"We Have Captured Your Women"

Explaining Jihadist Norm Change

Aisha Ahmad

How jihadists treat women varies widely across war theaters. Interviews with women across Afghanistan, for example, reveal surprising insights. "The Taliban didn't let women go to the bazaar or schools, but they didn't rape the girls," explained the head of a civil society organization in northern Balkh.[1] In southern Kandahar Province, women told a similar story: "We couldn't even think about going outside, out of fear; but the Taliban never went into our houses. They were very good in that respect. We could even sleep with the door open."[2]

Senior members of the original Taliban movement were explicit that rape was un-Islamic.[3] Yet, jihadists in other war theaters have come up with very different interpretations of the law. In Iraq and Syria, the so-called Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) was so enthusiastic about rape that in 2015 its leaders issued an official pamphlet stating: "It is permissible to have sexual intercourse with the female captive."[4] In the jungles of northern Nigeria, Boko Haram insurgents kidnapped and trafficked schoolgirls in 2014, declaring their violations legal under religious law. In a seething video, Boko Haram's leader announced, "I abducted your girls."[5]

For each of these different jihadists, violence—including violence against women—is subject to the laws of God; yet, each jihadist group champions its own interpretation of Islamist rules and norms, and therefore many differ-

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1. Author interview, Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan, 2005.
2. Author interview, Kandahar, Afghanistan, 2005.
3. Author interview with two senior former Taliban officials, 2016; and author interview with Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence officials, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, 2009.
4. Kenneth Roth, "Slavery: The ISIS Rules" (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 5, 2015), https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/05/slavery-isis-rules.
5. Terrence McCoy, "'I Abducted Your Girls,' Nigerian Islamist Leader Reportedly Says in Video," *Washington Post*, May 5, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/05/05/nigerian-president-faults-abducted-girls-parents-admits-he-has-no-idea-where-girls-are.

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ences exist among jihadist groups around the world. Within each group, however, there must be a common ideational framework for group membership, which thus constitutes the group's political and religious identity. For jihadists, their interpretation of Islamist ideas is the very thing that defines them.[6]

It is surprising, therefore, that in the past decade, several jihadist groups have overturned their interpretations of the rules, embraced tabooed forms of violence, and even celebrated abuses that they once considered forbidden, and even shameful. This is puzzling because jihadists are an especially rule- and norm-bound class of insurgents, and their legitimacy depends on their adherence to their Islamist ideals. They typically take their religious laws and norms very seriously, particularly those pertaining to gender and sexual mores. Even more, Islamists often declare that their beliefs and laws are timeless and immutable; altering them is *bid'ah*, or "heretical innovation."[7] These rules and norms are thus especially sticky: in other words, they are commitments that constrain jihadists' strategic options.[8] Jihadists are quick to attack their rivals for violations of this timeless code and regularly declare other Muslims—including rival jihadists—apostates for deviating from their interpretations of the writ.[9] Dramatically reversing these rules of the game, espe-

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6. For discussion of contemporary Islamic laws of jihad, see John Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1991); Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Shaheen Sardar Ali and Javaid Rehman, "The Concept of Jihad in Islamic International Law," *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Winter 2005), pp. 321–343, doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2055140; and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan Shaybānī, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar*, trans. Majid Khadduri (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

7. For further discussion on the concept of *bid'ah*, see Frederic Volpi, *Political Islam: A Critical Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2013); and Mohd Fauzi Mohd Amin et al., "The Understanding of *Bid'Ah* Concept from Hadith Perspective," *American Scientific Publishers*, Vol. 23, No. 11 (November 2017), pp. 10842–10845, doi.org/10.1166/asl.2017.10166.

8. Vesselin Popovski, Gregory M. Reichberg, and Nicholas Turner, eds., *World Religions and Norms of War* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2009); Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam*; Sohail H. Hashmi, ed., *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014); Terry Nardin, ed., *The Ethics of War and Peace: Religious and Secular Perspectives* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); James Turner Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Ahmed Al-Dawoody, *The Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Clark, N.J.: Lawbook Exchange, 2010).

9. For discussion, see Jeffrey B. Cozzens, "Al-Takfir Wa'l Hijra: Unpacking an Enigma," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (2009), pp. 489–510, doi.org/10.1080/10576100902886044; Tarik K. Firro, "The Political Context of Early Wahhabi Discourse of *Takfir*," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (2013), pp. 770–789, doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2013.811648; Bader Al-Ibrahim, "ISIS, Wahhabism and *Takfir*," *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2015), pp. 408–415, doi.org/10.1080/17550912.2015.1051376; and Mohamed Badar, Masaki Nagata, and Tiphanie Tueni, "The

cially the rules pertaining to women, is no easy feat—even when doing so might be strategically advantageous.[10] This prompts the central puzzle addressed in this article: Why are some jihadists able to successfully shed sticky religious rules and norms that constrain their violence, while others remain bound by these constraints?[11]

The existing scholarly literature on insurgencies provides few clues to explain changes in jihadist violence. Scholars can explain why some armed groups use extreme forms of violence while others do not; yet, most of this research overlooks the evolution of violence within insurgent groups over time.[12] Scholars working on wartime sexual violence, for example, ask why

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Radical Application of the Islamist Concept of *Takfir*," *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (June 2017), pp. 134–162, doi.org/10.1163/15730255-31020044.

10. See Rumee Ahmed, *Sharia Compliant: A User's Guide to Hacking Islamic Law* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2018); Nazeem M.I. Goolam, "Ijtihad and Its Significance for Islamic Legal Interpretation," *Michigan State Law Review*, Spring 2006, pp. 1443–1468; and L. Ali Khan, *Contemporary Ijtihad: Limits and Controversies* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

11. On Islamic law, see Wael B. Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Donald L. Horowitz, "The Qur'an and the Common Law: Islamic Law Reform and the Theory of Legal Change," *American Journal of Comparative Law*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 233–293, doi.org/10.2307/840748; Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Qur'anic Ethics and Islamic Law," *Journal of Islamic Ethics*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1–2 (July 2017), pp. 7–28, doi.org/10.1163/24685542-12340002; and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (Maulana), *Rumi and Islam: Selections from His Stories, Poems, and Discourses, Annotated and Explained* (Woodstock, Vt.: SkyLight Paths, 2004).

12. Michael C. Horowitz, "Nonstate Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism," *International Organization*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Winter 2010), pp. 33–64, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818309990233. For variation in the use of violence by insurgents, see Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Peter Krause, "The Political Effectiveness of Non-State Violence: A Two-Level Framework to Transform a Deceptive Debate," *Security Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2013), pp. 259–294, doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.786914. For rationales of terrorism and reasons for the adoption of terrorist violence, see Virginia Page Fortna, "Do Terrorists Win? Rebels' Use of Terrorism and Civil War Outcomes," *International Organization*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Summer 2015), pp. 519–556, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000089; Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (August 2003), pp. 343–361, doi.org/10.1017/S00030554 0300073X; David A. Lake, "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century," *Dialogue IO*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 15–29, doi.org/10.1017/S777777770200002X; and Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 49–80, doi.org/10.1162/isec.2006.31.1.49. For sexual violence, see Gerald Schneider, Lilli Banholzer, and Laura Albarracin, "Ordered Rape: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Wartime Sexual Violence in the DR Congo," *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 21, No. 11 (November 2015), pp. 1341–1363, doi.org/10.1177/1077801215593645; Roos Haer, Tobias Hecker, and Anna Maedl, "Former Combatants on Sexual Violence during Warfare: A Comparative Study of the Perspectives of Perpetrators, Victims, and Witnesses," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (August 2015), pp. 609–628, doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2015.0044; Dara Kay Cohen and Ragnhild Nordås, "Do States Delegate Shameful Violence to Militias? Patterns of Sexual Violence in Recent Armed Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (August 2015), pp. 877–898, doi.org/10.1177/0022002715576748; Dara Kay Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (August 2013), pp. 461–477, doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000221; Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?" *Politics & Society*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (March 2009), pp. 131–162, doi.org/10.1177/0032329208329755; and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence dur-

militant group A engages in rape, while group B does not; however, what is missing from the existing academic debate is why group B may start to rape in the middle of a conflict, despite having hitherto refrained.[13] Other researchers examine the parts of the Koran and Hadith (prophetic statements) that jihadists use to justify their violence.[14] Yet, these religious texts have existed for more than 1,400 years, and thus cannot explain variation over time. Moreover, jihadists typically offer legalistic religious justifications post hoc—well after they have already embraced new norms of violence, and as a final stage in the rewriting of their Islamist code.

There are also a number of compelling strategic explanations for ratcheting jihadist violence.[15] According to Monica Toft, increased competition among jihadist groups causes each group to escalate its violence in order to "outbid" the other for power and legitimacy.[16] Mia Bloom contends that competition among terrorist groups escalates conflicts, as these groups ramp up their use of violence to increase their prestige.[17]

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ing War," *Politics & Society*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (September 2006), pp. 307–342, doi.org/10.1177/0032329206290426.

13. Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence"; Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War"; Jonathan Gottschall, "Explaining Wartime Rape," *Journal of Sex Research*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May 2004), pp. 129–136, doi.org/10.1080/00224490409552221; Nicola Henry, "Theorizing Wartime Rape: Deconstructing Gender, Sexuality, and Violence," *Gender & Society*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (February 2016), pp. 44–56, doi.org/10.1177/0891243215608780; Janine Natalya Clark, "Making Sense of Wartime Rape: A Multi-Causal and Multi-Level Analysis," *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 13, No. 5 (October 2014), pp. 461–482, doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2014.928461; and Dara Kay Cohen, "Female Combatants and the Perpetration of Violence: Wartime Rape in the Sierra Leone Civil War," *World Politics*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (2013), pp. 383–415, doi.org/10.1017/S0043887113000105.

14. Manuel R. Torres, Javier Jordán, and Nicola Horsburgh, "Analysis and Evolution of the Global Jihadist Movement Propaganda," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2006), pp. 399–421, doi.org/10.1080/09546550600751990; Mark Stout, "In Search of Salafi *Jihadist* Strategic Thought: Mining the Words of the Terrorists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 32, No. 10 (2009), pp. 876–892, doi.org/10.1080/10576100903185578; Manuel R. Torres Soriano, "The Road to Media Jihad: The Propaganda Actions of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (December 2010), pp. 72–88, doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2010.512839; and Thérèse Postel, "The Young and the Normless: Al Qaeda's Ideological Recruitment of Western Extremists," *Connections*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Fall 2013), pp. 99–118, doi.org/10.11610/Connections.12.4.05. For critical discussion, see Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013); and Amina Wadud, *Inside The Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2013).

15. Recent studies have critiqued the outbidding literature. See Robert J. Brym and Bader Araj, "Palestinian Suicide Bombing Revisited: A Critique of the Outbidding Thesis," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 123, No. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 485–500, doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-165X.2008.tb00632.x; and Stephen Nemeth, "The Effect of Competition on Terrorist Group Operations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (March 2014), pp. 336–627, doi.org/10.1177/0022002712468717.

16. Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Spring 2007), pp. 97–131, doi.org/10.1162/isec.2007.31.4.97.

17. Mia M. Bloom, "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 61–88, doi.org/10.2307/20202305.

The problem with these outbidding explanations, however, is that violating accepted Islamist rules about violence does not increase legitimacy; on the contrary, its risks destroying a jihadist's religious credentials.[18] Suddenly abrogating existing Islamist laws—especially those pertaining to gender or sexuality—is difficult and risky. Given that gender and sexual norms are closely associated with religious piety, violating deeply held conventions can undermine a jihadist group's Islamist reputation. These rapid and dramatic changes cannot simply be dismissed as an ordinary ratchet effect.

