993 until at least 2002 Shaykh Ja'far Mahmud Adam was actually one of Muhammed Yusuf's mentors and in the mid-1990s Shaykh Ja'far preached a doctrine of violent jihad and called takfir on Sufis in Borno. He also cultivated a relationship around 1994 with Muhammed Ali, who was the actual Boko Haram founder in 2002 and co-leader of Boko Haram with Muhammed Yusuf until 2003. Thurston's claim, therefore, "exonerates" Shaykh Ja'far Mahmud Adam from involvement in Boko Haram's origins because it provides cover for the jihadist ideology and takfiri theology that existed in Saudi Arabia and that Shaykh Ja'far propagated and introduced to his followers in Nigeria after he returned from Medina to Nigeria in 1993, including to Muhammed Yusuf. Shaykh Ja'far became "outspoken" against Muhammed Yusuf (and Muhammed Ali) only around 2002, which is nearly ten years after he returned from Medina to Nigeria. To be fair, Shaykh Ja'far was also a "tragic hero" because, according to Brigaglia, like other Salafi clerics in Nigeria, he "genuinely, but ineffectively" sought to combat the doctrine of violent jihad and takfir, but by the 2000s it was already too late; this is also why Muhammed Ali's loyalists in Boko Haram assassinated Shaykh Ja'far in 2007. Similarly, Pérouse de Montclos wrote in a 2016 article that, "In spite of his total opposition to the ideas professed by Mohammed Yusuf, for example, an Izala sheikh from Sokoto, Abubakar Gero Argungu, said publicly that the members of Boko Haram [who were] killed in 2009 could be considered Muslim martyrs." Pérouse de Montclos therefore "exonerates" Abubakar Gero Argungu from any role in the origins of Boko Haram or jihadism in Nigeria by failing to consider that in 2002 when Yusuf was still in Izala Argungu delivered a sermon with one of the most explicit endorsements ever in Nigerian history of al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Bin Laden and Mullah Umar, which is discussed in Brigaglia's "Slicing the Tumour" article. Assuming these two academics and other members of their academic group have acted in good faith and have not been influenced by, for example, the Gulf-based "research patrons" of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies or Gulf-based research patrons of their other institutional affiliations, then their "exoneration" of these clerics should, according to Brigaglia, be attributed to their reliance "entirely on sources that date only to after the mid-2000s, i.e. when the split between [Shaykh Ja'far Mahmud] Adam and Yusuf had already clearly emerged." They should therefore consider using sources from before 2004. See Alexander Thurston, "Islamic Universities and Their Global Outreach," Oxford Islamic Studies Online, September 28, 2016; URL: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009_Islamic_Universities.html . Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2016) A Sectarian Jihad in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27:5, 878-895. Andrea Brigaglia, "Slicing off the Tumour": The History of Global Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by the Islamic State," *Politics and Religion Journal,* Vol. XII, No. 2, 2018; URL: https://www.politicsandreligionjournal.com/index.php/prj/article/view/320/332 . Andrea Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram", *Diritto e Questioni Pubbliche*, 15(2), pp. 174- 201, 2015; URL: https://www.academia.edu/24045774/The_Volatility_of_Salafi_Political_Theology_the_War_on_Terror_and_the_Genesis_of_Boko_Haram . Duncan Robinson, "The Shame of Britain's Universities," *The New Statesman*, March 9, 2011; URL: https://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/03/university-saudi-british . See also Rebuttal #7 in Jacob Zenn, "The Folly of Crowds: Jacob Zenn Rebuts Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston," aymennjawad.org, June 22, 2018; URL: http://www.aymennjawad. org/2018/06/jacob-zenn-replies-to-his-critics . See also the section "Events of the 1990s" in Khalifa Aliyu Ahmed Abulfathi, "The Metamorphosis of Boko Haram: A Local's Perspective," sheikhahmadabulfathi.org, 2011; URL: http://www.sheikhahmadabulfathi.org/content/metamorphosis-boko-haram-0

[13] Andrea Brigaglia, "Slicing off the Tumour": The History of Global Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by the Islamic State."