My research reveals that changes in jihadist norms of violence do not align with conventional strategic, economic, or ideological explanations. Fluctuations in battlefield conditions, material endowments, and even ideological affiliation have no clear relationship with the adoption of new jihadist norms of violence. Rather, this article argues that sweeping changes in jihadist norms of violence occur only when there is an external trigger event that gives jihadist leaders the opportunity to act as violent norm entrepreneurs. Because Islamists are self-professed purists, jihadist leaders can push forward dramatic normative changes only at these critical moments; otherwise, they do not have free rein to do away with the religious norms that shape and constrain their behavior.[19]

Drawing on diagnostic evidence from Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia, I argue that jihadist leaders are only able to act as revisionist norm entrepreneurs when they have an opportunity to strategically exploit moments of collective outrage.[20] The case evidence shows that such opportunities emerge when the

18. For example, during the 1992–96 Afghan civil war, the notoriously unrestrained Uzbek warlord General Rashid Dostum tried to rebrand his secular ethnonationalist Junbesh-i-Milli faction as Junbesh-i-Milli-Islami; yet, given his record of "un-Islamic" violence, Dostum failed to convince any other mujahideen groups that his faction was truly Islamist. See Michael Bhatia, "The Future of the Mujahideen: Legitimacy, Legacy, and Demobilization in Post-Bonn Afghanistan," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 2007), pp. 90–107, doi.org/10.1080/13533310601114301; Darryl Li, "Taking the Place of Martyrs: Afghans and Arabs under the Banner of Islam," *Arab Studies Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 12–39; Robert A. Blair and Pablo Kalmanovitz, "On the Rights of Warlords: Legitimate Authority and Basic Protection in War-Torn Societies," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (August 2016), pp. 428–440, doi.org/10.1017/S0003055416000423; and Aisha Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.: Black Markets and Islamist Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

19. Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements: Its Impact on Their Mobilization," in J. Craig Jenkins and Bert Klandermans, eds., *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), pp. 167–198; and David S. Meyer and Debra C. Minkoff, "Conceptualizing Political Opportunity," *Social Forces*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (June 2004), pp. 1457–1492, doi.org/10.1353/sof.2004.0082.

20. Richard A. Nielsen, *Deadly Clerics: Blocked Ambition and the Paths to Jihad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Hun Joon Kim and J.C. Sharman, "Accounts and Accountability: Corruption, Human Rights, and Individual Accountability Norms," *International Organization*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (Spring 2014), pp. 417–448, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000428; Sara E. Davies and

jihadists' main opponent, typically a government, perpetrates an egregious act that shocks the local population. These trigger events create openings for jihadist entrepreneurs to take advantage of the scandal, while deflecting attention away from their mutating violence. By systematically focusing on the trigger event, jihadists capitalize on the outrage and quickly to do away with restrictive prohibitions.[21] The result is the rapid erosion of former taboos, the adoption of previously proscribed behaviors, and the emergence of radical new norms.

I contend that jihadist leaders could not have changed their norms of violence without these necessary trigger events.[22] The case evidence in this article demonstrates that norm-bound jihadists forgo tabooed violence, even when it might be strategically valuable to embrace it. My inductive study thus suggests that external trigger events are necessary—but perhaps not sufficient—for this jihadist revisionism.

In the development of this argument, four terms require brief clarification. First, I define as Islamist any substate movement that utilizes Islamic ideas, identity, symbols, and rhetoric toward the goal of creating political order on the basis of Islamic laws, ideas, and institutions.[23] Second, I define jihadist

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Jacqui True, "Norm Entrepreneurship in Foreign Policy: William Hague and the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (July 2017), pp. 701–721, doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw065; Stacie E. Goddard, "Brokering Change: Networks and Entrepreneurs in International Politics," *International Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 2009), pp. 249–281, doi.org/10.1017/S1752971909000128; and Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 887–917, doi.org/10.1162/002081898550789.

21. Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (January 2007), pp. 177–216, doi.org/10.1353/wp. 2007.0023; Peter A. Lupsha, "Explanation of Political Violence: Some Psychological Theories versus Indignation," *Politics & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (December 1971), pp. 89–104, doi.org/10.1177/003232927100200105; Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970); Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Andrea Ruggeri, "Political Opportunity Structures, Democracy, and Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (May 2010), pp. 299–310, doi.org/10.1177/0022343310362293; and Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 1969), pp. 167–191, doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301.

22. Amitav Acharya, "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism," *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 239–275, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818304582024; Diana Panke and Ulrich Petersohn, "Why International Norms Disappear Sometimes," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (December 2012), pp. 719–742, doi.org/10.1177/1354066111407690; Sebastian Schmidt, "Foreign Military Presence and the Changing Practice of Sovereignty: A Pragmatist Explanation of Norm Change," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 108, No. 4 (November 2014), pp. 817–829, doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000434; and Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society," *International Organization*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Winter 2014), pp. 143–176, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000337.

23. For this article, I consider an Islamist group to be one that is principally defined by membership in the Muslim *ummah*, the conception of a universal Islamic nation. For further explanation,

groups narrowly as nonstate armed groups that use military force for the purpose of advancing social or political causes that have an Islamist character, motivation, or mandate.[24] Third, while jihadists often fight on multiple fronts, including against rival jihadist movements,[25] I consider their primary rivals to be governments.[26] Fourth, I consider a trigger event to be an egregious, intentional act perpetrated by the jihadists' main rivals that violates conventional norms and shocks the sensibilities of local populations.

My theory also makes two analytical assumptions for the purposes of gleaning the independent effects of trigger events on jihadist violence. First, as noted above, I assume that jihadists have prior strategic interests in expanding their repertoire of violence. In my theory, trigger events act as enabling mechanisms for norms change that are driven by strategic priors, rather than as motivations for changing norms per se. Second, my theory focuses on how trigger events enable jihadist norms change; however, it sets aside certain aspects of these events—such as the roles of collective anger and shame—for further study. Of course, there may be other unexplored mechanisms that can also bring about jihadist norm change. This article presents a first step in understanding the interactive effects between norms, trigger events, and jihadist violence.

I lay out my argument in the following five sections. First, I present my theory of jihadist normative change and situate it within the existing literatures on norm cascades and rebel violence. Second, I outline the methodological ap-

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see Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Martha Crenshaw, "The Debate over 'New' vs. 'Old' Terrorism," in Ibrahim A. Karawan, Wayne McCormack, and Stephen E. Reynolds, eds., *Values and Violence: Intangible Aspects of Terrorism* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2008), pp. 117–136.

24. See Reuven Firestone, "'Jihadism' as a New Religious Movement," in Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 263–285; Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, rev. ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); and Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Inside Jihadism: Understanding Jihadi Movements Worldwide* (Boulder, Colo.: Routledge, 2009).

25. For discussion of jihadist disunity and in-fighting, see Stig Jarle Hansen, "Unity under Allah? Cohesion Mechanisms in Jihadist Organizations in Africa," *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (October 2018), pp. 587–605, doi.org/10.1177/0095327X17740086; Adib Bencherif, "From Resilience to Fragmentation: Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Jihadist Group Modularity," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, published ahead of print, August 10, 2017, pp. 1–19, doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1351956; and Aisha Ahmad, "Going Global: Islamist Competition in Contemporary Civil Wars," *Security Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2016), pp. 353–384, doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2016.1171971.

26. Ahmad, "Going Global"; Hanne Fjelde and Desirée Nilsson, "Rebels against Rebels: Explaining Violence between Rebel Groups," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (August 2012), pp. 604–628, doi.org/10.1177/0022002712439496; and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "Actor Fragmentation and Civil War Bargaining: How Internal Divisions Generate Civil Conflict," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July 2013), pp. 659–672, doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12003.

proach, case selection, and scope limitations of my argument. Third, I present case evidence from Pakistan and Nigeria to glean insights into why jihadist norms of violence rapidly and suddenly evolved in these theaters. Fourth, I present a negative case, Somalia, where jihadist norms of violence remained relatively constant throughout a lengthy war period. In the final section, I offer an agenda for future research and some recommendations to address jihadist violence.

Theorizing Jihadist Normative Change

Islamists often state that their ideals are timeless and unchangeable. In reality, these laws and norms have evolved over centuries in response to new technologies and material conditions.[27] Modern jihadists have even managed to erode well-established and unambiguous religious laws, such as the prohibition on suicide in battle.[28] Yet, making sudden and dramatic changes to these laws and mores is no easy feat. Even if there is a strategic reason to embrace the tabooed violence, jihadists cannot easily ignore these constraints.

Under the right conditions, however, jihadist leaders have a unique ability to radically change norms of violence, without jeopardizing their Islamist credentials. Specifically, I argue that when their rivals commit egregious acts, jihadist leaders have a window of opportunity to capitalize on public outrage and quickly erode restrictive rules that constrain their violence. These trigger events expand the political opportunity space for jihadist leaders to act as revisionist norm entrepreneurs, allowing them to rapidly redefine their Islamist codes of conduct.[29] At these critical junctures, jihadist leaders con-

27. Ahmed, *Sharia Compliant*. See also Rūmī (Maulana), *Rumi and Islam*; Farhana Ali and Jerrold Post, "The History and Evolution of Martyrdom in the Service of Defensive Jihad: An Analysis of Suicide Bombers in Current Conflicts," *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Summer 2008), pp. 615–654; and Paul R. Powers, "Offending Heaven and Earth: Sin and Expiation in Islamic Homicide Law," *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 2007), pp. 42–80, doi.org/10.1163/156851907780323825.

28. Note that suicide attacks were historically considered taboo in Muslim societies and deemed contentious among jihadists as recently as the late 1990s and early 2000s. See Adam L. Silverman, "Just War, Jihad, and Terrorism: A Comparison of Western and Islamic Norms for the Use of Political Violence," *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Winter 2002), pp. 73–92, doi.org/10.1093/jcs/44.1.73; and Margaret P. Battin, "The Ethics of Self-Sacrifice: What's Wrong with Suicide Bombing?" *Archives of Suicide Research*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2004), pp. 29–36, doi.org/10.1080/13811110490243750.

29. Gleditsch and Ruggeri, "Political Opportunity Structures, Democracy, and Civil War"; Jack A. Goldstone, "More Social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 33, Nos. 3–4 (June 2004), pp. 333–365, doi.org/10.1023/B:RYSO.0000038611.01350.30; David S. Meyer, "Protest and Political Opportunities," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 30 (August 2004), pp. 125–145, doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.30.012703.110545; Meyer and Minkoff, "Conceptualizing Political Opportunity"; David S. Meyer and Su-

vince their adherents that previously tabooed behaviors are now permissible, and even praiseworthy.[30] The collective outrage provides essential cover for jihadist leaders, as critiques of their new violence can be deflected through *whataboutism*.[31]

The international relations literature shows that leaders can exploit crucial moments to produce norm change.[32] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink demonstrate that leaders can act as norm entrepreneurs at crucial historical moments when emerging international norms reach a tipping point, resulting in a "norm cascade."[33] Diana Panke and Ulrich Petersohn argue that norm entrepreneurs can also cause the rapid degeneration of previously held international norms, particularly when global authorities lack the ability to enforce or discipline behavior.[34] The civil wars literature also demonstrates that leaders play a crucial role in shaping and constraining armed group behavior.[35]

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zanne Staggenborg, "Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 101, No. 6 (May 1996), pp. 1628–1660, doi.org/10.1086/230869; Kriesi, "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements"; and Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

30. The international relations literature speaks to how trigger events can catalyze norm change. See Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy," *International Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Autumn 1993), pp. 565–597, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300028101; Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change"; Richard Ned Lebow, "Contingency, Catalysts, and International System Change," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 4 (Winter 2000/01), pp. 591–616, doi.org/10.2307/2657611; Martin B. Carstensen, "Ideas Are Not as Stable as Political Scientists Want Them to Be: A Theory of Incremental Ideational Change," *Political Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (October 2011), pp. 596–615, doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2010.00868.x; Panke and Petersohn, "Why International Norms Disappear Sometimes"; and Diana Panke and Ulrich Petersohn, "Norm Challenges and Norm Death: The Inexplicable?" *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (March 2016), pp. 3–19.

31. For examples of the employment of this strategy, see James Headley, "Challenging the EU's Claim to Moral Authority: Russian Talk of 'Double Standards,'" *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (September 2015), pp. 297–307, doi.org/10.1007/s10308-015-0417-y; Jonathan G. Leslie, "Netanyahu's Populism: An Overlooked Explanation for Israeli Foreign Policy," *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2017), pp. 75–82, doi.org/10.1353/sais.2017.0006; and Joanna Szostek, "The Power and Limits of Russia's Strategic Narrative in Ukraine: The Role of Linkage," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (June 2017), pp. 379–395, doi.org/10.1017/S153759271700007X.

32. Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 185–205, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300018920; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Thomas Risse, "'Let's Argue!': Communicative Action in World Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Winter 2000), pp. 1–39, doi.org/10.1162/002081800551109.

33. Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change."

34. Panke and Petersohn, "Why International Norms Disappear Sometimes."

35. Amelia Hoover Green, "The Commander's Dilemma: Creating and Controlling Armed Group Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 53, No. 5 (September 2016), pp. 619–632, doi.org/10.1177/0022343316653645; Kai M. Thaler, "Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars: Theory and Evidence

Currently, the civil war literature points to three possible factors in explaining jihadist violence: material resources, ideological extremism, and strategic interests. None of these approaches effectively explains within-group variation in jihadist violence over time.

First, the war economies literature shows how material factors explain civil war violence.[36] Jeremy Weinstein argues that insurgents with natural resources are more violent than those who rely on their domestic constituents for material support.[37] Reed Wood contends that rebel groups that lack access to resources may also engage in violence against civilians, in order to entice support and compel loyalty.[38] Aisha Ahmad shows how local economic support empowered jihadists in Afghanistan and Somalia.[39] Peter Andreas uncovers how international resources worsened insurgent violence during the siege of Sarajevo in Bosnia.[40]

Such research cannot, however, explain variations in jihadist violence over time when economic factors are held constant. As the evidence in this article shows, some jihadist groups that have experienced no changes in their material conditions have radically transformed their violence. In other cases, jihadists have gained or lost material resources, but have had no corresponding changes in their norms of violence that govern their conduct.

Second, the literature on ideology seeks to explain variations in insurgent violence. Kentaro Hirose, Kosuke Imai, and Jason Lyall show how variations in ideological orientation affected levels of violence of different insurgent

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from Mozambique and Angola," *Civil Wars*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (December 2012), pp. 546–567, doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2012.740203; and Bruce O. Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

36. Sara Meger, *Rape Loot Pillage: The Political Economy of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Ian Bannon and Paul Collier, eds., *Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Options and Actions* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2003); Axel Dreher and Merle Kreibaum, "Weapons of Choice: The Effect of Natural Resources on Terror and Insurgencies," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (July 2016), pp. 539–553, doi.org/10.1177/0022343316634418; Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre, 2000); Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (October 2004), pp. 563–595, doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpf064; and Aisha Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar: Business Interests and Islamist Power in Civil War Somalia," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Winter 2014/15), pp. 89–117, doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00187.

37. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

38. Reed M. Wood, "Rebel Capability and Strategic Violence against Civilians," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (September 2010), pp. 601–614, doi.org/10.1177/0022343310376473. See also David Maher, "The Fatal Attraction of Civil War Economies: Foreign Direct Investment and Political Violence, A Case Study of Colombia," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (June 2015), pp. 217–248, doi.org/10.1111/misr.12218.

39. Ahmad, *Jihad & Co*.

40. Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).

groups across Afghanistan, including jihadists.[41] Reed Wood and Jakana Thomas explain how different insurgent ideologies about gender result in variation in how a group engages in violence.[42] Barbara Walter argues that adopting extremist ideologies can also help jihadists overcome other organizational and practical challenges.[43] These studies do not, however, explain changes in violence within jihadist groups over time.

Third, there are strategic reasons why an expanded repertoire of violence can be advantageous in an asymmetric conflict.[44] Dara Cohen and Elisabeth Wood both show that militant groups can strategically use gang rape to improve militia cohesion and loyalty.[45] Stathis Kalyvas shows how the strategic utilization of even grotesque violence can serve to "punish and deter civilian defection."[46] These rational cost calculations even apply to suicide terrorism.[47] David Lake contends that the strategic logic behind terrorist attacks is to drag targeted states into military quagmires.[48] Benjamin Acosta argues that terrorist groups may adopt suicide bombing to gain supporters and maintain organizational viability.[49]

Yet, explanations that rely on strategic logic alone do not easily explain vari-

41. Kentaro Hirose, Kosuke Imai, and Jason Lyall, "Can Civilian Attitudes Predict Insurgent Violence? Ideology and Insurgent Tactical Choice in Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (January 2017), pp. 47–63, doi.org/10.1177/0022343316675909.
42. Reed M. Wood and Jakana L. Thomas, "Women on the Frontline: Rebel Group Ideology and Women's Participation in Violent Rebellion," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (January 2017), pp. 31–46, doi.org/10.1177/0022343316675025.
43. See Barbara F. Walter, "The Extremist's Advantage in Civil Wars," *International Security*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Fall 2017), pp. 7–39, doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00292.
44. David A. Jaeger et al., "Can Militants Use Violence to Win Public Support? Evidence from the Second Intifada," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (April 2015), pp. 528–549, doi.org/10.1177/0022002713516843; and Max Abrahms, Jonathan Leader Maynard, and Kai Thaler, "Correspondence: Ideological Extremism in Armed Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Summer 2018), pp. 186–190, doi.org/10.1162/isec_c_00324.
45. Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War"; Cohen, "Female Combatants and the Perpetration of Violence"; and Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence during War." See also Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Socialization and Violence: Introduction and Framework," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (September 2017), pp. 592–605, doi.org/10.1177/0022343317721813; and Dara Kay Cohen, "The Ties That Bind: How Armed Groups Use Violence to Socialize Fighters," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (September 2017), pp. 701–714, doi.org/10.1177/0022343317713559.
46. Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria," *Rationality and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (August 1999), pp. 243–285, at p. 245, doi.org/10.1177/104346399011003001.
47. Crenshaw, "The Debate over 'New' vs. 'Old' Terrorism"; Pete Lentini, "Understanding and Combating Terrorism: Definitions, Origins, and Strategies," *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 133–140, doi.org/10.1080/10361140701842615; and Assaf Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Winter 2008/09), pp. 46–78, doi.org/10.1162/isec.2009.33.3.46.
48. Lake, "Rational Extremism."
49. Benjamin Acosta, "Dying for Survival: Why Militant Organizations Continue to Conduct Suicide Attacks," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (March 2016), pp. 180–196, doi.org/10.1177/0022343315618001.

ations in the use of this tabooed violence over time.[50] For example, jihadists in Afghanistan refrained from using suicide bombings for more than two decades, believing it to be un-Islamic; the first suicide attack in Afghanistan occurred in 2001 and was perpetrated by Arab, not Afghan, fighters. Similarly, Somalia has been at war since 1991, yet its first suicide attack occurred in 2006. Despite the strategic advantage of this tactic, most jihadist groups abandoned the Islamist prohibition on suicide only fairly recently.

To explain this phenomenon, I put forward a leadership-centered explanation of why some jihadists are able to do away with norms that constrain their violence. I contend that while jihadist leaders may wish to expand their repertoire of violence, they cannot easily shed their prior held Islamist constraints. However, if their rivals commit an egregious act that shocks the local population, jihadist leaders can take advantage of the outrage and erode taboos prohibiting them from using strategically valuable but tabooed violence.

As Francisco Sanín and Elisabeth Wood show, ideas and norms can restrain groups from using even strategically advantageous violence.[51] Sebastian Schmidt also shows that exogenous shocks, such as foreign military intervention, can drive norm entrepreneurs to adopt new frameworks for norm change, in order to adapt to new challenges.[52] Building on these insights, this article shows how jihadist leaders can take advantage of exogenous shocks to promote norm erosion and reconstruction within their ranks.[53]

By applying these concepts to jihadist insurgencies, this article also makes an important correction to the existing norms literature.[54] The current scholar-

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50. Silverman, "Just War, Jihad, and Terrorism"; Battin, "The Ethics of Self-Sacrifice"; Ali and Post, "The History and Evolution of Martyrdom in the Service of Defensive Jihad"; David Jan Slavicek, "Deconstructing the Shariatic Justification of Suicide Bombings," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 31, No. 6 (2008), pp. 553–571, doi.org/10.1080/10576100802064833; and Mohammed M. Hafez, "The Alchemy of Martyrdom: Jihadi Salafism and Debates over Suicide Bombings in the Muslim World," *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (January 2010), pp. 364–378, doi.org/10.1163/156853110X499927.

51. Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (March 2014), pp. 213–226, doi.org/10.1177/0022343313514073.

52. Schmidt, "Foreign Military Presence and the Changing Practice of Sovereignty." See also Adler-Nissen, "Stigma Management in International Relations"; and Panke and Petersohn, "Norm Challenges and Norm Death."

53. Michael Zürn, "Globalization and Global Governance," Thomas Risse, "Transnational Actors and World Politics," and Fabrizio Gilardi, "Transnational Diffusion: Norms, Ideas, and Policies," all in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage, 2013), pp. 401–477.

54. Claire Metelits, "Reformed Rebels? Democratization, Global Norms, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army," *Africa Today*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Fall 2004), pp. 65–82, doi.org/10.1353/at.2004.0069; Nichole Argo, "Why Fight? Examining Self-Interested versus Communally-Oriented Motivations in Palestinian Resistance and Rebellion," *Security Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (December 2009), pp. 651–680, doi.org/10.1080/09636410903368920; Kristin M. Bakke, "Help Wanted? The Mixed Record of

ship focuses heavily on positive or cooperative norms on the world stage, but provides little insight into destructive norms, especially in the context of civil war.[55] Indeed, while jihadists are particularly norm- and rule-bound insurgents, the content of their norms can be exceedingly violent. By investigating the erosion and formation of these violent norms, this research opens up an important new area of inquiry into how leaders can promote and normalize destructive mores within and across state borders.

Case Selection and Methods

Turning to the empirical work, I begin with a detailed, inductive investigation of jihadist violence in two cases: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Pakistan from 2007 to 2014, and Boko Haram in Nigeria from 2002 to 2014. These cases reveal how leaders used critical moments in the conflict to promote unprecedented changes in jihadist norms of violence. In contrast, economic, ideological, and strategic factors do not neatly align with changes in TTP's and Boko Haram's violence. I then present a short case study showing negative variation on the dependent variable: al-Shabaab in Somalia from 2007 to 2017. In the Somali case, no changes in jihadist norms of violence occurred, despite significant fluctuations in economic endowments, ideological affiliation, and battlefield conditions. These three cases suggest that rapid and dramatic norm change only becomes possible when jihadist leaders are able to take advantage of an exogenous shock, thus allowing them to redefine their rules and norms of violence.

To evaluate this argument, I chose an especially hard case of jihadist norm change: gendered violence. Like many religious communities, in Muslim soci-

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Foreign Fighters in Domestic Insurgencies," *International Security*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Spring 2014), pp. 150–187, doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00156; Alec Worsnop, "Who Can Keep the Peace? Insurgent Organizational Control of Collective Violence," *Security Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July 2017), pp. 482–516, doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1306397; and Clayton L. Thyne and Ryan D. Schroeder, "Social Constraints and Civil War: Bridging the Gap with Criminological Theory," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (October 2012), pp. 1066–1078, doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000655.

55. Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell, "Piecing Together the Democratic Peace: The CSCE, Norms, and the 'Construction' of Security in Post–Cold War Europe," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 505–535, doi.org/10.1162/002081899550977; Nina Tannenwald, "The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 433–468, doi.org/10.1162/002081899550959; Francis Fukuyama, "Social Capital, Civil Society, and Development," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (February 2001), pp. 7–20, doi.org/10.1080/713701144; Kate O'Neill, Jörg Balsiger, and Stacy D. VanDeveer, "Actors, Norms, and Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 7 (2004), pp. 149–175, doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.090803.161821; and Hiro Katsumata, "Mimetic Adoption and Norm Diffusion: 'Western' Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia?" *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April 2011), pp. 557–576, doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000872.

eties, laws and norms pertaining to women are considered sacrosanct.[56] Because Islam places heavy weight on gender and sexual mores, violations of such norms are typically attributed to moral corruption, or even outright disbelief. Of course, this does not mean that Islamist ideas about gender are either compassionate or virtuous; jihadists are not feminists. These religious gender norms are, however, deeply held. It is exceedingly difficult for jihadists to put forward new legal or moral arguments that violate traditional gender mores, let alone champion tabooed ideas.