[14] Ibid.

[15] Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), p. 119; Jacob Zenn, "Northern Nigeria's Boko Haram: The Prize in al-Qaida's Africa Strategy," The Jamestown Foundation Occasional Paper, December 6, 2012."

[16] "Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency", International Crisis Group Africa Report # 216, 3 April 2014; URL: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/curbing-violence-nigeria-ii-boko-haram-insurgency . Cherif Ouzani, "Sale temps por les djihadistes," Jeune Afrique, May 10, 2004. Tijjani Talba Kafa and Abdulwahab Habib, "Clash of Civilizations: An Assessment of the Early Origin of Boko Haram," *International Journal of Science and Research*, Volume 7 Issue 10, October 2018.

[17] Carl LeVan, "Review," Journal of Modern African Studies, 56, 4 (2018), pp. 697 – 716. See also Douglas Walton, "The strawman fallacy," in Johan von Bentham, ed., *Logic and Argumentation* (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of the Arts, 1996); URL: https://www.dougwalton.ca/papers%20in%20pdf/96straw.pdf . Jacob Zenn, "A Primer on Boko Haram Sources and Three Heuristics on al-Qaida and Boko Haram in Response to Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston." Abdulbasit Kassim, "Boko Haram's Internal Civil War: Stealth Takfir and Jihad as Recipes for Schism." ed. by Jacob Zenn, in "Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines: Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency," West Point CTC, New York, May 2018; URL: https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2018/05/Boko-Haram-Beyond-the-Headlines.pdf.

[18] See, for example, Andrea Brigaglia and Alessio Iocci, "Some Advice and Guidelines: The History of Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by AQIM and the Islamic State." See also Jacob Zenn, "A Primer on Boko Haram Sources and Three Heuristics on al-Qaida and Boko Haram in Response to Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston."

[19] Even without background analysis or any citation some established scholars have made the claim that the relationship is "primarily rhetorical", which indicates that this claim has become so accepted among certain members of the scholarly community that sourcing is no longer deemed necessary to substantiate the claim. See Scott MacEachern, *Searching for Boko Haram: A History*

of Violence in Central Africa, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pg. 187.

[20] Virginia Comolli, "Boko Haram: Indigeneity, Internationalism, Insurgency," in A. Carl LeVan, Patrick Ukata, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics* (Oxford University Press (December 18, 2018)), pp. 611.

[21] See Kyari Muhammed, "The Origins of Boko Haram," in A. Carl LeVan, Patrick Ukata, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics* (Oxford University Press (December 18, 2018), pp. 611. Curiously, Kyari Muhammed neither discussed in his book chapter a document released by AQIM in 2017 that mentions Boko Haram members with the GIA in 1994 nor an article by the Ansaru leader that discusses Boko Haram's origins before 9/11. Both of these documents were mentioned in Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston, "A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida" and Jacob Zenn, "A Primer on Boko Haram Sources and Three Heuristics on al-Qaida and Boko Haram in Response to Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston."

[22] Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston, "A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and al-Qa'ida." Kyari Mohammed, "The message and methods of Boko Haram," in: Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (Ed.) *Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*,(Ibadan: French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA)– Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014; URL: https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/23853/ASC-075287668-3441-01.pdf. For a keen description of the value of jihadist primary sources, see the "Methodology" section of Nelly Lahoud, "Al-Qa'ida's Contested Relationship with Iran," New America Foundation, September 7, 2018; URL: https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/al-qaidas-contested-relationship-iran/methodology.