Of course, gendered violence in civil wars is not unique to conflicts involving jihadist groups.[57] Kara Siddharth shows that militant groups of many types profit from sex trafficking.[58] Armed groups across the ideological spectrum, from secular ethnonationalists to Marxist revolutionaries, engage in wartime rape. This research does not suggest that jihadists engage in either more or worse gendered violence than other types of armed groups. In fact, because of their strict and puritanical gender and sexual mores, research shows that in some cases Islamists raped far less than other types of militia groups.[59]

This research therefore addresses a critical question in security studies. Indeed, as more than half the population, women constitute the single largest group that jihadists can target for violence, more than minority sects and foreign forces combined. Given the sheer size of this target group, jihadist campaigns against women thus have far-reaching consequences. Targeting women and girls not only terrorizes civilian populations, but can also trigger mass displacement, demographic change, and sizable shifts in the local balance of power. In both the Pakistan and Nigeria cases, systematic attacks on women and girls had wide-ranging security consequences.

To evaluate my argument against the three dominant explanations, I use a process-tracing method to conduct a focused contemporary historical analysis

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56. Orit Avishai, Afshan Jafar, and Rachel Rinaldo, "A Gender Lens on Religion," *Gender & Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (February 2015), pp. 5–25, doi.org/10.1177/0891243214548920; Shahra Razavi and Anne Jenichen, "The Unhappy Marriage of Religion and Politics: Problems and Pitfalls for Gender Equality," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 6 (September 2010), pp. 833–850, doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2010.502700; and Jane H. Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi, eds., *Globalization, Gender, and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

57. Schneider, Banholzer, and Albarracin, "Ordered Rape"; Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence"; and Sara Meger, "The Fetishization of Sexual Violence in International Security," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (March 2016), pp. 149–159, doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqw003.

58. Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

59. In the Afghan case, the Taliban put an end to the rape campaigns perpetrated by ethnic warlords during the 1992–96 civil war. See Anand Gopal, *No Good Men among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes* (New York: Henry Holt, 2014); and Ahmad, *Jihad & Co.*

of the TTP, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab, based on a critical examination of their primary source materials in multiple languages.[60] Drawing from a database of more than 100,000 jihadist primary sources from across the world, my research team first selected out all jihadist print, audio, and video sources from relevant theaters in each respective time period.[61] Within that set, the team then short-listed those primary sources that were specifically related to the norms and rules of jihadist violence and the treatment of women. These short-listed sources were reviewed to create a final selection of 93 primary-source materials that contained diagnostic pieces of evidence, which were representative of the overall trends in the qualitative data.[62] These key sources were then reviewed in their entirety, and the selected diagnostic evidence was translated into English and placed within a timeline of events for each conflict theater.[63] For the TTP and al-Shabaab cases, I also draw on and cite my own field research, including observational research on these jihadist information operations campaigns.

In my analysis of these primary sources, I paid special attention to both content and rhetorical tone, especially as these fit within the broader narrative constructs of the jihadist information operations campaigns. Importantly, jihadist primary sources are insurgent propaganda, and are therefore best used to unpack how jihadists intentionally create and disseminate group narratives; these sources should not be used to make inferences about sincerity of beliefs and values.[64] Given that this study explicitly examines why and

60. David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (October 2011), pp. 823–830, doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429; David Waldner, "Process Tracing and Causal Mechanisms," in Harold Kincaid, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Social Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 65–84; and Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

61. My sincere thanks goes to Christopher Anzalone for his extraordinary assistance in evaluating and categorizing these primary source materials from his massive database.

62. In addition to the evidence from Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia, this selection also included some information operations from the Iraqi and Syrian theater, for the purpose of comparative analysis.

63. This work was facilitated by my team of remarkable research assistants who spent hundreds of hours reviewing, analyzing, and categorizing these data. My sincere thanks goes to Ali Akbar, Rukayyat Akinnibosun, Christopher Anzalone, Ajmal Burhanzoi, Chantel Cole, Mohamed Ibrahim, Amir Abdul Reda, and Zabikhullah Yari.

64. Michael V. Bhatia, "Fighting Words: Naming Terrorists, Bandits, Rebels, and Other Violent Actors," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (February 2005), pp. 5–22, doi.org/10.1080/0143659042000322874; David L. Altheide, "The Mass Media and Terrorism," *Discourse & Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (August 2007), pp. 287–308, doi.org/10.1177/1750481307079207; Christopher Paul, "As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (May 2010), pp. 488–510, doi.org/10.1080/10576101003752630; and Luke Bertram, "Terrorism, the Internet, and the Social Media Advantage: Exploring How Terrorist Organizations Exploit Aspects of the Internet, So-

how jihadists have propagated new norms within their ranks and to the broader jihadist community, these primary sources provide excellent data for this discourse analysis.

To sift through this propagandist material, I reviewed how and why these messages were crafted for different intended audiences. For example, sources that included translations or subtitles in multiple languages could be classified as having a broader target audience, whereas sources in local dialects that addressed supporters in nearby communities had a narrower audience. I also evaluated the types of information that were conspicuously absent from these sources, and then cross-checked these narratives against primary and secondary sources, including my fieldwork. Delving into the case evidence, I uncovered critical trigger events that catalyzed rapid transformations in each respective jihadist normative environment.

Regarding my method of comparison, I used within-case analysis to track these distinct changes in norms over time, in order to identify the causal processes that explained jihadist normative evolution.[65] For both Pakistan and Nigeria, I evaluated the material conditions, ideological orientation, strategic interests, and normative constraints for each of these respective jihadist groups, both before and after significant changes in their violent behavior. In my evaluation of these counterarguments, I relied on both primary and secondary data, including my prior fieldwork in Pakistan and Somalia, which focused intently on political economy, strategic, and organizational factors affecting jihadist insurgencies.

The goal of this comparison is to identify the casual mechanisms that explain dramatic changes in jihadist violence. To establish clarity on the dependent variable, I examine only organized group-level acts of violence, not individual incidents by members or supporters.[66] Because this research treats

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cial Media and How These Same Platforms Could Be Used to Counter-Violent Extremism," *Journal for Deradicalization*, No. 7 (Summer 2016), pp. 225–252.

65. John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (May 2004), pp. 341–354, doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404001182; Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, "Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9 (2006), pp. 455–476, doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104918; Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, "Complex Causal Relations and Case Study Methods: The Example of Path Dependence," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer 2006), pp. 250–267, doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpj020; and Jason Seawright and John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (June 2008), pp. 294–308, doi.org/10.1177/1065912907313077.

66. Will Moore, "Rational Rebels: Overcoming the Free-Rider Problem," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (1995), pp. 417–454, doi.org/10.1177/106591299504800211; Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 2003), pp. 475–494, doi.org/10.1017/S1537592703000355; Kalyvas and Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?"; Paul Staniland, "States, Insurgents, and

the nonstate armed group as the unit of analysis, I focus on the organized, premeditated acts perpetrated by jihadist groups, not on the private abuses committed by either affiliated or unaffiliated individuals.

I then present a brief investigation of jihadist violence in Somalia, a case of negative variation. Drawing on both primary source materials and my field research in Somalia, I find that al-Shabaab underwent no changes in its gendered violence, despite significant changes in material, ideological, and battlefield conditions between 2007 and 2017. Rather, the evidence suggests that al-Shabaab has refrained from sanctioning many common forms of strategically valuable but tabooed gendered violence. Collectively, the case evidence from Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia thus shows that jihadist leaders can make dramatic changes only when an external trigger event gives them an opportunity to do away with inhibitory taboos on gendered violence.

Pakistan: TTP and Attacks on Girls' Schools

Between 2007 and 2017, an alarming new type of gendered violence became commonplace among Pakistani jihadists: the targeting of girls' schools. Despite the fact that the northwest province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) in Pakistan has been a hotbed of jihadist violence for more than three decades, local Islamists—including those participating in jihad—have historically not attacked girls' schools. Unlike girls in neighboring Afghanistan, Pakistani girls have attended both public and private schools in KPK safely for decades. Female education in Pakistan is hardly ubiquitous, but attacks on girls or schoolchildren have traditionally been utterly taboo.[67] Even when the Afghan Taliban—which had the support of the Pakistani government—banned female education in the 1990s, girls in Pakistan continued to attend schools without

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Wartime Political Orders," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 2012), pp. 243–264, doi.org/10.1017/S1537592712000655; Rebecca Littman and Elizabeth Levy Paluck, "The Cycle of Violence: Understanding Individual Participation in Collective Violence," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 36, No. S1 (February 2015), pp. 79–99, doi.org/10.1111/pops.12239; and Checkel, "Socialization and Violence."

67. The Purdah and Namus institutions in the Pakhtunwali code dictate strict segregation between men and women who are not part of the immediate family. See Bernt Glatzer, "The Pashtun Tribal System," in Deepak Kumar Behera and Georg Pfeffer, eds., *The Concept of Tribal Society*, Vol. 5: *Contemporary Society Tribal Studies* (New Delhi: Concept, 2002), pp. 265–282; Bernt Glatzer, "Being Pashtun—Being Muslim: Concepts of Person and War in Afghanistan," in Glatzer, ed., *Essays on South Asian Society: Culture and Politics II* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1998), pp. 83–94; Fida Mohammad, Alexander R. Thomas, and Iffat Tabassum, "Honor, Revenge in Socio-Geographic Space of Pashtuns," *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (July 2016), p. 74; and Arab Naz et al., "The Relational Analyses of *Pakhtun* Social Organization (*Pakhtunwali*) and Women's Islamic Rights Relegation in Malakand Division, KPK Pakistan," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (March 2012), pp. 63–73.

impediment. Many Pakistani girls went on to become doctors, teachers, and politicians.[68]

In 2007, however, local jihadists suddenly changed course and razed hundreds of girls' schools across the KPK. These changes were perpetrated by emerging Pakistani Taliban factions in the region.[69] One jihadist leader arose as a particularly pronounced voice at this time: Mullah Fazlullah of the Swat Valley. Inspired by the Afghan Taliban, Fazlullah came to prominence in 2006 by launching a daily radio campaign that propagated the idea of Islamist government in Pakistan. Nicknamed the "Radio Mullah," Fazlullah regularly ranted against all political and social institutions that he deemed westernized and secular, including educational institutions.[70] Fazlullah's flare won him a base, and his followers soon began targeting military, police, and other government bodies.

The Radio Mullah used every rhetorical flourish to bully his opponents, enhance his Islamist legitimacy, and advocate for violence toward symbols of Islamabad's reign. In practical terms, however, the remote Swat Valley contains few symbols of government to target beyond the odd police station or administrative bureau. His followers were swift in engaging in grotesque violence against local police officers, but these victims were not especially numerous. In fact, the most common government-affiliated institutions in the area were publicly funded schools.[71] In 2006, Fazlullah assailed the moral corruption of these government-funded schools.

Fazlullah's jihadists thus found themselves at a strategic impasse: they wanted to fight against the government, but attacks on schools were still considered deeply taboo.[72] Instead, in 2006, his followers burned a number of music stores, barber shops, and a few educational institutions that they declared

68. Ghulam Mustafa, "Education Policy Analysis Report of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" (Pakistan: United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2012); and "Stress on Girls' Education in NWFP: Minister," *Dawn*, April 30, 2005, http://www.dawn.com/news/403246. For updated statistics on female education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, visit http://www.kpese.gov.pk/EMIS.html.

69. While on their heels, in 2005, Pakistan's jihadists tried to win badly needed points from local communities by providing emergency humanitarian support after the devastating earthquake. Jawad Hussain Qureshi, "Earthquake Jihad: The Role of Jihadis and Islamist Groups after the October 2005 Earthquake" (Brussels: International Crisis Group, July 2006).

70. Author observations, Peshawar, Pakistan, 2006.

71. In an interview in Swat Valley in 2009, when Fazlullah was asked why his group was attacking girls schools, he replied that "when the government attacks us, then what capacity do we have to retaliate? We will try to harm the government by attacking them." See "Swat Taliban Leader Mullah Fazlullah Interview," exclusive with Khyber News, YouTube, January 27, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjHpTio-srk, 5:55, at 3:16–3:25.

72. Author observations, Peshawar, Pakistan, 2006. Note that during this period, Mullah Fazlullah made concerted efforts to state that he was actually seeking to advance women's rights, albeit from within the context of his purportedly traditional Islamist mores. Khurshid Khan, "Exclusive:

un-Islamic. They also burned a number of schools, but were careful to ensure they were empty at the time.[73]

Changes in the strategic environment had no noticeable effect on these checks on his violence. By the end of 2006, Fazlullah's group had surged. His faction established influence across the Swat Valley, and the Pakistani government had not yet challenged its power. Rather, in September 2006, the Pakistani government signed a cease-fire agreement with a number of emerging Pakistani Taliban factions.[74] By the beginning of 2007, the jihadists appeared to have the strategic advantage; yet, Fazlullah's group still made no major escalation against girls.

In July 2007, however, a drastic change occurred in the political landscape as a result of a key trigger event: the Pakistani government's siege of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa. Also known as the "Red Mosque," Lal Masjid is a historic mosque in downtown Islamabad, which has a history of militant Islamism.[75] However, Lal Masjid also boasts having a large all-girls' school attached to it called Jamia Hafsa, which teaches Islamic studies, as well as math and sciences, to hundreds of Pakistani women and girls.[76] Students at Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa earned a reputation for hardline Islamism, including moral policing, community vigilantism, and anti-Pakistan agitation. In response to these actions, in July 2007 the Pakistani government launched an eight-day-long military operation against the mosque and school, resulting in hundreds of casualties.[77] Most notably, female students participated in the defense of Jamia Hafsa, which resulted in a culturally outrageous scene of Pakistani soldiers fighting against Muslim schoolgirls.

While the siege had no direct impact on the strategic environment in the KPK, the incident gave the jihadists an unexpected window of opportunity. The Lal Masjid incident was particularly scandalous because it was calculated and orchestrated by the government to target girls in a religious school; the siege could not be dismissed as a mistake, nor could it be blamed on a

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An Interview with Maulana Fazalullah," Valley Swat, April 27, 2007, http://www.valleyswat.net/articles/fazalullah_interview.html.

73. Author observations, Peshawar and Swat, Pakistan, 2006.

74. Adnan Naseemullah, "Shades of Sovereignty: Explaining Political Order and Disorder in Pakistan's Northwest," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (December 2014), p. 517, doi.org/10.1007/s12116-014-9157-z.

75. Hassan Abbas, "The Road to Lal Masjid and Its Aftermath," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 5, No. 14 (July 2007), p. 4.

76. Author observations, Islamabad, Pakistan, May 2005.

77. Carlotta Gall and Salman Masood, "At Least 40 Militants Dead as Pakistani Military Storms Mosque after Talks Fail," *New York Times*, July 10, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/10/world/asia/10pakistan.html; and "Pakistani Soldiers Storm Mosque," *BBC News*, July 10, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6286500.stm.

few bad actors. The government owned the Lal Masjid affair, giving the Pakistani Taliban the excuse it needed to launch a new military and propaganda campaign.

The jihadist response was strong and organized. Leaders across Swat and the tribal belt immediately declared that the Pakistani government had attacked and humiliated "their" girls.[78] They collectively ended their ten-month-long truce deal with the Pakistani government and announced a new umbrella alliance called Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.[79] Beitullah Mehsud, the late leader of TTP, stated: "The fact is that this is all [Pakistani President] Musharraf's doing. It is all happening because of Musharraf. If he did not engage in cruelty, if he did not unleash cruelty on Jamia Hafsa . . . and did not martyr children and women in FATA, then the situation would have been different. Musharraf acted so cruelly in Jamia Hafsa and in FATA that these acts resulted in an organic uprising among the people, and they acted against these cruel acts, and the worsening security situation is a consequence of these."[80] A different TTP-affiliated group in the Pakistani tribal areas exaggerated the casualty reports: "The Pakistani army bombed the Lal Masjid in Islamabad with heavy arms and turned it into a graveyard for hundreds of female students."[81] Even al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri called for revenge attacks against the Pakistani state.[82] In an hour-long broadcast, al-Zawahiri presented a distorted picture of the incident: "They are even prepared to destroy mosques and madrassas and kill thousands of male and female students just to appease and please their masters who pay them, the neo-crusaders in the White House."[83]

The incident opened up a perfect opportunity for Fazlullah to escalate his

78. Author interviews, Peshawar, Pakistan, 2007. During this time, rumors began to swirl that the girls from Jamia Hafsa were natives of Mingora, Swat. The author has seen no evidence that the students in Jamia Hafsa were actually from the Swat region.
79. "Pakistan Militants End Truce Deal," *BBC News*, July 15, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6899621.stm; and Ismail Khan, "Suicide Bombers Kill at Least 49 in North Pakistan," *New York Times*, July 16, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/16/world/asia/16attack.html.
80. Rizwan Zaman, "Zia Ul Haq Interview with Baitullah Mehsud," Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, 0:48–1:35.
81. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, "Glad Tidings from Pakistan", n.d.
82. "Al Qaeda Calls for Revenge," *CTV News*, July 11, 2007, http://www.ctvnews.ca/al-qaeda-calls-for-revenge-over-mosque-attack-1.248248.
83. Aiman al-Zawahiri, "A Message from Shaykh Aiman al-Zawahiri to Pakistan Army and the People of Pakistan," al-Qaida, 2008, 9:28–9:39. In a separate message, Zawahiri adds that "Pakistani forces should know this that by murdering Shaheed Abdul Rasheed Ghazi [leader of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa] and his colleagues and students and by attacking masjids and madrassas, what they have started today can only be erased by the murder of those who killed Shaheed Abdul Rasheed Ghazi and his colleagues."Aiman Al-Zawahiri, "Imam of Truth," Al- Qaida, 2008, 27:00–27:17. In another message, Zawahiri adds, "The assaults on the Red Mosque and the tribal areas exposed the ugly anti-Islamic face of the military leadership of Pakistan." Al-Qaida, "A Message from Shaykh Aiman Al-Zawahiri to Pakistan Army and the People of Pakistan," 18:40–18:48.

campaign in Swat Valley. The Radio Mullah used his propaganda machine to turn public attention toward the siege, while his followers began a massive and unprecedented campaign against government-funded girls' schools across the Swat Valley.[84] His campaign was brutal and effective. Fazlullah issued an edict banning all female education, and between 2007 and 2009, his faction destroyed hundreds of girls' schools across the Swat Valley.[85] Indeed, in her memoir, Nobel Prize–winning education activist Malala Yousafzai stated that the Lal Masjid attack was "the start of real trouble."[86] She recalled that, in July 2007, Fazlullah gave a radio speech "quite different from his previous ones" in which "he declared war on the Pakistani government" to avenge the deaths of Lal Masjid.[87]

Eroding the taboo on attacking girls' schools increased Fazlullah's ability to hit symbols of Islamabad's power. This escalation also provided his groups with the additional value of intimidating ideological rivals. It made little difference to Fazlullah that the women and girls his group was targeting were also Muslims. With a threat now levied against their daughters, families who opposed Fazlullah's fanatical band were faced with the choice to submit, run, or risk injury to their girls.[88]

In October 2007, the Pakistani military finally launched a campaign to oust Fazlullah's group.[89] On the ground, the balance of power swung rapidly. By December 2007, the Pakistani government had gained control of most of the Swat Valley. In 2008, the United States dramatically escalated its drone war

84. Author observations, Swat Valley and Peshawar, Pakistan, 2005–09.
85. "Taliban Bans Education for Girls in Swat Valley," *Washington Times*, January 5, 2009, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jan/5/taliban-bans-education-for-girls-in-pakistans-swat/; Elias Groll, "The Pakistani Taliban's War on Education, by the Numbers," *Foreign Policy*, December 16, 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/12/16/the_pakistani_talibans_war_on_education_by_the_numbers; and Omar Waraich and Andrew Buncombe, "Taliban Restrict Women's Education in Pakistan," *Independent*, January 18, 2009, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/taliban-restrict-womens-education-in-pakistan-1419199.html. For a report on attacks between 2009 and 2013, see Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, "Education Under Attack, 2014: Pakistan" (New York: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2014), http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/eua_2014_country_profiles_pakistan.pdf.
86. Yousafzai Malala, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013), p. 128.
87. Ibid.
88. As many as two million people are estimated to have been displaced as a result of the Swat insurgency. See Khurshaid Muhammad Faheem and Asfandyar Marwat, "Human Rights Violations in Swat Conflict: A Qualitative Study," *Pakistan Journal of Peace & Conflict Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January–June 2016), p. 51; Manzoor Ahmad, "Implications of the War on Terror for Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan," *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, No. 3 (2010), p. 109; and Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, "Pakistan's Anti-Taliban Counter-Insurgency," *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 155, No. 1 (February 2010), p. 12, doi.org/10.1080/03071841003683377.
89. Niaz A. Shah, "War Crimes in the Armed Conflict in Pakistan," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2010), p. 286, doi.org/10.1080/10576100903582535.

campaign in a new push to break the TTP. By early 2009, however, Fazlullah's faction had recaptured almost all of the Swat region.[90] These dramatic changes in the strategic landscape had no effect on the norms of violence of the Swat Taliban.

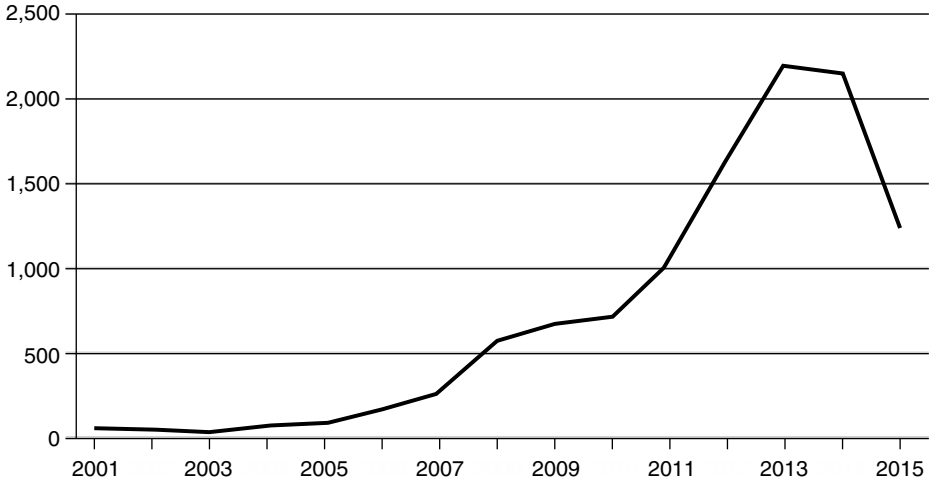
During this period of tumult, Pakistan's jihadists consistently kept their focus on the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa. In 2010, an al-Qaida publication declared: "Those sisters who [were] targeted in Jamia Hafsa and out of which many are still yet to be found and are trapped . . . this jihad is for all of them."[91] As his group escalated assaults on schools, Fazlullah consistently dodged criticism about attacking girls by referencing the Lal Masjid incident, and then adding that government-funded schools promote un-Islamic ideas.