[23] Thurston's definition of "terrorology" includes that it is when "jihadist primary sources" are "imbue[d] with an aura of mystery and power…" or when "terrorologists… follow obscure and highly ideological 'treasure maps' to arrive at the true, inner understanding of jihadism and the ten-foot-tall warrior-masterminds who direct it." The term is therefore too subjective and imprecise to be academically credible; the term "source criticism" is, however, more academically useful. In addition, it does not appear anyone "present[ed] a single biography as the key to understanding the Islamic State" as Thurston claimed someone did in his assessment of several potential "terrorologists", nor does Aymenn al-Tamimi indicate he himself is "disappointed" about a two-year gap in the biography of Abu Ali al-Anbari, as Thurston claims he "seems" to be, but rather al-Tamini notes that "*readers* hoping for detailed stories of what Anbari was up to in Syria in 2012-2014 will be disappointed (italics added for emphasis)." This impreciseness itself is why "terrorology" can become a problematic term. It is also important for scholars to accurately represent the claims of other scholars and not invent claims that no scholar ever made because although countering "strawmen" arguments may make it easier to "win" a debate, they do not advance the field because they do not engage any actual arguments put forth by other scholars. Alexander Thurston, "On the Zarqawi/Anbari Issue: Source Criticism and Subtext in the Analysis of Jihadism," Sahelblog, January 4, 2019; URL: https://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2019/01/04/on-the-zarqawi-anbari-issue-source-criticism-and-subtext-in-the-analysis-of-jihadism/ . For an example of the risk of imprecise and "broad-brush terms" in the context of human rights, see Jon Henley, "A glossary of US military torture euphemisms," *The Guardian,* December 13, 2007; URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/dec/13/usa.humanrights .

[24] The possibility of misuse or abuse of the term "terrorology" is further evidenced in Rebuttal #6 of Jacob Zenn, "The Folly of Crowds: Jacob Zenn Rebuts Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston," aymennjawad.org, June 22, 2018; URL: http://www.aymennjawad.org/2018/06/jacob-zenn-replies-to-his-critics . See also Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram's al-Qaeda Affiliation: A Response to 'Five Myths about Boko Haram," *Lawfare*, February 1, 2018; URL: https://www.lawfareblog.com/boko-harams-al-qaeda-affiliation-response-five-myths-about-boko-haram .

[25] See, for example, the critique of Pérouse de Montclos' interview methods in Rebuttal #11 in Jacob Zenn, "The Folly of Crowds: Jacob Zenn Rebuts Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston," aymennjawad.org, June 22, 2018; URL: http://www.aymennjawad.org/2018/06/jacob-zenn-replies-to-his-critics . See also Khalil's critique of interview methods of Boko Haram members in James Khalil, "A Guide to Interviewing Terrorists and Violent Extremists Khalil," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, October 20, 2017, p.1-15.

[26] Scott MacEachern, "Searching for Boko Haram: A History of Violence in Central Africa," Pgs. 180 and 207, citing Kyari Muhammed's 2014 book chapter that relied on an anti-Christian chat forum post that itself did not even claim that Christians pretend to be Boko Haram to attack churches and a 2014 International Crisis Group report that also did not make the claim that Christians attack their own churches. An assessment of the origin of the conspiracy theory in academic literature about Christians "masquerading" as Boko Haram can be found in Rebuttal #24 and section "3. Groupthink" of Jacob Zenn, "The Folly of Crowds: Jacob Zenn Rebuts Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Alex Thurston," aymennjawad.org, June 22, 2018; URL: http://www.aymennjawad.org/2018/06/jacob-zenn-replies-to-his-critics .

[27] See, for example, Rohan Gunaratna, "The Siege of Marawi: A Game Changer in Terrorism in Asia Article," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* Vol. 9, No. 7 (July 2017); Michael Hart, "A Year After Marawi, What's Left of ISIS in the Philippines?," The Diplomat, October 25, 2018; URL: https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/a-year-after-marawi-whats-left-of-isis-in-the-philippines/ . Maria A. Ressa, "Terrorism and ISIS at Resorts World attack?," *Rappler*, June 5, 2017; URL: https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/171784-terrorism-isis-resorts-world-attack .

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[35] Author's interview with mediator between government and ISWAP/Boko Haram, Maiduguri, Borno State, November 2018.

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