As these revisionist norms took root, the nature of Fazlullah's violence mutated and worsened. In 2012, Fazlullah's faction attacked a bus carrying Yousafzai, shooting the teenage girl in the head. The attack prompted widespread public condemnation, both inside Pakistan and across the world. Most Pakistanis, for whom female education was completely normal, saw the targeting of girls' schools to be shameful and abhorrent; for jihadists, however, this previously unthinkable behavior was now permissible, even laudable. By 2013, an estimated 400 of the approximately 1,600 schools in Swat Valley had been destroyed, 70 percent of which were girls' schools.[92]

For ten years, these jihadists' have escalated their school attacks, while consistently deflecting attention to the attacks on Lal Masjid (see figure 1). The most brutal event took place in 2014, when the Pakistani Taliban launched a devastating assault on the coeducational Army Public School in Peshawar, killing 134 schoolchildren. Because some of the students were children of Pakistani army officers, the militants declared it revenge for their own families who had been killed in operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). In a statement, Fazlullah confirmed that "6 men from Tehrik-i-Taliban who were willing to sacrifice their lives . . . kill[ed] the children of those army officers who were about to follow in the footsteps of their fathers and brothers in the war that is being waged on the whole country including the tribal areas . . . more than 200 kids who were sons and daughters of individuals involved in the army were killed."[93] Again, while ordinary Pakistanis declared their

90. Matthew J. Nelson, "Pakistan in 2009: Tackling the Taliban?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (January/February 2010), pp. 118–119, doi.org/10.1525/as.2010.50.1.112.
91. Farouq Ahmad, "Why Jihad in Pakistan," al-Qaida, 2010, p. 20.
92. Groll, "The Pakistani Taliban's War on Education, by the Numbers."
93. Fazlullah, "Statement from Fazlullah Confirming Peshawar School Attack," Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, December 2014.

Figure 1. Number of Attacks on Pakistani Schools, 2001–15



SOURCE: Global Terrorism Database, 2017, http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.

horror and disgust with this shameful violence, the jihadists were no longer constrained by these normative restrictions on their behavior.

Neither ideological, economic, nor strategic interests can explain this dramatic change in behavior. There were no apparent changes in the economic conditions of the Pakistani Taliban during this time period. Illicit trade flows remained relatively constant, and there is no evidence of a mass increase or decrease of foreign funds during this time. Changes in the strategic environment also had no noticeable effect on jihadist norms. Indeed, even the U.S. drone war campaign, which started in 2004 and spiked in 2008, does not correspond with any changes in jihadist norms of violence against girls in KPK. There is no identifiable pattern or correlation linking changes in the strategic environment with changes in these norms of violence.

Rather, the evidence from the Pakistan case shows the importance of the Lal Masjid trigger event in justifying dramatic changes in jihadist norms of violence, which have had a lasting effect. In 2015, TTP official Adnan Rashid directly referenced the Lal Masjid incident, saying: "In the name of war on terror you gave a blood bath to Red Mosque and whole tribal belt, from Swat to South Waziristan. A non-stop series of barbaric operations, disappearances, mutilated bodies, and record number of IDPs [internally displaced persons]."[94] In a 2016 broadcast by Fazlullah's faction, TTP spokesperson Hilal

94. Adnan Rashid, "TTP Adnan Rashid's Message to the Security Forces in Pakistan," Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, 2015, 4:32–5:10.

Ghazi Hafizullah stated: "The Lal Masjid sad moments, atrocity, bloodshed, and dangerous events, that all the Muslim Umma remembers, caused an uprising in the Muslims and give birth to an army of Mujahideen. Praise be to Allah, this sacrifice of our sisters had a profound effect on Tehrik Taliban Pakistan and the broader Muslim Umma and young Muslims welcomed the call of jihad. The martyred sisters of Lal Masjid had only one request from the government, that this country got its independence in the name of Islam and that we want an Islamic government in this country."[95]

After a decade of this propaganda and resocialization, these Pakistani jihadists seem undaunted by the fact that their underaged targets are Muslim children. Not only do these jihadists no longer seem to feel shame about these attacks, but they also champion these new beliefs. Indeed, a 2017 TTP pamphlet stated: "All educational institutions promoting western education are not to be spared."[96] Traditional mores, which had prohibited attacking women and children, no longer restrain this jihadist violence; the TTP has adopted revisionist new norms of violence. Schoolgirls are now acceptable targets.

Nigeria: Boko Haram and Kidnapping Girls

Although ethnic and sectarian violence in Nigeria has a long history, between 2009 and 2019 the northeastern Borno region has experienced a dramatic transformation in the nature and intensity of its jihadist insurgency. Most notably, in 2013 the militant group calling itself Boko Haram began kidnapping and sexually trafficking women and girls, a serious violation of the values and mores held by the vast majority of Nigerian Muslims. The group claims to have sold these girls as "wives" both to its fighters and to slave markets. The few girls who managed to escape from Boko Haram after being kidnapped reported rape and sexual violence while they were in captivity. This targeting of women and girls is unprecedented in Nigeria, even among Boko Haram fighters.

The Boko Haram insurgency began in 2002 in northeastern Borno State under the leadership of a radical Salafist preacher named Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf opposed Nigeria's secular education system, claiming that it violated Islamic law, and began pushing for a stricter Islamist political order for the

95. Fazlullah, "Bayyan Shari'at Ya Shahadat," Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, August 2016, 6:36–8:00. Hafizullah continued, "There our teachers were martyred . . . our pious sisters were martyred. Some of our sisters are still missing; our brothers were picked up from Lal Masjid. They were handed over to infidels. Whether our sisters are in prisons or injured, or if our brothers are injured or martyred, we have promised them in the Lal Majid . . . that we would avenge them and topple this [disbelieving] government and replace it with an Islamic one." Ibid., 8:12–9:38.
96. Tahrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, "Operation Ghazi Policy Brief by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Jamat ul Ahrar)," February 2017, p. 2.

Muslim-dominant northern provinces.[97] As the conflict spiralled, the jihadists clashed with police forces, Christian minorities, and other non-Muslim populations.[98] Retaliatory clashes among Muslim and Christian gangs continued intermittently from 2004 onward, which led to church and mosque burnings, the sacking of villages, and riots that claimed hundreds of lives on both sides.

In 2009, Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf stated that the "Nigerian government has not been built on justice. [It] was not built to protect Islam or to protect Muslims. It was built to kill Muslims."[99] These claims reflect the long-standing political tensions between northern Nigeria's Hausa-speaking Muslim communities and the central government.[100] As the government pushed back against Boko Haram's uprising in the north, Yusuf complained about the failure of the political process and the presence of armed forces in his town: "We will not listen to anyone; we will not write letters to anyone anymore. We already did that before. We will not consult anyone, and so we do not agree with all this and we shall not forgive this act. And if these mad soldiers are not taken out this town, there shall be no peace, and this is not just for our people, but for the people of this town entirely."[101]

By 2009, a series of clashes had broken out between Boko Haram and the government, which triggered a jihadist uprising in Borno. What followed were two key events that catalyzed a rapid and radical transformation in the jihadist environment. To start, the Nigerian government arrested Yusuf and summarily executed him. Extremist commander Abubakar Shekau succeeded Yusuf and assumed leadership over Boko Haram, and then escalated attacks on government targets and Christian communities. The strategic landscape in northern Nigeria underwent a series of shocks between 2009 and 2012. Despite these changes in the strategic environment, the empirical evidence indicates that Boko Haram did not embark on any systematic campaigns of gendered or sex-

97. Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, "Why Boko Haram Exists: The Relative Deprivation Perspective," *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2013), pp. 144–157, doi.org/10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.3.1.144; and Freedom C. Onuoha, "The Audacity of the Boko Haram: Background, Analysis, and Emerging Trend," *Security Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (April 2012), pp. 134–151, doi.org/10.1057/sj.2011.15.

98. Freedom C. Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge: Nigeria's Boko Haram Crisis Explained," *African Security Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (June 2010), pp. 54–67, doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2010.503061; Onuoha, "The Audacity of the Boko Haram"; and Jacob Zenn and Elizabeth Pearson, "Women, Gender, and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (February 2014), doi.org/10.15664/jtr.828.

99. Muhammad Bakur, "Waazin Skekh Muhannnad Yusuf 1," YouTube, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f89PvcpWSRg, 15:15, at 9:05–9:29.

100. In another message, Yusuf adds, "When the security services were disturbing us by calling us out all the time, we wrote a lengthy letter to the president during the reign of Obasanjo so that he knows what our da'awah is, what we are saying." Muhammad Bakur, "Waazin Shekh Muhammad Yusuf Maiduguri 2," YouTube, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elVjD7znMik, 15:08, at 2:56–3:10.

101. Bakur, "Waazin Skekh Muhannnad Yusuf 1," 7:11–7:18.

ual violence in northern Nigeria at this time, either against Muslim or non-Muslim women.[102]

This changed after a critical event took place in January 2012. As clashes between Christian and Muslim communities in the north continued, the government tried to pressure Boko Haram to relent. Hoping to force the group to back down, the government arrested and detained the wives and children of several Boko Haram commanders, including the wife of Shekau. Also arrested "were the wife and children of the commander for Kano, Suleiman Muhammed; the pregnant wife of the commander for Sokoto, Kabiru Sokoto, who gave birth while in prison; and the wife of [a] suicide bomber."[103]

The calculated strategy to capture and hold female family members of the commanders shocked the Boko Haram leadership. The jihadists' verbal response was fierce. Alleging in a video message that government forces were sexually abusing their wives, Shekau bewailed:

> Previously, our members have been held captive in the prison. They tie them up and disrespect them, but it's a pity we never said anything. We were practicing our religion. Now, it's not even the men anymore; it is our women that are being held captive. Right now as I talk this week, there are up to seven women that are held captive. No one knows where they are and no one knows what is being done to them. You Muslims know what the nonbelievers who are against Allah do to women . . . I swear by God . . . some are being stripped naked, another is used as a sex toy. Allah, Allah, Allah you have seen us, Allah you have heard us. This is only in one location that seven women are held captive, in another location there are three women, there are so many locations like this, only Allah knows how many of our women are being held captive at different locations. The ones we are aware and know of are even more than ten. Presently, we do not even know where they are. These are married Muslim women.[104]

Shekau then warned the Nigerian government in the same message: "Since it is our women you are now holding captive [laughs], then you should await what happens to your women according to Shariah."[105] In the months that followed, Boko Haram focused its outrage and threats on the arrest and abuse of its wives.

The Nigerian government refused to release the wives of the Boko Haram commanders. One year later, Shekau delivered on his threat. In early 2013, the jihadists' launched their first round of kidnappings, targeting the families of

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102. Nigeria experienced its first suicide bombing in 2008, but there are no clear reports of targeting women during this time.
103. Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender, and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram."
104. Abubakar Shekau, "Sako zuwa ga duniya" (A message to the world), Boko Haram, September 30, 2012, 4:09–5:22.
105. Ibid., 7:08–7:31.

government officials in the northern region.[106] In May 2013, Shekau announced that his group had kidnapped an undisclosed number of women and girls, displayed in a hostage video, who would be held as ransom to secure the release of their wives.[107] Boko Haram's first foray into gendered kidnapping therefore had a clear strategic rationale; by holding these hostages ransom, the jihadists hoped to increase their bargaining position and secure the release of their wives.[108]

The situation deteriorated further when the Nigerian government refused to exchange the hostages for the wives. Northern communities that had sympathized with the jihadists were outraged. The fact that the government had instigated this gendered violence shielded Boko Haram from criticism of its own abuses. Indeed, outrage at the government's provocation allowed Boko Haram to set aside Islamist mores that had previously constrained violence against women and girls. The jihadist leadership used this opportunity not only to denounce the government's aggression, but also to systematically develop new normative and legal arguments that they could use to justify their right to retaliate in kind.[109]

By early 2014, Boko Haram had developed an emerging set of Islamist norms to justify kidnapping girls.[110] In April 2014, these jihadists kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from their dormitories in the town of Chibok.[111] Shekau put out a video message, once again demanding the release of their captured women: "Those girls that you all are bothering yourselves about, those school girls we captured: I have said I will sell them. I have a market for selling of slaves . . . I will sell them and I repeat I will sell them, and [I swear] you won't be able to get them until the day you release our people whom you are holding captive

106. Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram."
107. Abubakar Shekau, "New Boko Haram Video Claims to Show Kidnapped Girls," Boko Haram, May 12, 2014.
108. Hilary Matfess, *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses* (London: Zed, 2017); Mike Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria's Unholy War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); and Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017).
109. Mia Bloom and Hilary Matfess, "Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram's Terror," *PRISM*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2016), p. 104; Sarah Ladbury et al., "Jihadi Groups and State-Building: The Case of Boko Haram in Nigeria," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2016), doi.org/10.5334/sta.427; Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender, and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram"; and James L. Regens et al., "Operational Dynamics of Boko Haram's Terrorist Campaign following Leadership Succession," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (March 2016), pp. 44–52, doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12251.
110. Temitope B. Oriola, "'Unwilling Cocoons': Boko Haram's War against Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2017), pp. 99–121, doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1177998; Matfess, *Women and the War on Boko Haram*; and Oliver Blau, *Women's Role in the Boko Haram Conflict* (Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2017).
111. Oriola, "'Unwilling Cocoons'"; and Regens et al., "Operational Dynamics of Boko Haram's Terrorist Campaign following Leadership Succession."

in your prisons and the women whom you are humiliating. There is a woman whom you held captive, you released her and still held on to her child, we know about all this."[112]

Not only did Shekau present this ultimatum to the Nigerian government, but he also used the event to announce his group's new normative justifications for the unprecedented violence. In a subsequent video, he mocked the international community's demands for the release of the girls, laughing that the schoolgirls had been forcibly "converted" to Boko Haram's version of Islam, were sold to different men, and were now in their "marital homes".[113] He declared: "I captured your girls, [and] I will sell them (laughs). I swear to God . . . I have a market for selling people. Allah has instructed me to sell; the owner himself has directed me to sell."[114]

Notably, survivor accounts indicate that some victims were Muslim, and that for non-Muslim women, conversion to Islam did not spare them from the cruelty of their captors.[115] Similarly, recent research also suggests that Boko Haram's victim selection may have had much more to do with ethnic and communitarian politics than with religion.[116] Nonetheless, in the months following the kidnapping of the Chibok girls, Shekau provided a post hoc religious reinterpretation of Islamic laws to legitimate his new violence: "Even the Prophet of Allah captured slaves during the battle of Badar," argued Shekau.[117] Using an obscure passage, *ma malakat aymanukum* (that which your right hand possesses), Shekau declared that he was revitalizing slavery as a valid Islamic practice in war: "I am not the type that only prays and does not capture slaves. No, I won't do that. I will follow the entirety of Quran. The Quran talks about capturing slaves; that is why I have caught them."[118]

After two years of these reactive kidnappings and incendiary messages, Boko Haram failed to secure the release of its wives. Yet, its embrace of previously tabooed violence provided Boko Haram with a slew of new strategic and economic benefits. Not only did kidnapping girls terrorize rival communities, but this tactic also provided Boko Haram fighters with a steady supply of "wives" and slaves. The jihadists could also generate revenue from their sex trafficking networks.[119]

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112. Shekau, "New Boko Haram Video Claims to Show Kidnapped Girls," 9:58–10:42.
113. Abubakar Shekau, "Boko Haram Leader Shekau Speaks on Cease-fire Talks and Abducted Chibook Girls," Boko Haram, November 1, 2014, 8:03–8:06.
114. Shekau, "New Boko Haram Video Claims to Show Kidnapped Girls," 16:52–17:03.
115. Patience Ibrahim and Andrea C. Hoffmann, *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with My Daughter from Boko Haram* (London: Little, Brown, 2017).
116. Scott MacEachern, *Searching for Boko Haram: A History of Violence in Central Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and Thurston, *Boko Haram*.
117. Shekau, "New Boko Haram Video Claims to Show Kidnapped Girls," 25:12–25:18.
118. Ibid., 11:17–11:27.
119. Anna M. Angathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, "Desire Industries: Sex Trafficking, UN Peace-

Moreover, widespread international condemnation of the kidnappings made Shekau's previously obscure group known to global jihadists. Boko Haram had until then enjoyed only nominal relations with the region's powerful and wealthy al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), but had no formal affiliation.[120] With its new sex trafficking credentials, however, Boko Haram gained notoriety among even more extreme global jihadists. In 2016, after years of being snubbed by AQIM, Shekau pledged allegiance to the infamous Islamic State in the Levant leadership, which had also openly embraced sexual slavery and trafficking.[121] This shift in ideological affiliation, however, took place well after the group had embraced its new norms of gendered violence.

Despite these later benefits, there is no evidence that Boko Haram had any prior strategic, ideological, or economic interests in gendered kidnapping before the capture of their wives. Outraged by the arrest of their wives, Boko Haram's first retaliatory kidnappings aimed to increase their strategic bargaining position vis-à-vis the government. Their ability to use this tabooed behavior for broader strategic purposes, however, was made possible by the expanded political opportunity space created by the initial trigger. The results have been dramatic. Within two years of the initial trigger event, Boko Haram had become sex traffickers in their own right.

Somalia: Al-Shabaab As Static Jihadists

Not all jihadists have changed their norms of violence against women, despite significant changes in their economic, ideological, and strategic conditions. Al-Shabaab in Somalia from 2007 to 2017 provides a powerful example.

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keeping, and the Neo-Liberal World Order," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Summer/Fall 2003), pp. 133–148, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24590599; Jeanne Ward and Mendy Marsh, "Sexual Violence against Women and Girls in War and Its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources," paper prepared for the Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond, Brussels, Belgium, June 21–23, 2006, p. 34; Janie L. Leatherman, *Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); and Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence during War."

120. Jacob Zenn, "Nigerian al-Qaedaism," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 16 (2014), https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1392/zenn.pdf; Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram's Conquest for the Caliphate: How Al Qaeda Helped Islamic State Acquire Territory," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, published ahead of print, February 20, 2018, pp. 1–34, doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1442141; and Jacob Zenn, "A Biography of Boko Haram and the Bay'a to al-Baghdadi," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (March 2015), https://ctc.usma.edu/a-biography-of-boko-haram-and-the-baya-to-al-baghdadi.

121. Hakeem Onapajo, "Has Nigeria Defeated Boko Haram? An Appraisal of the Counter-Terrorism Approach under the Buhari Administration," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2017), pp. 61–73, doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2016.1249177; Daniel Byman, "ISIS Goes Global: Fight the Islamic State by Targeting Its Affiliates," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (March/April 2016), pp. 76–85, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/isis-goes-global; and Ely Karmon, "Islamic State and al-Qaeda Competing for Hearts and Minds," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2015), pp. 71–79.

While Somalia has been in a state of civil war since 1991, its current jihadist insurgency began in 2007 in the immediate aftermath of a U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion, which overthrew the emerging Islamic Court Union (ICU) government in Mogadishu.[122] As the ICU disbanded, its armed wing reformed as the militant group called al-Shabaab.[123] From 2007 until the time of this writing, al-Shabaab has maintained an effective jihadist insurgency across large swaths of southern and central Somalia. These jihadists have also extended their reach across borders, launching a campaign of terror that has affected neighbouring Uganda and Kenya. During this period, the group earned a reputation for assassinations, coercive extortion, kidnappings, and suicide attacks, declaring all of these abuses as justified under its Islamist code of conduct.[124] Never, however, did it change its established Islamist norms to permit new violence against women. Despite substantial changes in material, strategic, and ideational factors over this decade, al-Shabaab has not experienced any corresponding group-level variations in its norms of gendered violence.

Nevertheless, al-Shabaab does engage in a wide range of abuses against Somali women, such as excluding them from some aspects of public life and enforcing mandatory veiling.[125] Using religious norms as a pretext, at times these jihadists have even required women to buy and wear special al-Shabaab-approved clothing.[126] They also engaged in more grisly gendered violence, including the corporal punishments of persons—often women—who are charged with adultery.[127] These practices may seem alien to the majority of moderate Somalis; al-Shabaab, however, espouses this extreme Islamist interpretation of the law.

Yet, al-Shabaab leaders have not sanctioned any new and unprecedented forms of gendered violence that deviate from their preexisting Islamist conceptions. There have been no new group-level campaigns of gendered violence that violate existing taboos and mores. The group has not issued any legal edicts allowing rape or sexual exploitation, even though such permissions might help recruit foot soldiers. At no point have al-Shabaab's leaders put forward new edicts that drastically reinterpret Islamic laws to allow for previ-

122. Harry Verhoeven, "The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States: Somalia, State Collapse, and the Global War on Terror," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (November 2009), pp. 405–425, doi.org/10.1080/17531050903273719.
123. For details on the origins of al-Shabaab, see Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005–2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
124. Ibid.; and Harun Maruf, Dan Joseph, and Christopher Anzalone, *Inside Al-Shabaab: The Secret History of Al-Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).
125. Author observations, Mogadishu, Somalia, 2013.
126. Author interviews, Nairobi, Kenya, 2012, and Mogadishu, Somalia, 2013.
127. Importantly, al-Shabaab did not exclusively punish women for "moral crimes." For example, see Feisal Omar, "Somali Militants Kill Two Men Accused of Rape, Al Shabaab Says," Reuters, May 1, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-alshabaab-idUSKBN17X1R6.

ously tabooed gendered violence. Notably, nor have there been any identifiable scandals perpetrated by the government during this time period that could have served as triggers.

In all civil wars, however, some soldiers commit acts of sexual violence. Al-Shabaab militants reportedly engage in rape, sometimes using the pretext of "forced marriage."[128] In other cases, unruly and drugged-up militiamen have raped without bothering with stipulating religious rules and norms, much like other armed groups in the Somali theater.[129] Al-Shabaab's leaders often ignore these abuses, but have not dared sanction or advocate these tabooed abuses. There have been no sermons or campaigns championing and justifying new norms or laws of gendered violence. To the contrary, al-Shabaab officially applies the death penalty for the crime of rape.[130]

While there have been no formal changes in al-Shabaab's norms of gendered violence to date, the group has experienced significant economic, strategic, and ideational shocks, including major victories and setbacks. From 2008 to 2012, al-Shabaab enjoyed relative dominance in the southern region, including control over the lucrative Kismayo Port. This dominance ended in 2012, however, when al-Shabaab experienced a seismic economic and strategic reversal after a Kenyan offensive pushed its fighters out of Kismayo, resulting in a heavy loss of revenue and territory.[131] In the same year, al-Shabaab also made a formal ideological change, becoming an affiliate of al-Qaida, and swearing fealty to Osama bin Laden.

These economic, ideological, and strategic changes certainly affected al-Shabaab's behavior. When the group was dominant in Kismayo and other regions, it ruled and governed more like a state.[132] When it lost money and power in 2012, al-Shabaab shifted to using cheap and bloody terrorist attacks against softer targets to maintain its presence while in decline. After al-Shabaab's leader Ahmed Godane was killed in a 2014 U.S. drone strike, the jihadists changed their leadership.[133] Yet, even in this period of tumult, there was no attempt by the jihadist leadership to redefine the group's rules and norms of gendered violence.

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128. Author interviews, Mogadishu, Somalia, 2013.
129. See Dominic Wabala, "Al-Shabaab Returnee's Horrid Tales of Sex Slavery," *Standard*, December 10, 2017, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001262655/al-shabaab-returnee-s-horrid-tales-of-sex-slavery.
130. Omar, "Somali Militants Kill Two Men Accused of Rape, Al Shabaab Says."
131. Ahmad, "Going Global."
132. Ahmad, *Jihad & Co*.
133. Christopher Anzalone, "The Life and Death of Al-Shabab Leader Ahmed Godane," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 7, No. 9 (September 2014), pp. 19–23, https://ctc.usma.edu/the-life-and-death-of-al-shabab-leader-ahmed-godane.

Moreover, between 2015 and 2017, al-Shabaab rebuilt its power and tax base, covertly re-establishing its coercive influence across the southern region. Even still, despite having regained strategic and economic power, there is no evidence that these factors have provoked any sweeping changes in its gendered violence. Al-Shabaab has certainly abused women according to its existing norms of violence; unlike its Pakistani and Nigerian counterparts, however, it has waged no new and unprecedented campaigns against them.

Notably, there is no identifiable trigger event that could have allowed al-Shabaab to catalyse sweeping norm changes. Of course, there is a high rate of wartime rape in Somalia, and even allegations of sexual exploitation by African Union peacekeepers, which al-Shabaab has decried.[134] Yet, each of these incidents can be blamed on individual actors; the government does not own responsibility for orchestrating these abuses. As a result, there has been no pivotal moment in the conflict that al-Shabaab could use to redefine its rules and norms. As a result, al-Shabaab's norms of gendered violence have remained static for more than ten years, despite significant transformations in the group's economic endowments, strategic conditions, and ideological affiliation.

Conclusion

There are no jihadist groups in modern history that have championed women's rights and freedoms; indeed, jihadists are not feminists. Across time and space, jihadist groups have targeted women and girls for abuse and repression, using their purportedly sacrosanct Islamist norms and laws as a justification. Yet, in some recent cases, jihadist violence against women has changed dramatically, in ways that deviate from these supposedly immutable Islamist norms and laws. Long-standing norms that once prohibited certain wartime violence have been abandoned.

The evidence in this article shows that changes in jihadist violence occurred when external triggers expanded the political opportunity space for jihadist leaders to act as norm entrepreneurs, and thus redefine the rules of war. In Pakistan, the government's assault on Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa in 2007 gave local Taliban factions the opportunity to justify targeting girls and schools that they associated with the government. In Nigeria, the 2012 mass arrest of the

134. Laetitia Bader and Samer Muscati, "'The Power These Men Have Over Us': Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia" (New York: Human Rights Watch, September 8, 2014), https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/09/08/power-these-men-have-over-us/sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-african-union-forces.

wives and children of Boko Haram leaders gave these African jihadists the opportunity to launch a campaign of kidnapping, rape, and sexual slavery against women and girls from both Christian and Muslim communities. In contrast, in the absence of a shocking act perpetrated by the Somali government, al-Shabaab has not dramatically changed in the nature and type of its jihadist violence against women and girls. The evidence from these cases reveals that changes in economic, strategic, and ideational factors have no clear causal connection to jihadist violence against women and girls; such changes in gendered violence occur only when a significant trigger event allows jihadist leaders to rewrite their rules and norms.

These cases thus provide a launching point for future research on jihadist violence in other war theaters. In Iraq, for example, jihadists made dramatic changes to their norms of violence against women between 2005 and 2018.[135] Looking closely at information operations data from the Iraqi theater across this time period, the data show that al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq obsessively referenced the 2005 Abu Ghraib scandal to justify their gendered violence and deflect criticism of their abuses.[136] In contrast, in Mali, where there has been a jihadist insurgency since 2012, there were no noticeable changes in norms of violence against women. From 2012 to 2018, Malian jihadists gained and lost significant economic resources, experienced astonishing victories and crushing defeats on the battlefield, and have undergone a major ideological reorientation by formally becoming an al-Qaida affiliate.[137] Yet, despite these significant and measurable changes in economic, strategic,

135. See Rosanne Marrit Anholt, "Understanding Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: Cutting Ourselves with Occam's Razor," *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (2016), p. 6, doi.org/10.1186/s41018-016-0007-7; James P. Farwell and Darby J. Arakelian, "Using Information in Contemporary War," *Parameters*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Autumn 2016), pp. 71–86; Nadje Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, *What Kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation of Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Nadje Al-Ali, "Sexual Violence in Iraq: Challenges for Transnational Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (February 1, 2018), pp. 10–27, doi.org/10.1177/1350506816633723.

136. For discussion on the effects of the Abu Ghraib incident on the rhetoric of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, see Tallha Abdulrazaq and Gareth Stansfield, "The Enemy Within: ISIS and the Conquest of Mosul," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Autumn 2016), pp. 525–542, doi.org/10.3751/70.4.11; Karen J. Greenberg, "Counter-Radicalization via the Internet," *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 668, No. 1 (November 2016), pp. 165–179, doi.org/10.1177/0002716216672635; Marwan M. Kraidy, "The Projectilic Image: Islamic State's Digital Visual Warfare and Global Networked Affect," *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 39, No. 8 (November 2017), pp. 1194–1209, doi.org/10.1177/0163443717725575; and John Hagan et al., "The Militarization of Mass Incapacitation and Torture during the Sunni Insurgency and American Occupation of Iraq," *Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 2016), p. 78, doi.org/10.3390/socsci5040078.

137. Author interviews, Bamako, Mali, February 2017.

and ideational factors, there have been no corresponding changes in jihadist norms of gendered violence in Mali.[138]

Although this research is concerned with jihadists, there are also other types of insurgent groups with norms and rules. For example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka developed a strict code prohibiting sexual violence in response to the Sri Lankan military's widespread abuse of Tamil women.[139] The National Liberation Army in Colombia, during the early period of its existence, followed strict doctrines of liberation theology, and thus prohibited certain behaviors, such as kidnapping, extortion, and drug trafficking.[140] The theory developed in this article may help explain norm endurance, erosion, and change in other insurgencies around the world. Of course, my research will have less to say about rapacious militias that have no normative or ideological roots, and thus have no qualms about using gruesome violence. However, many modern civil wars are fought by insurgents that have declared fealty to a higher set of principles. This article offers a first step into exploring why, how, and under what conditions the supposedly immutable norms and values that militias espouse can be overturned during a fight.

Future research should also consider the possibility that contagion effects can spread new norms across borders.[141] If a trigger event sparks jihadist norm change in one war theater, jihadist groups in other parts of the world may be inspired to follow suit. For example, the fact that suicide bombing was adopted by jihadists in the Palestinian theater gradually expanded the opportunity space for jihadists in other theaters to adopt this tactic.[142] Once toxic

138. Author interviews, Bamako, Mali, March 2018.

139. Kristian Stokke, "Building the Tamil Eelam State: Emerging State Institutions and Forms of Governance in LTTE-Controlled Areas in Sri Lanka," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 6 (September 2006), pp. 1021–1040, doi.org/10.1080/01436590600850434; Alisa Stack-O'Connor, "Lions, Tigers, and Freedom Birds: How and Why the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Employs Women," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2007), pp. 43–63, doi.org/10.1080/09546550601054642; and Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence."

140. Svante E. Cornell, "The Interaction of Narcotics and Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (November 2005), pp. 751–760, doi.org/10.1177/0022343305057895; and Andreas E. Feldmann and Victor J. Hinojosa, "Terrorism in Colombia: Logic and Sources of a Multidimensional and Ubiquitous Phenomenon," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2009), pp. 42–61, doi.org/10.1080/09546550802544656.

141. Alex Braithwaite, "Resisting Infection: How State Capacity Conditions Conflict Contagion," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (May 2010), pp. 311–319, doi.org/10.1177/0022343310362164; Alex Braithwaite and Tiffany S. Chu, "Civil Conflicts Abroad, Foreign Fighters, and Terrorism at Home," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 62, No. 8 (September 2018), pp. 1636–1660, doi.org/10.1177/0022002717707304; and Halvard Buhaug and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Contagion or Confusion? Why Conflicts Cluster in Space," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (June 2008), pp. 215–233, doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2008.00499.x.

142. Yasutaka Tominaga, "There's No Place Like Home! Examining the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks through Terrorist Group Locations," *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June

norm change has successfully occurred in one jihadist group, it becomes easier for other jihadists to do away with taboos and constraints on violence in their local war theaters. Given that global communication and connectivity among jihadist groups has become increasingly sophisticated, these demonstration and learning effects across conflict zones may help explain cascading changes in jihadist norms of violence.[143]

This analysis is premised on the assumption that jihadist leaders inherently want to shed constraints on strategically advantageous but tabooed violence. That is, I have assumed that jihadist leaders are not truly sincere about their purportedly immutable beliefs, but rather instrumentally abide by Islamist rules and norms just to maintain their legitimacy. While this rationalist assumption offers valuable analytical utility for this initial inductive work, future researchers may wish to question this premise.[144] It is indeed possible that jihadist leaders truly believe in their stated laws and mores; if so, their decision to make drastic changes to their rules and norms is even more significant, signaling a deep psychological change.

This future research would require a more detailed investigation of the possible emotional and psychological effects of these key trigger events.[145] There is strong evidence in the literature that feelings of shame, rage, and revenge are powerful explanations for human behavior,[146] and jihadists frequently use

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2018), pp. 355–379, doi.org/10.1007/s12061-016-9219-x; Andrea Gilli and Mauro Gilli, "The Spread of Military Innovations: Adoption Capacity Theory, Tactical Incentives, and the Case of Suicide Terrorism," *Security Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (2014), pp. 513–547, doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2014.935233; Michael C. Horowitz, "Nonstate Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism," *International Organization*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 33–64, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818309990233; and Robert Braun and Michael Genkin, "Cultural Resonance and the Diffusion of Suicide Bombings: The Role of Collectivism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 58, No. 7 (October 2014), pp. 1258–1284, doi.org/10.1177/0022002713498707.

143. Erika Forsberg, "Diffusion in the Study of Civil Wars: A Cautionary Tale," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2014), pp. 188–198, doi.org/10.1111/misr.12130; T. David Mason et al., "When Civil Wars Recur: Conditions for Durable Peace after Civil Wars," *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May 2011), pp. 171–189, doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2011.00426.x; Lars-Erik Cederman and Manuel Vogt, "Dynamics and Logics of Civil War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 9 (October 2017), pp. 1992–2016, doi.org/10.1177/0022002717721385; Barak Mendelsohn, "Al-Qaeda's Franchising Strategy," *Survival*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (June–July 2011), pp. 29–50, doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2011.586187; and Barak Mendelsohn, *The Al-Qaeda Franchise: The Expansion of Al-Qaeda and Its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

144. Joas Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

145. Rose McDermott, "The Feeling of Rationality: The Meaning of Neuroscientific Advances for Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (December 2004), pp. 691–706, doi.org/10.1017/S1537592704040459.

146. Jennifer S. Lerner and Larissa Z. Tiedens, "Portrait of the Angry Decision Maker: How Appraisal Tendencies Shape Anger's Influence on Cognition," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*,

the language of revenge and justice in their calls for violence.[147] The challenge, of course, is that one cannot psychologically evaluate jihadists without first putting these hostile actors on the psychiatrist's couch. That said, research shows that intense feelings of humiliation and revenge are a powerful trigger of violence.[148] While discussion of these psychological factors are beyond the scope of this article, there is much potential for fruitful study of these cognitive processes on jihadist violence.

With respect to the practical implications of this research, governments should reflect critically on the consequences of controversial counterinsurgency strategies. Arresting the pregnant wives of insurgent commanders is dangerous and unwise. Botched military operations targeting women and girls can have serious blowback effects. In cases such as Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Mali, the international community works closely with governments in their fight against jihadist insurgencies. Ensuring that these governments conduct themselves professionally and ethically would minimize the risk of violent escalations. Apologies levied after the fact do little to contain jihadist reactions. Indeed, the safest and smartest strategies for engaging with jihadists is to ensure that intervention against them is conducted according to the highest legal and moral standards.

Finally, moderate Islamic leaders have withdrawn from the global conversation about acceptable norms in fighting wars. Fearing potential reprisals for engaging in conversations about jihadist ideas, the majority of Islamic scholars have responded to the surge in extremist violence with empty slogans such as "Islam means peace." Because moderate Islamic scholars have withdrawn from the debate about jihad, extremists have a near monopoly over the narrative. Silencing mainstream conversations about jihadist norms and laws has not made the world safer. Rather, by completely ceding this intellectual territory to extremists, this fringe minority has used its unchecked power to under-

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Vol. 19, No. 2 (April 2006), pp. 115–137, doi.org/10.1002/bdm.515; Todd H. Hall and Andrew A.G. Ross, "Affective Politics after 9/11," *International Organization*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Fall 2015), pp. 847–879, doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000144; and Wendy Pearlman, "Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 2013), pp. 387–409, doi.org/10.1017/S1537592713001072.

147. Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and James M. Jasper, "Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 37 (2011), pp. 285–303, doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015.

148. Laia Balcells, *Rivalry and Revenge: The Politics of Violence during Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

mine hundreds of years of Islamic legal precedent and deeply embedded cultural mores. The only way to reverse this pernicious trend is for moderate Muslim intellectuals to engage in these tough conversations about Islamic laws and norms in war. For the safety of the world, the security community should encourage them to do so.